

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA TRIBUTES

13 AUG 2020 Celebrating the
appearance day of our
beloved spiritual master



OM̐ VIṢṆUPĀDA
PARAMAHĀMSA
PARIVRĀJAKĀCĀRYA
AṢṬOTTARA-ŚATA

ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD
A. C.
BHAKTIVEDANTA
SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

FOUNDER-ĀCĀRYA OF
THE INTERNATIONAL
SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA
CONSCIOUSNESS

ŚRĪLA
PRABHUPĀDA
TRIBUTES

13 AUG

2020

Celebrating the
appearance day of our
beloved spiritual master

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* All tributes appear in order of the author's seniority by initiation.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this year's *Śrīla Prabhupāda Tributes*, a collection of Vyāsa-pūjā offerings from Śrīla Prabhupāda's direct disciples.

All of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples are welcome to write an offering for this yearly book, regardless of their personal history, present circumstances, personal views, or institutional affiliation.

The book provides an opportunity for all of Śrīla Prabhupāda's direct disciples to express their realizations, reflections, and gratitude – and for other devotees to read and reflect upon what these disciples have expressed.

Following traditional *Vaiṣṇava* etiquette, we have placed the offerings from sannyasis first, and then those from Śrīla Prabhupāda's other disciples, all in order of seniority by initiation. In the back of the book you'll find an index to all the contributors in alphabetical order.

When the book comes out each year, we welcome you to start reading from it as soon as you receive it – *ahead* of the day of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā. That way the book can help fill your mind with thoughts of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his devotees as the sacred day of Vyāsa-pūjā draws near. And later the book can serve as a source of memories, insights, inspiration, and history, preserving the words of those who wrote.

If you're Śrīla Prabhupāda's direct disciple but haven't been included in this year's book, we warmly invite you to send an offering for next year's. And everyone please spread the word. The place to find out more about the book and submit an offering is www.sptrIBUTES.com.

If you have any suggestions for improving the book, please write to us at sptrIBUTES@gmail.com.

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda and to all of his disciples and followers.
Hare Krishna.

Your servant,
Pradyumna Dasa
Production Manager

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For ten years we have printed *Śrīla Prabhupāda Tributes* and sent a free copy to each devotee who wrote for it. But this year the pandemic that struck made us uncertain about whether our printers could provide the book on schedule. And so for the first time we have produced the book only in electronic form.

Still, we owe our thanks to His Holiness Subhāg Swami Maharaja and an anonymous donor for generously donating for the cost of printing and distributing this year's book. We'll save their donations for next year.

We of course welcome more donors. If you'd like to be among them, please get in touch with Pradyumna Dasa, sptributes@gmail.com.

For the purposes of this book, a direct disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda is, by definition, anyone included in the disciple database maintained by Mahamaya Devi Dasi. Our thanks to her for maintaining it.

Our thanks to the Bhaktivedanta Archives for the cover photos.

Our thanks to Draviḍa Dāsa for providing the offerings shared from the BBT's Vyāsa-pūjā book.

And our thanks to Gaura Dasa for broadcasting word of the book and encouraging many of his godbrothers and godsisters to write for it.

THE TRIBUTES TEAM

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TRIBUTES
BY
SANNYĀSĪ
DISCIPLES

*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,

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

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

Where *varṇāśrama* would rule
And demons would slump
Life'd be rural
With sin at the dump.

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

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

* * *

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Your servant,
Mukunda Goswami

The Plague and the Voice

*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*

Part 1. The Plague

They call it a pandemic, but that's just a fancy name for another kind of plague. It's killing thousands of people, so governments are ordering people to stay in their homes to avoid contagion. But now people are protesting.

"Don't tell me what to do!"

"It's communism!"

"It's fascism!"

"Give me liberty or give me death!"

I would understand—I would feel their mental fist-banging, the imaginary hands pushing them toward the door, their urge to scream—if they were underprivileged sub-Saharanans jammed 20 together in a hot, tiny room with an outhouse across the dirt road for a toilet.

But these protesters look like middle-class Americans. They live in spacious American homes where Venetian blinds filter the sun's rays in their bedrooms. They pamper their skin in tiled bathrooms where the toilets smell of disinfectant and where little vases of plastic flowers decorate the countertops. They cram their bellies full three times a day.

But even this little bit of confinement drives them mad, drives them to domestic violence and child abuse.

They need help. They need Prabhupāda.

Part 2. The Voice

I have been in quarantine for four months now, living on the 20th floor in a smaller-than-American apartment with four other men. It's

been a peaceful, jolly four months. We're even having a good time.

Why? Because we have Prabhupāda.

My day starts when the sky is still black. I groan and force my still heavy eyelids out of the bed and bump into the wall as I stagger into the bathroom. Then I plop into my chair and try to chant some *japa* without falling asleep.

When I look out the window and see pinkish-purple streaks showing through the black sky, I wrap a few turns of my sacred thread around my right thumb and say the prayer "to the sun who enthuses our meditation."

I try hard to see the sun, but the tall buildings block my view.

Oh. I am looking through the wrong eyes. I need the eyes Prabhupāda gave me, the eyes of the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

"Of lights I am the radiant sun."

Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke those words 5,000 years ago, but they caress my mental ear as if it had been only a few seconds.

Thank you, Prabhupāda.

I go back to my *japa*. Sometimes I shake my bead bag, and the beads go click-clack as they knock into each other, waiting for their turn to roll around when they pass through the tips of my right thumb and middle finger.

I hear the others chanting softly, and their words enter piecemeal into my ear: "*K'shnick-shnick Ram Ram...*"

(Did someone say something about quarantine?)

The soft murmuring is punctuated by the sound of Gajendra Dasa in the kitchen, sneezing as he sprinkles pepper into the morning soup for Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā.

Jishnu Dasa opens the altar curtain, and I half-roll half-fall out of my chair and touch my forehead to the floor. My mind breezes back to that Friday evening in 1966 on Second Avenue, when I touched my forehead to the floor in front of Prabhupāda for the first time and tried to repeat the words he said: "*Namaḥ... Om... Vishnu... Padaya...*"

And now... and now fifty-four years have whizzed by since that evening. Yes, and the arrogant young hippie has become a doddering old man. The legs that used to walk all over Manhattan need a cane now just to make it to the corner. The strong young voice has dwindled to a hoarse whimper.

But I am still that young disciple bowing at Prabhupāda's lotus feet and trying to repeat his words: "*Namaḥ om vishnupadaya...*" (I

offer my respectful obeisances...)

But I wish I could mean what I say. I wish I could speak with the sincerity I heard in Prabhupāda’s voice that night and that I still hear whenever that moment flows into my memory.

At first, I looked for a spiritual blowtorch to melt away the steel frame covering my heart. But Lord Chaitanya gave me the real clue: “The chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa cleanses the dust from the mirror of the mind.”

I understood. Why look for a blowtorch when I already had the cloth that wipes the dust off the mirror? Prabhupāda had given it to me—the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*—that night on Second Avenue.

Someday, when I finally get the mirror clean, I will, at last, be able to reflect Prabhupāda’s words and the power in them, as a mirror reflects not only the sun but also the brilliance of its rays.

My daydream breaks as the fragrance of sandalwood overpowers the fragrance coming from the kitchen. I look up. Jishnu is offering incense and singing to Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā. Through the kitchen door comes the muffled sound of Gajendra chanting and running the blender.

And it all comes from Śrīla Prabhupāda.

(Who cares about a little quarantine, anyway?)

You know, they say a big strong hero never weeps. Neither does a doddering old man. But when the sound of Prabhupāda’s voice from that night on Second Avenue grabs my memory, a teardrop comes into an eye hidden somewhere inside me. And no one can see it but me.

So I’ll close with these words, in whatever sincerity I can muster:

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Umapati Swami

I offer my obeisances to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda who is very dear to Kṛṣṇa on this earth. Obeisances unto you, Spiritual Master, who are so kindly teaching the message of Lord Chaitanya, and delivering these Western countries which are full of voidism and impersonalism.

It has been over forty years since Śrīla Prabhupāda's disappearance. He is still close to me and all his followers in his *vāṅm*. I exchanged many letters with His Divine Grace, and they continue to guide me today. I once spoke to a professor who said that Kṛṣṇa consciousness appears to be a combination of logic and *śāstra*. I asked Prabhupāda about this and he replied to me as follows:

“Concerning our use of analogy. We do not bring in imperfect analogy, but we follow the instructions of the *śāstra* strictly. Our authority is on the basis of *śāstra*, not analogy... We give analogy for the general mass of people who have no faith in *śāstra*. Analogy is not proof, *śāstra* is proof. Foolish people cannot understand or accept, so we use analogy. The conclusion is not drawn from the analogy but from the *śāstra*. We don't use a combination of logic and authority, we use authority. The logic of using analogy is called in *śāstra*, 'sadha chandra nyaya.' It is easier to focus on the moon through the branches of a tree.” (Letter 75.10.32)

I was very impressed with Śrīla Prabhupāda's strong conviction that *śāstra* is the proof in understanding Vedic knowledge (*śāstra pramāṇa*). I share this letter with devotees who approach me with their doubts in accepting Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote me an even more personal letter about the importance of reading *śāstra* in his letter of January 5, 1976 in answer to my inquiry of December 4, 1975. I was very fond of reading many hours in his books, but I wasn't sure if this was bona fide. His reply was very encouraging:

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 Kṛṣṇa consciousness there must be a sound philosophical understanding otherwise it will become only sentiment. Whenever you find time please read my books.

This was a green light for me to cram Prabhupāda's purports. In the previous letter I quoted Prabhupāda said *śāstra* was the proof for Vedic understanding. I take it that Prabhupāda's books, with the verse translation and his purport, is itself *śāstra*.

But in the same letter Prabhupāda writes: "Our first business is this book distribution. There is no need of any other business. If this book distribution is managed properly, pushed on with great enthusiasm and determination, and at the same time if our men keep spiritually strong, then the whole world will become Kṛṣṇa conscious."

So, he didn't want me to *only* read his books, but I had to also distribute the books, and tend to other preaching duties. But whenever I could find time – and I did so with top priority – I read his books.

Reading Prabhupāda's books or listening to his recorded lectures is necessary and nectarean for keeping alive in spiritual life. I deeply thank Śrīla Prabhupāda and all the devotees who assisted him in publishing his books and recording his lectures. They have done a great service for the world, and for this fallen, aspiring devotee of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am now eighty years old. As long as I am physically able, please let me read your books with enthusiasm and without doubt. And let me cooperate with your devotees as a sign of my love for you.

Your eternal servant,
Satsvarupa das 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*

In our Vyāsa-pūjā offerings we tell some of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s uncountable glories, and one that came to mind today is that he has inspired a new generation of disciples, for whom he serves as the spiritual grandfather.

He has left them a Kṛṣṇa conscious legacy, in the form of his books and instructions, his temples and Deities, his mission, his *kīrtana*, his worldwide society of devotees, his unique example of pure devotional service, and the wealth of a Kṛṣṇa conscious way of life, nourished, fortified, and enlivened by *sādhana* and Kṛṣṇa’s kindness, opening the way to freedom from *māyā* and, step by step, to faith, attachment, and finally pure love for Kṛṣṇa, as given by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Among these grand-disciples, some are sons and daughters of devotees, others new recruits. As Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mercy descends, they have grasped hold of it. Many practice and serve strongly, and some stand out in varied ways, by preaching and teaching, by scholarship, by *kīrtana*, by worship of the Deity, by cooking, by organizing, by enlivening and inspiring others, by dedication to different aspects of what Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to establish. For all of this, the credit goes to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

What a pleasure it is for us disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda to see members of that new generation shine and even excel us. When a son takes over the family business and makes it more successful than the father, the father becomes more pleased. And the grandfather is easier to please than the father.

Śrīla Prabhupāda in his last days sometimes asked, “How will things go on?” They will go on by his mercy, from generation to generation, as long as devotees who receive it take it seriously, manage it well, and keep it pure.

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

Please accept my respectful obeisances!

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

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

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

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

Your servant,
Jayapatāka Swami

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

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

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

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

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

Prabhupāda: What?

Haṁsadūta: This coming war.

Prabhupāda: You should simply prepare for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

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

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

Your servant,

Prahlādānanda Swami

*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*

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!

One thing that is becoming more and more apparent to me as I get older is that when Lord Kṛṣṇa says that this material world is a place of misery He is not exaggerating. So much suffering, subtle and gross, from every direction, but still the mind tries to convince us that we can be happy here. The problem, of course, is that we listen carefully to the mind and often tend to agree with it in this regard.

Fortunately, as we continue with this process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, this truth about the material world is revealed to us more and more. And from the other side, by your mercy, we are experiencing a small glimpse of the spiritual world, especially in the *kīrtana* of the names of Lord Hari. As Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura writes, *golokera prema-dhana, hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*: “The chanting of the Holy Names of the Lord is coming from the spiritual world, Goloka Vṛndāvana.”

I remember being with you in Vṛndāvana in September 1974. I had arrived from preaching in Hong Kong, and at the time you were somewhat ill. Every night we had a program in the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple (under construction), and all the devotees were expected to attend, mainly because you were always there. The program started at 6:30 with the evening *ārati*, after which there was a class. Because of your ill health you were not giving class, and instead your *sannyāsīs* took up this service.

Śrutakīrti Prabhu, your personal servant at the time, instructed us that you wanted the class to be short. Sometimes, if you thought the *sannyāsī* was speaking too long, Śrutakīrti would come and say that you wanted him to stop. Then everyone would stay for the second stand-up *kīrtana*, which went on for at least another hour or so.

This evening program went on like this for some time, and gradually your health improved. One evening after the final *kīrtana* I came back into the courtyard, where you were getting ready to

take rest. You were sitting on one of those wooden beds and were speaking for a few minutes before the mosquitoes forced you to cover with the net. Śrutakīrti and I were sitting on the ground when you began to speak. Your voice was firm and full of real authority. You said, “This *kīrtana* gives us life. This is the special mercy of Lord Caitanya.” Then after a very short pause to bring emphasis to what you were about to say, you declared, “And if we don’t get life from the *kīrtana* . . . simply sex life.”

I am personally very grateful to you for this emphasis on *kīrtana*. I thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, from the bottom of my heart.

Your insignificant servant,

Trivikrama Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I beg to offer my most respectful obeisances at your lotus feet. This year we are celebrating your 124th birth anniversary. Next year we are going to have celebrations in important cities of India for your 125th birth anniversary. Your spiritual master recognized in the first meeting in 1921 that you are that special devotee who would fulfill Lord Caitanya's mission. Lord Caitanya had predicted that the holy name will be chanted in every town and village of the world. As stated in the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* 7.11:

kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana

“Unless empowered by Kṛṣṇa, one cannot propagate the saṅkīrtana movement.”

I had the great fortune of meeting you in Montreal in June 1968. You were able to convert a fool like myself to the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You presented the pure teachings of the Lord and the *ācāryas* without any distortion. While establishing ISKCON in America some friends suggested that you call your society, International Society for God Consciousness. You insisted that it should be called ‘Kṛṣṇa consciousness’ because God was a vague term and Kṛṣṇa was exact and scientific. You stated ‘that God consciousness is spiritually weaker and less personal.’ A journalist once asked you that if your Kṛṣṇa consciousness was so good then why is the hall not fully packed. You responded that ‘when you are selling diamonds only few will buy but imitation diamonds many may buy.’

Your books have changed the lives of countless conditioned souls around the world. Fortunately, your books are available in almost every major language of the world. Few months ago, the government in Sindh, Pakistan agreed to publish 1000 copies each of the *Gītā* in Urdu and Sindhi. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you struggled in India to establish Kṛṣṇa consciousness and publish your books. In a brief span of eleven years, you travelled all over the world 14 times and translated over 70 books. You often said that everything we need to know is in your books. Reading your books is the best way to associate with you. Your books will continue to guide humanity

for the next ten thousand years.

The world today is facing a major crisis. Covid-19 also known as coronavirus has spread to almost every corner of the globe. Thousands have died and millions have fallen ill. Unfortunately, during this crisis, all the places of worship such as temples, mosques, gurudwaras, churches are closed to the public. All ISKCON temples are also closed. Only a small crew of *pūjārīs* is permitted on the altar for essential Deity worship. This has resulted in a sharp drop of income and book distribution. Book distribution has virtually stopped. Necessity is the mother of invention. Devotees have discovered many new techniques for on-line preaching. This new technique is attracting new people to your Movement.

Scientists all over the world are competing to develop a vaccine to cure the coronavirus. Śrīla Prabhupāda you have the solution to every problem. On August 26, 1966, you stated the following:

“Hong Kong flu. Yes. So everyone took that vaccination. So our Hayagriva prabhu took me also. “All right, let us have.” [laughter] So there was no attack. Fortunately, there was no attack. So similarly, this world is Hong Kong flu. [laughter] *māyā* is always ready to attack. Always. So we have to take this injection, this anti-vaccine, Hare Kṛṣṇa. *Enechi auṣadhi māyā nāśibāro lāgi*’ [Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura].

[I have brought the medicine to eradicate the disease of illusion. Now pray for this Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and take it.]

That song, *Jīv Jāgo, Jīv Jāgo*. “I have brought this medicine for killing this Hong Kong flu of *māyā*.” [laughter] *Enechi auṣadhi māyā nāśibāro lāgi, hari-nāma mahā-mantra lao...* Now you take.” [Initiation Lecture, June 4, 1969, New Vrindaban]

“Just like if you take vaccine, the infectious disease will not touch you. Similarly, if you keep yourself vaccinated with Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then *māyā* has no power to touch you. And if you can keep, then you will be accustomed.” [Lecture at Initiation Fire Sacrifice – July 16, 1969, Los Angeles]

“We should always bear in mind that we are in the

midst of infected area. Any moment the infection can attack us. Take for example that in a neighborhood where there is infection of disease, say cholera or typhoid like that. Those who have taken vaccines, anti-cholera vaccine or anti-typhoid vaccines. Just like physicians, doctors they go to treat contaminated patient but if they are not cautious the physician will become himself contaminated. Then the question will come out physician heal thyself. A physician goes to treat but he... If he is himself a diseased man how he can treat?

“So our preachers, our devotees should always remember that *māyā* is very strong. As soon as there is slackness, immediately *māyā* will attack.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.1.16–19, December 11, 1970, Bombay]

So, on this auspicious day, I want to beg you for your mercy so that I may be able to practice and help expand your Movement. Preaching and constructing temples is becoming more and more challenging. Only with your mercy can we hope to succeed on the devotional path and complete the construction projects that we have started.

Your fallen servant,
Gopal Krishna Goswami

Śrīla Prabhupāda and Lord Nityānanda's Mercy

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Knowledgeable devotees agree that you were a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*, an empowered incarnation, and you have indicated as much yourself. Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (*Antya* 2.13–14) states:

“To deliver people in regions throughout the universe who could not meet Him, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally entered the bodies of pure devotees. Thus He empowered living beings [His pure devotees] by manifesting in them so much of His own devotion that people in all other countries became devotees by seeing them.”

And in your purport you explain - as stated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya* 7.11):

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

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

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

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

Jagāi and Mādhāi were two brothers born in Navadvīpa in a respectable *brāhmaṇa* family who later became addicted to all kinds of sinful activities. By the order of

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

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

If one is true to Gaura-Nitāi’s service in the disciplic succession, he can even exceed Nityānanda Prabhu’s service. This is the process of disciplic succession. Nityānanda Prabhu delivered Jagāi and Mādhāi, but a servant of Nityānanda Prabhu, by His grace, can deliver many thousands of Jagāis and Mādhāis. That is the special benediction of the disciplic succession. One who is situated in the disciplic succession can be understood by the result of his activities.

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

Kṛṣṇa-candra Prabhu (Hrishikesh Mafatlal), from Mumbai, used to say that people cannot imagine who you approached when you

came to America. He recommended that everyone see the early DVDs of you, first at 26 Second Avenue in New York, then at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. Most of us can't believe, can't imagine, the type of people you were approaching. And they didn't always receive you or treat you well.

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

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

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

And you delivered the same message: chant Kṛṣṇa's name, worship Kṛṣṇa, follow Kṛṣṇa's instructions—but not in so many words, because the people you were approaching didn't even know who Kṛṣṇa was. When Nityānanda approached people in Navadvīpa and told them, "Chant Kṛṣṇa's name, worship Kṛṣṇa,

follow Kṛṣṇa’s instructions,” they knew who Kṛṣṇa was and they knew what He was saying. But in America and Europe nobody knew who Kṛṣṇa was. So “Just chant Kṛṣṇa’s name, worship Kṛṣṇa” had to be explained in detail in books, and thus you wrote so many books to explain who is Kṛṣṇa, what is Kṛṣṇa’s name, what are Kṛṣṇa’s instructions, how to chant Kṛṣṇa’s name, how to worship Kṛṣṇa, why we should surrender to Kṛṣṇa and follow Kṛṣṇa’s instructions—the same message that Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked Nityānanda Prabhu to deliver to everyone, but in an expanded form, because the people you were approaching had no idea of Kṛṣṇa’s identity or instructions.

When we go out with your books, it is like when Mahāprabhu sent Nityānanda and Haridāsa to approach people with that message. Sometimes devotees are not well received, but even Nityānanda and Haridāsa were not always well received. Caitanya Mahāprabhu would have nocturnal *kīrtanas* in Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura’s house, and if anyone was proud they were not allowed to enter. Only humble, pure devotees were allowed. So all these proud people in Navadvīpa were upset and angry that they weren’t allowed to join the *kīrtana*, and when Nityānanda and Haridāsa came to their homes, they were angry with them—“Oh, you’ve come from that Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura”—and the people spread so many rumors about them: “They are thieves. They come to your door and say to chant Kṛṣṇa’s name and worship Kṛṣṇa, but really what they’re doing is looking in your house to see what you have so that they can come back at night and steal it.” The people spread a lot of false propaganda. So we have to accept that, expect it and accept it, without being deterred. It didn’t stop Nityānanda Prabhu, and it didn’t stop you, and it shouldn’t stop any of us.

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

has no limit.” So, that was your mood; you were in the mood of Nityānanda Prabhu.

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

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

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

You often quoted a verse by Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī about how we should approach people the way Nityānanda Prabhu approached people. The verse is, *dante nidhāya tṛṇakaṁ padayor nipatyā*: “I take a straw in my mouth . . .” (it is a sign of utter humility) “and I bow at your feet.” *Kṛtvā ca kāku-śatam etad ahaṁ bravīmi*: “And I flatter you

a hundred times." *He sādhaḥaḥ:* "O great learned *sādhu*." *Sakalam eva vihāya dūrād:* "Whatever you have learned, you keep it far away from you." And *gaurāṅga-candra-caraṇe kurutānurāgam:* "Just accept the mercy of Lord Gaurāṅga, just surrender to Lord Gaurāṅga, become attached to Lord Gaurāṅga's lotus feet." And you did it yourself.

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

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

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

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

In a talk in Bombay you said:

Our Krishna Consciousness movement is trying to make fools and rascals and sinful men wise. And actually it is happening. *Pāpī tāpī yata chila, hari-nāme uddhārila, tāra sākṣī jagāi-mādhāi*. You want evidence? Look at Jagāi and Mādhāi. Caitanya Mahāprabhu delivered two sinful brothers named Jagāi and Mādhāi. Now you can see how strong is Caitanya Mahāprabhu's movement. Many thousands of Jagāis and Mādhāis are being delivered. Caitanya Mahāprabhu's movement is greater than Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally delivered Jagāi and Mādhāi, but now, by His movement, thousands of Jagāis and Mādhāis are being delivered. This is the

practical evidence. If you take advantage of it, you will be glorified, and we shall be glorified. This is our process.

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

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

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

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your aspiring, eternal, hopeful servant,

Girirāj Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

As I reached the age at which you came to America on the *Jaladuta* and founded your great mission, ISKCON, I found I could understand and appreciate more than ever your bold, straightforward, and skillful presentation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

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

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

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

Your servant,

Hridayānanda Dāsa Goswami

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

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

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

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

On this most auspicious day, we celebrate the one hundred and twenty-fourth birth anniversary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the great spiritual master of the universe. At this time when the world is engulfed in the coronavirus pandemic, Śrīla Prabhupāda's advice is pertinent and welcome:

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

feet of the Lord. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.14.10, purport]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

An unqualified servant,

Dānavīr Goswami

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

*śrī-caitanya-mano-'bhṛṣṭam sthāpitam yena bhū-tale
svayam rūpaḥ kadā mahyam dadāti śva-padāntikam*

I was born in the darkest ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torch of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him. When will Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, who has established within this material world the mission to fulfill the desire of Lord Caitanya, give me shelter under his lotus feet?

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

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

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

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

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

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

*nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis
tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smarāṇe na kālaḥ
etādṛśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi
durdaivam īdṛśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ*

"My Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, in Your holy name there is all good fortune for the living entity, and therefore You have

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

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

This is confirmed by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(3) Avoiding the association of saintly persons, I sported merrily in the company of materialistic rascals. For that reason I have become strung up in the noose of my own fruitive activities.

(4) I perpetually drank the horrible poison of mundane sense gratification, having never absorbed myself in the divine mellows of the *kīrtana* glorifying Lord Gaura.

(5) Oh, why has my heart not experienced any satisfaction? And why has Narottama dāsa not simply perished?

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

*kr̥ṣṇe sva-dhāmopagate dharmajñānādibhiḥ saha
kalau naṣṭa-dṛśām eṣa purāṇārko 'dhunoditaḥ*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Once one of my godbrothers, after watching me distribute

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

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

Your servant,

Kavicandra Swami

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

In 1974 you conducted a series of discussions on *varṇāśrama* in Vṛndāvana during your morning walks. We as your disciples were having a lot of discussions at that time about developing *varṇāśrama-dharma*. Śrīla Prabhupāda, to develop your projects in India including *varṇāśrama* in Māyāpur you made all the devotees from all over the world who were attending the Festival remain in India for some time. I was sent to Bombay to preach, to make life members and obtain donations. You Śrīla Prabhupāda, were in Bombay at that time. Since having your personal association is rare I would make a point to spend time with you in your room in the mornings and the evenings and also at night when you sat on the roof to receive the cool breezes from the ocean.

On one such occasion Śrīla Prabhupāda, you spent a long time discussing *varṇāśrama-dharma* with me. Explaining how Gandhi had the vision to bring self-sufficiency to India but that Nehru and Patel betrayed him and built factories in the cities. The next year in 1975 you made me the president of Calcutta Temple for nearly one year. During those days, I was collecting money in Calcutta to help maintain Māyāpur since it was not yet self-sufficient. I would go every weekend from Calcutta to stay in Māyāpur with Jayapatāka Swami and Trivikrama Mahārāja to be with the devotees and discuss plans for developing Māyāpur and in general, also I had some fun. We would sometimes have wrestling matches and swim in the Pukur. During this time I had many discussions about developing *varṇāśrama-dharma* with the leaders in Māyāpur especially since just the year prior, you gave those talks in Vṛndāvana. Māyāpur was farming at the time, growing grain. I remember Jayapatāka Swami showing me the harvest once. They also were developing a *gośālā*, breeding cows, producing milk, and making milk products. There was also *khadi* being made, devotee cloth weavers would spin cotton and weave *dhotīs* and *sārīs*.

One thing that stuck with me from our discussions Śrīla Prabhupāda, was when you explained how after the liberation of India from Colonial Rule, Gandhi wanted that all the leaders should go into the villages and establish self-sufficiency. Gandhi wanted that the leaders should make India self-sufficient village-by-village

by establishing self-sufficiency in growing food, weaving cloth, building homes from forest wood and stones, making furniture from wood, creating crafts for sale and barter, growing herbs for medicine, establishing schools for education, and places of worship for spiritual guidance. These were the pillars of self-sufficient development Gandhi wanted to establish in every village before having India embark on building factories in the cities. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you told me that night how Gandhi tried to save India by making it self-sufficient but that Nehru and Patel betrayed Gandhi by making a deal with Mountbatten to obtain India's freedom by building factories and selling cheap goods to England. In return, the parts for the factories in India would be built in England and shipped to India thus ensuring England's economic growth while securing their ability to obtain cheap goods. The result of doing this was what Gandhi predicted slums full of factory workers in the cities who left their farms to make slave wages in the factories and idle land in the villages where the farming stopped. I remember that there were famines in India in the early '70s because there was not enough farming going on to feed people.

I believe we have made the same fatal mistake in your mission. We failed to listen to you when you requested us repeatedly to create *Varṇāśrama Dharma* to protect us in the future disaster that you said was sure to come to society worldwide. Now, this disaster is upon us and there is no place for us to go. We are dependent on grocery stores and shops to obtain our daily sustenance instead of getting these things directly from the land and the cows. No one listens. India did not listen to Gandhi, and we did not listen to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Yet we wonder why we are in the mess we are in now with this disaster upon us and no proper shelter for our devotees. How many times I have told this story Śrīla Prabhupāda that you told me only to hear everyone say later, we will do it later, first, this or that must be done and then later we will do *varṇāśrama*. Well, now is later and we stand before you today Śrīla Prabhupāda, once more begging for your mercy that we may somehow at this very late date manifest your desire to create *varṇāśrama-dhama* self-sufficiency to protect the devotees and for a place of refuge for sincere spiritual seekers who are suffering.

Your fallen servant,

Swami B. V. Bhagavat

*namaḥ om viṣṇupādāya kṛṣṇa-presthāya bhūtaḥ
svāmī śrī bhaktivedānta prabhupādāya te namaḥ*

*gurov jñāṁ śirasī-dhṛtvā śaktyāveśa sva-rūpine
hare-kṛṣṇeti mantrena pāścātya-prācyā-tāriṇe*

*viśvācārya prabaryāya divya kārūṇya mūrtaye
śrī-bhāgavata-mādhurya-gītā-jñāna pradāyine*

*gaura-śrī-rūpa-siddhānta-sarasvatī-niṣevine
rādhā-kṛṣṇa-padāmbhoja-bhṛṅgāya gurave namaḥ*

I offer my humble obeisances to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, who is Kṛṣṇa's beloved associate and who came down to this plane from Goloka. Taking the order of his guru on his head, he is the *śaktyāveśa* [empowered] avatar of Nityānanda Prabhu personified. He distributed the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* all over the Eastern and Western world, delivering and uplifting all fallen souls.

He is the best of millions of *jagad-gurus*, because he is the personification of divine mercy. He has distributed the sweet nectar of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the transcendental knowledge of *Bhagavad-gītā* all over the world. He is constantly engaged in exclusive devotional service to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. I offer my humble obeisances unto Śrīla Prabhupāda, who is like a bumble-bee always tasting the nectar of the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Govinda.

(These *praṇāma* mantras were composed by Śrī Bhakti Sundara Govinda Mahārāja, following a request by Śrīla Prabhupāda.)

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, yet another year has passed, which presents us with another opportunity to reflect on the causeless mercy that brought each of us under your shelter. Such good fortune can only be providential, an arrangement by the Supreme Lord himself. Acknowledging this puts us in company such as the sages of Naimiṣāranya, who acknowledged their good fortune at coming into Sūta Gosvāmī's company at the cusp of Kali-yuga:

*tvaṁ naḥ sandarśito dhātrā
dustaraṁ nistitṛṣatām*

*kalim sattva-haram purisam
karṇa-dhāra ivārṇavam*

“We think that we have met Your Goodness by the will of providence, just so that we may accept you as captain of the ship for those who desire to cross the difficult ocean of Kali, which deteriorates all the good qualities of a human being.” (SB 1.1.22)

We find the providential nature of such good fortune corroborated in Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s instructions to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī:

*brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bija*

“According to their karma, all living entities are wandering throughout the entire universe. Some of them are being elevated to the upper planetary systems, and some are going down into the lower planetary systems. Out of many millions of wandering living entities, one who is very fortunate gets an opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. By the mercy of both Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master, such a person receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service.” (Cc. Madhya 19.151)

And we hear from Viśvanātha Cakravarti Ṭhākura that, although *bhakti* is completely independent and can go wherever she wants, she follows the lead of devotees who share their own good fortune with others by teaching this science to others, entering the hearts of those to whom those devotees show compassion. So we have some sense of the rarity of our good fortune, which moves us to cultivate that seed of devotion and, following your example, share it with others as far as we are able.

In the spring of 1969, Bhakti Devi inserted herself into my life when I met your students in Honolulu, which changed my life’s course drastically and irrevocably. Studying your books and practicing the process of *sādhana bhakti* convinced me to surrender to you, and I eventually asked you to accept me as your student and engage me in helping you spread Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s teachings for the rest of my life. You responded that you were glad to do so. Many years ago I began an attempt at writing some sonnets that reflect that shift in my life that lifted me from the ocean of attachment and lamentation. Perhaps because I wasn’t very satisfied with them, I didn’t carry the project out as far as I would have liked. Still, I’ll share two of them today, confident that you will, as you always have, accept whatever sincerity you may find in them:

I've turned my back on Kṛṣṇa, from Him run
As fast and far as I could ever go.
I've been stuck tight in Kali, my head spun
By a drastic case of karmic vertigo.
Who knows how long I've wallowed in this pit?
Who cares how many different ways I've tried
To find some pleasure? Though the signs said, "Quit!"
I closed my eyes and courted suicide.
Then you, my master, turned me to the light
With *Hari-kīrtan*, *Gītā*, and *prasād*.
And now, although I'm clearly neophyte,
I try to serve the confidant of God.

A child of Kali, saved by Divine Grace,
Chants Hare Kṛṣṇa in the Marketplace.

I wasn't very steady, but I tried
To accept what Kṛṣṇa wanted—leave the rest.
Not convinced yet, not completely purified,
I must have really put your mercy to the test.
But as I chanted and I read your divine words,
I found real life, a spiritual revolution.
New desires from deep in my heart stirred;
I longed to taste and share the nectar of devotion.
A disciple's life I wanted, nothing more;
Your mission became everything to me.
And so today I write you to implore
That this may be my life eternally.

Now your child, blessed by Your Divine Grace,
Works to spread your teachings in this fallen place.

It's clear to many, I think, that my own ability to share Kṛṣṇa consciousness is quite modest. And my attempts at sharing have lately been complicated by a sudden shift in the world's circumstances. Still, here I am, having persisted through 40 years of family and professional life in my practice and my poor attempts at teaching what I've understood. And now I'm an old man with nothing left but my spiritual practice and divine service. I'm grateful to you for the last 51 years, and I hope to try expressing that

gratitude by continuing to study, to practice, and to teach. You have on a number of occasions expressed confidence in me. I pray that I may be able to continue trying to live up to that confidence and one day contribute something useful to the divine mission you have brought on Mahāprabhu's behalf.

Your aspiring servant,

Swami B. A. Āśrama

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāñī-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 on this earth, having taken shelter at His lotus feet. Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, if we take your *praṇāma-mantra* at face value, you are presently “kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva.” By Kṛṣṇa’s arrangement, therefore, your transcendental activities seem to span past, present, and future.

Śrīla Bhaktinoda Ṭhākura confirms this *advāya-jñāna-tattva* understanding of your pastimes in his poem glorifying Haridāsa Ṭhākura:

He reasons ill who says that Vaiṣṇavas die
When thou art living still in sound!
The Vaiṣṇavas die to live, and living try
To spread the holy name around!

In support of a straightforward literal acceptance of the truth of this verse, you also told us in your lecture on Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s Appearance Day, March 2, 1975, in Atlanta:

It is not that he is dead and gone. That is not spiritual understanding. Even ordinary living being, he does not die (*na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*). And what to speak of such exalted authorized personality like Bhaktisiddhānta. He is seeing. I never feel that I am alone. Of course, when I came to your country without any friend, without any means . . . Practically, just like a vagabond I came. But I had full faith that “My Guru Mahārāja is with me.” I never lost this faith. And that is fact. There are two words, *vāñī* and *vapuḥ*. *Vāñī*

means words, and *vapuḥ* means this physical body. So *vāṇī* is more important than the *vapuḥ*. *Vapuḥ* will be finished. This is material body. It will be finished. That is the nature. But if we keep to the *vāṇī*, to the words of spiritual master, then we remain very fixed up. It doesn't matter.

Is it possible we can also have such full faith in your “exalted authorized personality” and “never feel that I am alone”? Is it possible we can accept your divine words to be you yourself in person? Is it possible we can faithfully follow in your footsteps as our ISKCON founder-*ācārya* and ISKCON head? By your mercy, it must be possible.

Otherwise why did you repeatedly warn us to strictly follow Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura's words in the second stanza of his “Śrī-guru-vandanā:” *Ār nā koriho mane āśā?*

Do not try to research anything. That is final—*Ār nā koriho mane āśā*.

Take this very seriously. *Ār nā koriho mane āśā*: “No more. Stop any other desires.” Then your life is successful.

No more desires, *Ār nā koriho mane āśā*. This is devotee. Except service of Kṛṣṇa, there is no other thing. That is devotee.

Ār nā koriho mane āśā. So guru, your guru, has said that “You chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, observe these rules.” Do that, don't speculate, and you will understand everything.

Ār nā koriho mane āśā. You rascal, you do not desire anything else. Are you not singing daily? But do you understand the meaning?

Ār nā koriho mane āśā. Don't go anywhere else. Take this faithfully, the orders of guru. You are singing daily.

Ār nā koriho mane āśā. This is faith, strong faith.

Ār nā koriho mane āśā. And if you plan something, [chuckles] “I am very expert in planning; I shall do this, I shall do that, not serve Kṛṣṇa,” then you remain impure.

Ār nā koriho mane āśā. Simply whatever you hear from the guru, try to execute it. *Ār nā koriho mane āśā.* Do not expect anything more.

Guru-mukha-padma-vākya, cittete koriyā aikya / Ār nā koriho mane āśā. Do not try to foolishly search anything and waste your time. Hear from a bona fide spiritual master, and that is final knowledge. That is final knowledge.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this auspicious day of your 124th Vyāsa-pūjā, please bless me that I will now set out to strictly follow you (*Ār nā koriho mane āśā*) and teach others so that your ISKCON mission will conquer all directions, and “a flood of transcendental ecstasy will certainly cover the land. When all the sinful, miserable living entities become happy, the Vaiṣṇava’s desire is then fulfilled.” (*Prayer Unto the Lotus Feet of Kṛṣṇa*, written on the *Jaladuta*)

Your humble servant,
Mahāvishnu Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my humble obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet.

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

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

Is this offering too late? It might not get published, but even if it isn't there would be no loss, as on this path there is no loss or diminution. And you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, know me, and I write this for you to read. And as I am writing, you already know. At the same time, I like to see it heard or read in your presence—maybe that is the essence.

I am writing at your Almviks Gard project in Sweden. It is a beautiful place—a farm in the countryside with forests and lakes surrounding it. And fields for the cows to graze in. There are houses and families. We call it a village.

The other day I took a long walk in the forests to reconnect with some old trails. Most of those trails are marked, but I looked for one specific trail that was not much used and kind of difficult to find the beginning of, and that was kind of overgrown. Long, long ago there cows walked there, freely traversing the forest and then coming back to their respective small farms in the evening. So what I looked for was one of those old cow trails of the previous centuries. I found the start of the old trail I was looking for where I expected, but to my surprise the trail was now clearly marked with yellow dots on the trees. Someone had marked the trail since the last time I was there. A pleasant surprise. With the help of the marked trees I could now quickly and safely return home to Almviks Gard and our temple there.

It made me think how you opened up the path back home, back to Godhead. You came and marked out the proper way back to the spiritual world—a path forgotten, neglected, unknown to modern mankind. You knew it and you marked it for us to easily find and traverse back to home, back to Godhead.

And now another day. I am sitting in my room and looking out the window, and I can see how a new set of oxen are being trained to walk together and work together. It's as much a learning experience

for the trainer as for the trained. With time, progress has been made, but more is to come.

The challenge is to depend on the oxen, our fathers, who peacefully and patiently wait for us to get our act together—an act that includes the oxen who walk on their four legs, representing honesty, austerity, mercy, and cleanliness. May their four legs and what they stand for be our shelter.

In the temple something happened during the winter: we came to end of the Twelfth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, as we have been reading it from beginning to end. And now we have started the *Bhāgavatam* anew, from the beginning. Sooner or later we will come to the passage where Parīkṣit confronts the personality of Kali, and there we will again meet the bull of dharma.

And then one day . . . Kṛṣṇa will blow His bugle . . . and call us home . . . to meet you and Kṛṣṇa there.

Please keep us in a corner of your heart.

Your disciple and attempting servant,

Smita Kṛṣṇa Swami

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

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

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

In your poem called *Mārkinē Bhāgavata-dharma* (“Krishna Consciousness in the West”), which you wrote while on the *Jaladuta* after it docked in Boston on September 17, 1965, you beautifully expressed the mood of surrender to the will of Lord Kṛṣṇa. As stated by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, “Mind, body, family, and whatever else is mine I have surrendered at Your lotus feet, O youthful son of Nanda!” In your poem you expressed how a devotee should feel just like an instrument depending on the Lord’s mercy. I cannot elaborate more, so I would like to include the translation of the poem.

“My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, You are so kind upon this useless soul, but I do not know why You have brought me here. Now you can do whatever You like with me.

“But I guess You have some business here, otherwise why would You bring me to this terrible place?

“Most of the population here is covered by the material modes of ignorance and passion. Absorbed in material life, they think themselves very happy and satisfied, and therefore they have no taste for the transcendental message of Vāsudeva. I do not know how they will be able to understand it.

“But I know Your causeless mercy can make everything possible because You are the most expert mystic.

“How will they understand the mellows of devotional service? O Lord, I am simply praying for Your mercy so that I will be able to convince them about Your message.

“All living entities have come under the control of the illusory energy by Your will, and therefore, if You like, by Your will they can also be released from the clutches of illusion.

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

“The words of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* are Your incarnation, and if a sober person repeatedly receives it with submissive aural reception, then he will be able to understand Your message.

“It is said in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.2.17-21):

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramātmā [Supersoul] in everyone’s heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted. By regular attendance in classes on the *Bhāgavatam* and by rendering of service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact. As soon as irrevocable loving service is established in the heart, the effects of nature’s modes of passion and ignorance, such as lust, desire, and hankering, disappear from the heart. Then the devotee is established in goodness, and he becomes completely happy. Thus established in the mode of unalloyed goodness, the man whose mind has been enlivened by contact with devotional service to the Lord gains positive scientific knowledge of the Personality of Godhead in the stage of liberation from all material association. Thus the knot in the heart is pierced, and all misgivings are cut to pieces. The chain of fruitive actions is terminated when one sees one’s self and one’s master.

He will become liberated from the influence of the modes of ignorance and passion and thus all inauspicious things accumulated in the core of the heart will disappear.

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

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

“O spiritual master of all the worlds! I can simply repeat Your

message, so if You like You can make my power of speaking suitable for their understanding.

“Only by Your causeless mercy will my words become pure. I am sure that when this transcendental message penetrates their hearts they will certainly feel 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.

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

Signed—the most unfortunate, insignificant beggar
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami,
on board the ship *Jaladuta*, Commonwealth Pier,
Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A.
dated 18th of September, 1965”

In recent years, by your mercy, we have been pushing forward college preaching, which you were so fond of, with some of our *brahmacārīs*. They are regularly preaching in universities across India, and the results are promising and encouraging. There is also regular college preaching across Indonesia, and although it is a predominately Muslim country, the results are hopeful. In a letter to Rudra Dāsa dated 9 March 1970, you stated how important preaching to the younger generation is:

I have heard that there is very good potential for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in Toronto, especially among the large younger population. So I think this will be a good field for you to work enthusiastically.

In a letter written to Bahudak dāsa in January 1976, you expressed similar delight: “I was very glad to learn how our devotees are coming out victorious in the preaching to the university professors and students.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you were asked many a time what would please you. You often mentioned that you would be pleased if someone could become Kṛṣṇa conscious. At other times you replied that if someone preached the message of Caitanya Mahārabhu,

it would definitely please you. I am trying to do this as far as my capacity allows, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Since you specifically instructed me to preach in Bangladesh, I go there regularly to spread this movement across the country. For the last fifteen years I have been regularly visiting Indonesia, another Muslim country. To our astonishment, devotees hold twenty-five Ratha-yātrās across the islands of Indonesia every year! At certain places, like Batam, we have been amazed to see that even the government supports the Ratha-yātrā. To attract tourism in Batam, they advertised the Ratha-yātrā with a big picture of Lord Jagannātha and also lent financial help. In Cligeon they included the beautiful face of Jagannātha in the annual carnival parade logo. Even the remotest places, such as Gorontalo, with a 98% Islamic population, are getting the mercy of the Lord. Recently there were a few preaching programs conducted there, and the response was wonderful. Many Muslim students took your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and honored *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*. A similar response was shown in Bandung, another city in Indonesia, where many young boys and girls of the Islamic faith took your books and showed keen interest in Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy. It is very encouraging to see people of other faiths taking your books and inquiring about the path of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. We heard that you were very much pleased with devotees preaching in difficult areas, and we are trying to do our best to please you.

Please give us strength, courage, and conviction. Let your words inspire us and keep us always on the path of preaching.

Your fallen, insignificant,

Subhāg Swami

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

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

This past year we have seen unprecedented changes in the world. First we had rioting take place on an almost daily basis for a few months in the usually conservative and peaceful Hong Kong. You had visited Hong Kong in the 1970s so you are very acquainted with the atmosphere there. You initiated your first and only Chinese disciple there, and you saw him as a gentleman. However the return of Hong Kong to China rule has given rise to serious tension and conflict. The usually hard working and respectable Chinese of Hong Kong, particularly the student and youth population turned aggressive and voiced strong disapproval of being part of China. Several thousand have been arrested and imprisoned or fined but there is no sign of any solution to the problem. I am reminded of the words of Mother Bhūmi in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto 12, in *The Bhūmi-Gītā*, where she laughed at the foolish kings killing each other in their attempts to conquer and rule the planet but who were unable to see their own inevitable death.

It was expected that with the coming of the winter and the festive season we could all relax but it was not to be. A deadly virus infected many and took the lives of several. It seemed to originate in a city in China but within a month spread around the globe. It is pandemic. Something we had not seen in our lives. Airlines have been forced to stop their service, cities around the world have closed down and everywhere people are advised to stay indoors and keep away from any public gathering. Just while writing this homage India's Prime Minister Modi has ordered a nationwide 21-day shutdown. Everyone has been told to stay at home and not to come out unless there is absolute necessity. I am truly fortunate to be in Māyāpur at this time. Here, I have the best spiritual atmosphere and the best association from such stalwart disciples of Your Divine Grace as Jayapatāka Swami the twin brothers Jananivāsa and Pañkajāṅghri

Prabhus, and many others all highly dedicated to your mission.

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

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

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

You Divine Grace would often tell us that this modern civilisation could never last. Now, suddenly we are seeing how it is all falling apart, suddenly, without warning. We heard you tell us not to put faith in this materialistic lifestyle and now we can see clearly why you implored us to take up seriously this mission of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

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

We can only hope that the vast numbers of your transcendental literature which we have been distributing over the last fifty years can find the hands of worthy persons who may now be ready to hear and accept the conclusions of Vedic scriptures.

We also pray that we can guide them and assist them in their pursuit of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

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

Your unworthy disciple,

Tridandi Bikshu Bhakti Vigna Vinasha Narasimha

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Vedic Planetarium directly challenges the accepted modern version of the universe and establishes the legitimacy of the Vedic version, using science to counteract the dominance of modern atheism. Śrīla Prabhupāda proposed to exhibit the universe in an exposition, which would take the viewer on a journey through the material cosmos to the spiritual world, all according to the

descriptions found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The temple will also house the Institute of Vedic Cosmology, which will continue research work and hold discussions about the Vedic account of the universe.

If we can explain the passing seasons, eclipses,
phases of the moon, passing of day and night, etc.,
then it will be very powerful propaganda...

(Letter to Svarūpa Dāmodara, 27 April 1976)

We shall show the Vedic conception of the planetary system
within this material world and above the material world.

(Morning walk, 27 February 1976, Māyāpur)

It will be a glorious exhibition of India's Vedic culture
that will attract visitors from all over the world.

(Letter to Deputy Secretary S. L. Dhani, 14 November 1976)

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda's eternal servant,

Bhaktivaibhava Swami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

*Prabhupāda!
kṛpā-bindu diyā, koro' ei dāse,
tṛṇāpekḥā ati hīna
sakala sahane, bala diyā koro',
nija-māne sprḥā-hīna*

("Gurudev" by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura)

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

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

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

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

in his song “*Gurudev*.”

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

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

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

When the governor of Bengal, Sir John Anderson, visited Māyāpur in January 1935, arrangements for receiving him and his gubernatorial party were made by a Calcutta hotel, which on Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī’s order supplied meat and other items according to British taste. When Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī suggested a similar approach for foreign preaching, Śrīmad Śrīdhara Mahārāja protested that it would invite criticism. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī replied, “I decided all these things thousands of births ago. We have to do anything and everything for serving Mahāprabhu.” On another occasion he had cigarettes provided for a visiting German scholar. (*Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava*)

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

*tad-vāg-visargo janatāgha-viplavo
yasmin prati-ślokaṁ abaddhavaty api
nāmāny anantasya yaśo ’nikitāni yat
śṛṅvantī gāyanti grṇanti sādhaḥ*

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.11)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I pray that we, your followers, both *dīkṣā* and *śikṣā* disciples, may be as you are, without material desires or aspirations, simply desiring to please you by carrying out your mission and

being ready to innovate without deviating from the principles you have taught us.

Therefore let me with all my earnestness pray at the lotus feet of my divine master to allow me to suffer the lot for which I am destined due to my past misdoings, but to let me have this power of recollection: that I am nothing but a tiny servant of the almighty Absolute Godhead, realized through the unflinching mercy of my divine master. Let me therefore bow down at his lotus feet with all the humility at my command.

(Śrīla Prabhupāda's homage to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura on the occasion of his Vyāsa-pūjā celebration in February, 1936)

Your eternal servant,

Bīr Kṛṣṇa dās Goswami

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-salākayā
cakṣur unmilitam yena tasmai śrī-gurave namah*

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

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

*mūkaṁ karoti vācālaṁ paṅguṁ laṅghayate girim
yat-kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande śrī gururṁ dina-tāraṇam*

My dear and most respected spiritual master and eternal father,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

That you successfully gave this most valuable gift to the entire world proves that you were empowered with *kṛṣṇa-śakti*, which you combined with your indomitable determination. Was there

opposition? Were there obstacles? Setbacks? Challenges? Forces of Kali of so many varieties presented themselves before you, which you had to contend with, despite your being Kṛṣṇa's empowered and protected instrument, dedicated exclusively to manifesting in unadulterated form the *Bhāgavata* vision within this world. Did that deter your determination? Not in the slightest!

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

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

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

Your humble servant,

Romapāda Swami

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*

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

On your most important appearance day, let me reflect on the answer to an intriguing question a young devotee asked you, serendipitously, in the very town where I grew up:

Is it possible for someone to make it within one life?

Your answer was both sobering and encouraging:

It is possible in one second, provided you are serious. It is not difficult... There is no such formula that 'One can be Kṛṣṇa conscious after so many years.' No. There is no such formula. One cannot become Kṛṣṇa conscious even after millions of births, and one can become within [a] second Kṛṣṇa conscious. But on the other edge, within this life we can become perfect in Kṛṣṇa consciousness if we take it seriously. — Hamburg, 1969

When I first read your answer (as I had not yet joined the Movement to attend the lecture where this question and answer took place), I asked myself what it could mean to take up the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Today, more than fifty years later, I continue to reflect on what is that exact process to become Kṛṣṇa conscious in "one second."

The Process You Came to Deliver

In studying your delivery of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the world, I have always been heartened to see how much of what you gave

was both clear and achievable. First and foremost, you taught: Hear about Kṛṣṇa (*śravaṇam*) and glorify Kṛṣṇa (*kīrtanam*).

Śravaṇam

You began your worldwide preaching with the main purpose to inform the misdirected modern world about Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and realizations of the *paramparā* were your prime sources of information and inspiration. You endeavoured so hard to translate the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and set up a network of temples and projects where this extraordinary work could be heard and learned thoroughly as well as distributed to all others. Your faith in the “claims” of the *Bhāgavatam* was unshakeable:

*śrīmad-bhāgavate mahā-muni-kṛte kim vā parair īśvaraḥ
sadyo hṛdy avarudhyate 'tra kṛtibhiḥ śuśrūṣubhis tat-kṣaṇāt*

“This beautiful *Bhāgavatam*, compiled by the great sage Vyāsadeva, is sufficient in itself for God realization. What is the need of any other scripture? As soon as one attentively and submissively hears the message of *Bhāgavatam*, by this culture of knowledge, the Supreme Lord is established within one’s heart.” — *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.2

I am experiencing now, for almost fifty years, that when I read the *Bhāgavatam*, “the fire of lamentation, illusion and fearfulness” is at once extinguished. I then immediately feel inspired to think about Kṛṣṇa, “as He is.” And this experience is there naturally for all those who follow your advice to regularly and attentively read the *Bhāgavatam* with faith.

Kīrtanam

mahā-bhāgavatā nityaṁ kalau kurvanti kīrtanam

“During Kali-yuga, the great devotees of the Lord always engage in *kīrtana*, chanting the Lord’s holy names.” — *Skanda Purāṇa* (as quoted in in the BBT purport of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.37)

Right from the very beginning you demonstrated your great faith in the chanting the holy names.

mahā-bhāgavatā nityaṁ kalau kurvanti kīrtanam

“During Kali-yuga the great devotees of the Lord always engage in *kīrtana*, chanting the Lord’s holy names.” — *Skanda Purāṇa* as quoted in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.37 in the BBT purport

The *Bhāgavatam* says:

“...Enlightened persons [unexpectedly] worship Kali-yuga because, in this fallen Age, all perfection of life can easily be achieved by the performance of *saṅkīrtana*.” — *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.5.36

One might ask, why is Śrī Kṛṣṇa *saṅkīrtana* especially recommended for Kali-yuga? Why are other devotional services not as strongly recommended?

The answer is eye-opening: In Kali-yuga, people can easily muster the qualification to chant. More than in other ages! Because of the intense suffering that is a distinguishing factor of Kali-yuga – an Age where everyone is severely handicapped as far as the normal qualifications for spiritual life are concerned, and they are incessantly attacked by wars, famines, plagues (including the coronavirus), widespread degradation, insanity, and so much more, people can therefore easily summon up the main qualification for chanting. In their *japa* and *kīrtana*, they can find in themselves the helplessness that brings about dependence on Kṛṣṇa. Humbled by the external circumstances and their own weaknesses, the conditioned souls who have awakened to their plight can actually cry out to the holy name and surrender to this most merciful form of Kṛṣṇa. If they do so, they will immediately feel *paramam śāntim* or supreme peace and attain *parāṁ gatim* – the highest goal.

Conclusion

The process of *śravaṇam* (hearing) and *kīrtanam* (chanting) are thus so very effective that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura remarked:

When a devotee understands that the process of *bhakti-yoga* is complete in itself, and he becomes absorbed in hearing and chanting the glories of the Lord, the supremely merciful Personality of Godhead affectionately lifts such a first-class devotee onto His own lap. —
Quoted in BBT purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.51

O’ Śrīla Prabhupāda, just like a little child can only speak words which his father and mother have put into his mouth, I lack original words. I can only quote and speak things that you have taught me. But no problem! Let me say just three words of my own composition about the process you have given to me and to the world:

It 100% works!

I know I can never repay you or show my indebtedness in an appropriate way:

*yair īdṛśī bhagavato gatiṛ ātma-vāda
ekāntato nigamibhiḥ pratipādītā nah
tuṣyantv adabhra-karuṇāḥ sva-kṛtena nityam
ko nāma tat pratikaroti vinoda-pātram*

“How can such persons, who have rendered unlimited service by explaining the path of self-realization in relation to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and whose explanations are given for our enlightenment with complete conviction and Vedic evidence, be repaid except by folded palms containing water for their satisfaction? Such great personalities can be satisfied only by their own activities, which are distributed amongst human society out of their unlimited mercy.” — *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.22.47

Kindly tolerate my spiritual slowness and keep me engaged in your lifesaving mission of disseminating the process of *śravaṇam-kīrtanam*.

*With deepest gratitude,
Your humble servant,
Sacinandana Swami*

*vande 'ham śrī-guroḥ śrī-yuta-pāda-kamalaṁ śrī-gurūn vaiṣṇavānīs ca
śrī-rūpaṁ sāgrajātaṁ saha-gaṇa-raghunāthānaitaṁ taṁ sa-jīvam
sādvaitaṁ sāvadhūtaṁ parijana-sahitaṁ kṛṣṇa-caitanya-devaṁ
śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pādān saha-gaṇa-lalitā-śrī-viśākhānaitānīs ca*

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

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

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

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

The spiritual master is the external manifestation of the *caitya-guru*, or the spiritual master sitting in

everyone’s heart. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.8.44, purport]

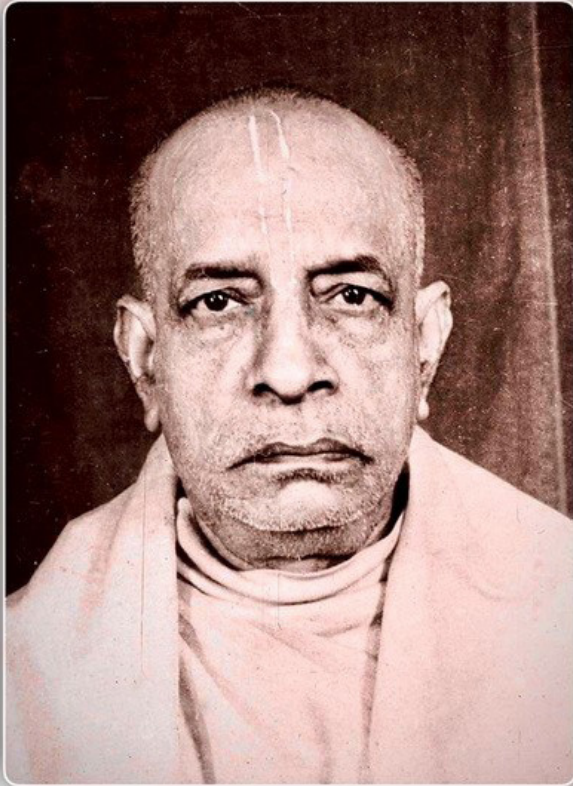
The spiritual master is as good as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and therefore one who is very serious about spiritual advancement must regard the spiritual master in this way. Even a slight deviation from this understanding can create disaster in the disciple’s Vedic studies and austerities. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

(1) **“not my will, but thine, be done”**

Although this phrase is, of course, reported as having emanated

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

(2) “sold-out”

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

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

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

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

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

*bhavāntam evānucaran niranāraḥ
praśānta-niḥśeṣa-mano-rathāntaraḥ
kadāham aikāntika-nitya-kiṅkaraḥ
praharṣayiṣyāmi sanātha-jīvitam*

“By serving You constantly, one is freed from all material desires

and is completely pacified. When shall I engage as Your permanent eternal servant and always feel joyful to have such a fitting master?" (*Stotra-ratna* 43)

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

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

In summary, while it may be offensive to think of one's spiritual master as a "sold-out animal," there can be no harm in considering him to be sold out to his guru. Indeed, nothing inspires me to surrender as a "sold-out animal" to His Divine Grace more than knowing that he is totally sold out to his *guru* and the entire *paramparā*. After all, we have not been asked to join a personality cult. Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke of "the fundamental principle of *gurudeva*" and that "there is only one *guru*." It's a package deal, so to speak. Surrendering to Śrīla Prabhupāda means surrendering to the disciplic succession he represents. A large part of what makes Śrīla Prabhupāda so personally wonderful is that he has introduced us to—and is the immediate face of—a succession of most wonderful realized masters.

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

Gaṇapati dāsa Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace, most merciful savior of fallen and confused humanity.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please give us understanding and humility so we may help you in your mission without causing disturbance to others, especially Vaiṣṇavas and Vaiṣṇavīs. You always were aware how your words and actions would affect others and were able to speak and act in ways that would best benefit them. Kindly bless us with that awareness and ability.

Your eternal servant,

Anand Kishore das Babaji

*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 lotus feet.

One of the many well-known sayings you quote in your preaching is:

“Time and tide wait for no man.”

As the years are passing, the simple truth behind these words becomes clearer to me by the day, especially this year, when I finally arrived at the same age that you had when you embarked on your journey to the West. For most people this is not the time for new adventures. Rather, it is the time for retirement, for sitting on park benches lost in memories, or relaxing in cafes, playing cards or dominoes, or watching TV. As life’s sun is setting and bodily strength is dwindling, who would even dream of starting a worldwide preaching movement?

You did. For over 40 years you had been meditating on how to carry out the order of your spiritual master, and you were determined to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the English speaking world, no matter what obstacles would come your way. Speaking from your own experience, you would encourage us on different occasions: “Try your best and Kṛṣṇa will help you.” With that confidence you were determined to try. Success or failure? That was in Kṛṣṇa’s hands.

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

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

Yes, you had actually created an institution. Within the short period of only five years you had established an international society. An

amazing feat. But you humbly dismissed this idea:

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

"Time and tide wait for no man."

Whenever you quote this proverb in your books and lectures, you point out two main aspects of time: its incalculable value and its powerful influence. As Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, He Himself is Time, the great destroyer. Regarding the value of time, you said in 1975, in Vṛndāvana:

So Cāṅkya Paṇḍita said, *svaṛṇa-koṭibhiḥ*. *Svaṛṇa* means gold coins, and *koṭi* means ten millions. So suppose today is 6th December. Now seven o'clock, morning. Seven o'clock, 6th December, passed. Can you bring it again by paying one crores of gold coins? Hm? "Let me get back again seven o'clock, 6th December, 1975, again"! No. It is gone forever. So just see the value! You cannot get back even a moment of your life by paying millions and millions of dollars. How time is valuable, just calculate. Therefore Cāṅkya Paṇḍita says, *sa cet nirarthakam nītaḥ ka no hānis tato 'dhika*. If you waste your time, such valuable time, for nothing, just imagine how much loser you are. But we do not know. Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu, *kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*: "Your life is meant for chanting. Therefore you should simply chant –*sadā*, always, consistently." This is the advice. This is properly using the moments of time.

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

A son is born. Oh, you are very glad, 'I have got a son.' But if you study philosophically, no, it is not birth. He is not born, death is born. Because the growing of the child means he is dying. It is dying. The dying process. The very day, the

very moment the child is born, the dying process begins. So we do not know that it is not birth, it is death. This is called *māyā*. This is called illusion, that death is born and we are jolly that there is birth of a child. This is called *māyā*.

In a similar vein you would unmask the phantasmagoria of youth while commenting on the story of Purañjana in the Fourth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.27.5 and 13):

The words *navam vayah* are significant in this verse. They indicate the period of youth from age sixteen to thirty. These thirteen or fifteen years of life are years in which one can very strongly enjoy the senses. When one comes to this age he thinks that life will go on and that he will simply continue enjoying his senses, but, 'Time and tide wait for no man.' The span of youth expires very quickly. One who wastes his life simply by committing sinful activities in youth immediately becomes disappointed and disillusioned when the brief period of youth is over...

Since time and tide wait for no man, time is herein called Candavega, which means 'very swiftly passing away.' As time passes, it is calculated in terms of years. One year contains 360 days, and the soldiers of Candavega herein mentioned represent these days. Time passes swiftly; Candavega's powerful soldiers of Gandharvaloka very swiftly carry away all the days of our life.

One of the fallacies of youth is that the profound truth of these statements remains somewhat elusive. Although one may observe the effects of time all around in the environment, the covering potency of illusion makes one believe that time influences everything and everybody except for myself. That was certainly my personal experience. But, as time passes and the body is being attacked by the powerful soldiers of Candavega, the true nature of time becomes more and more conspicuous. Gradually one begins to understand what Kṛṣṇa means when He tells Arjuna that He is Time, the great destroyer of the worlds. And of course, Kṛṣṇa does not have to do anything personally. He has His agents to do the work for Him. One of them is the daughter of Time, Kālakanyā, better known as Jarā, old age. She is the great destroyer of bodies, from celestial to microbic, and as Kṛṣṇa also tells us in *Bhagavad-gītā*, old age is one of

the four intrinsic miseries of material existence. However, devotional service is so powerful that it can even transform fearful and ugly old age into a joyful and attractive personality.

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

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

If a person is Kṛṣṇa conscious, he can work like a young man even if he is seventy-five or eighty years old. Thus the daughter of Kāla (Time) cannot overcome a Vaiṣṇava. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī engaged in writing *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* when he was very old, yet he presented the most wonderful literature about the activities of Lord Caitanya. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī began their spiritual lives at a very old age, that is, after they retired from their occupations and family lives. Yet they presented many valuable literatures for the advancement of spiritual life.

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

Almost fifty years ago, when I read these words for the first time, I was not in a position to grasp their full scope being trapped in a

youthful body. Now, by your grace, the profound meaning of these words is unfolding more and more with every passing year. Jarā has been knocking on my door for quite some time. I tried to ignore her, but she is very persistent. She wants to marry me, although I have accepted the renounced order of life. What shall I do? She is not someone to be refused. Therefore, I will receive her with open arms and give her shelter, having full confidence in your words that she will help me to become fearless and happy.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Ever grateful for your life-saving instructions,

Bhakti Gauravani Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you my Lord and Master.

Before leaving India and on arriving in the West, to embark on a seemingly impossible mission to start a worldwide society for Krishna Consciousness, you first sought the blessings from your predecessor *ācāryas* and Lord Kṛṣṇa. You knew that anything was achievable with their support. You were confident that actions rooted in good character would yield the best outcome, even when you cannot see how.

You never hesitate in your purpose or waver in your determination, and although fearless, you appeared to be momentarily overcome by the first sight of an American city. You realized and admitted your helpless situation and so prayed to Lord Kṛṣṇa and your spiritual master. You prayed:

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

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

Only by Your causeless mercy will my words become pure. I am sure that when this transcendental message penetrates their hearts, they will certainly feel 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.

In utter humility, You prayed that Kṛṣṇa makes your words suitable to enlighten us or inspire us, with an appreciation for His message. In your sincere love and compassion, and intimate relationship with Kṛṣṇa, you prayed for our deliverance, and Kṛṣṇa reciprocated by investing in you all wealth of empowerment. In the mood of complete surrender, you could see that Kṛṣṇa was doing everything.

Once, while giving a public program, one student questioned you with a challenging mentality. Later he became a devotee, and you both met again. You remembered him from the program. The devotee then wondered why he became a devotee because before he had no faith? You said, "because I prayed for you. I prayed to Kṛṣṇa that this soul might be aware of the importance of Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Based on these considerations, it should be evident to any honest person that the qualification for the topmost devotion can be nothing less than the topmost faith. It is the opinion of the leading authority, Lord Kṛṣṇa, that devotees are transcendently situated to attain the type of devotion and transparency that you exhibited.

One who is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brāhmaṇa and becomes fully joyful. He never laments nor desires to have anything; he is equally disposed to every living entity. In that state, he attains pure devotional service unto Me. (*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* 18.54)

I would like to think there is only a transparent veil that separates me from Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, However, it is more likely a heavy thick curtain. As a disciple, I must admit my feeling of helplessness and total dependence. I am trying to be of some use to you and your mission, but it is apparent that it is just a cheap imitation to impress others.

What is more, is that I am not transcendently situated, I am devoid of any compassion, and I am full of selfish interest. I am not honest, and in my worship and prayer, I have no devotion. Due to a wall of indifference within my mind, I cannot admit that whatever I am doing is only by your grace. Overshadowed by false ego, I am thinking how wonderful I am at everything I do. And above all, I cannot grasp how to be personal and intimate with you and Lord Kṛṣṇa.

You were indeed an achiever, but at the same time, you submitted yourself to be a receiver too. By analyzing the difference between self-empowerment and genuine empowerment, we can understand that real empowerment is not so cheap.

Therefore, if I want to move beyond the point where I am at present, I must submit myself wholly to you and seek your help. My situation is desperate and sees no other solution. Just as you are successful, shaking the foundation of this world to make

changes, please, I beg you to shake the foundation of this lowly servant who has no other shelter than your lotus feet. Only by your causeless mercy will I become released from the clutches of illusion and adequately serve you. I am now ready to be a receiver of your unlimited kindness upon me.

With a humble heart, I can then take shelter of Kṛṣṇa's words, and with a humble heart, I can then cry for the shelter of Kṛṣṇa's holy names. Please consider and do as you feel fit. But you are my only hope.

Your humble servant,
Dhirasanta dasa Goswami

*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 humble obeisances. All glories to you.

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

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

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

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

māyā is always ready to attack. Always. So we have

to take this injunction, this anti-vaccine, Hare Kṛṣṇa. *Enechi auṣadhi māyā nāśibāro lāgi'*. That song, *Jīv Jāgo, Jīv Jāgo*. "I have brought this medicine for killing this Hong Kong flu of *māyā*." [laughter] *Enechi auṣadhi māyā nāśibāro lāgi', hari-nāma mahā-mantra lao . . .* Now you take. This is greatest contribution of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, to fight against this attack of material influence. Everyone is subjected. [Initiation lecture and marriage ceremony, 4 June 1969, New Vrindaban]

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

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

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

Somehow, over the years I have drifted from the ideals you gave and have often become caught up in the same spirit of lassitude and

lethargy that afflicts the whole world, forgetting the goal of life and how to achieve it.

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

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

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

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

In these trying times it is easy to forget Kṛṣṇa’s message and become absorbed in speculations, but where is the time to waste? You taught genuine compassion. The *jīvas* are in fear and ignorance, and no material adjustment will remove them. Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, infuse genuine compassion into my dirty heart. In every verse of your prayer to your spiritual master called *Viraha Aṣṭakam*, you wrote “O Śrīla Prabhupāda! You personally suffer to see the suffering of the fallen conditioned souls.” The same applies to you—we saw

again and again how tears would role down your face as you felt the people’s suffering due to their forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa. What could be more relevant to our present situation than the deep spirit of your prayer—a heart-breaking compassion for the ignorant suffering *jīvas*, struggling aimlessly in the world of *māyā*? And I am thinking of my own problems.

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

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

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

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

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

Your servant.

Janānanda Goswami

*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*

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

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

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

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

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

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

\$71 and odds. Let me see how Kṛṣṇa arranges the things.

Despite the anticipated increase in rent of nine dollars per month (around \$90 in present-day value), you affirm that you are “not sorry.” You are confident that Kṛṣṇa will act in a way that will resolve the financial uncertainty.*

Within these simple expressions of affirmation for the progress of your mission amidst quotidian details of accounting and the times of sunrise and sunset, I find indices of the sort of mature, humble confidence that made your efforts successful. They also point to a long Vaiṣṇava tradition of humble confidence, tied to a sense of eager anticipation to meet Kṛṣṇa, as we see when Akrura excitedly journeys to Vṛndāvana to meet the Lord. Other, somewhat related sources of inspiration for me are accounts of situations where uncertainty regarding future events is mitigated with confidence in the Lord’s all-good intervention. At present I’m thinking particularly of Lord Brahmā’s uncertainty prior to the appearance of Varāhadeva.

As your mission expanded during the early years of your efforts beyond as well as within India, you expressed continuing confidence. During a morning walk in Māyāpur (April 3, 1975) you made such an “affirmation” that was also an invitation to anyone and everyone:

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

By saying “you come here,” your confidence is magnified by such a direct appeal. What’s more, your confidence is in your—and “our movement’s”—capacity to *give* all that could be required for a person’s well-being.

My prayer is that you may bless me to attain and maintain humble confidence in my own ability to be a positive contributor—a positive giver—to your mission of giving. To this end I allow myself to affirm my own fitness to be so. I further allow myself to affirm my potential, through your and Lord Kṛṣṇa’s grace, to hold fast to your vision of flourishing communities sustained internally by “philosophy, religion, [and] character” and outwardly by “sufficient food, shelter, [and] health.” And I pray that you allow me to continue

to participate in your ongoing powerful agency in fulfilling Kṛṣṇa's wondrous desire to establish consciousness of Him, the Lord in our hearts, deep in the hearts of all.

Your aspiring servant,
Krishna Kshetra Swami

* However, even as you waited to "see how Kṛṣṇa arranges" the situation, on September 1st, two months later, you expressed yourself further: **"Mr Gardiner wants to increase the rent to 71.000. He came and got it signed by me before the trustees. I think it is not just."**

My dearest and most beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most prostrated obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet on this most auspicious occasion of your 124th Vyāsa-pūjā celebration. All glories to you and your mission of delivering the universe!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as I sit to write this year's Vyāsa-pūjā offering, I am unable to remain oblivious to the fact that the world outside is gridlocked by an invisible enemy, the coronavirus global pandemic. More than two million people have been infected by the virus across the world. As the world is grappling with this pandemic, the full display of the five kinds of *ajñāna-vṛttaya*, ignorant engagements created by Lord Brahmā, have become evident in this virus outbreak:

“Self-deception, the sense of death, anger after frustration, the sense of false ownership, and the illusory bodily conception, or forgetfulness of one's real identity.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.12.2).

All of these five engagements are universally applicable, and when we are conditioned no one can escape them. With all of these in full action, the excruciating suffering encompassing the world right now is plain but painful to see. In your morning walks, lectures, and books, you saw the future as utterly predictable in the ways that these ignorant engagements will play out. Now we are observing the fulfillment of your prophetic words about the exploitation of nature, including the slaughtering of animals and the consumption of even creatures like bats and rats. The resultant backlash of such animalistic tendencies and atrocities is presenting itself with intense fury.

“Since I suffer when pinched or killed by others, I should not attempt to pinch or kill any other living entity. People do not know that because of killing innocent animals they themselves will have to suffer severe reactions from material nature.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.15.24, purport).

Clearly, we have hopelessly submitted to these ignorant engagements created by the Lord. The onslaught of the virus being experienced is proof that the conditioned souls have completely misused their independence. Śrīla Prabhupāda, by giving us

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam you have given us insight into the situation we are presently experiencing.

We now see and understand how “the living entity prefers to misuse his independence and glides down towards nescience.” Although “the all-merciful Lord first of all tries to protect him from the trap, but when the living entity persists in gliding down to hell, the Lord helps him to forget his real position.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.12.3, purport). At this moment the world is at its lowest point. It’s easy to see the material world as a place of suffering and distress. Instead of realizing that the situation at hand is reminding us to mend our ways and become more Kṛṣṇa conscious, we continue our forgetful ways. As you would often say, Śrīla Prabhupāda, “We have forgotten our real identity and that we are part and parcel of the Lord.” Our fear goes beyond the coronavirus. Out of sheer fear, governments in countries across the globe have shut down all nonessential facilities, including temples. The one place where we can seek solace from the entanglement of our material lives, from the five ignorant engagements, is unfortunately now off limits. People feel as if they are being hunted down by an invisible killer, which has already taken the lives of more than 120,000 people worldwide. In each birth, we have tried to save ourselves but were left frustrated. I recall you saying, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that our fear is due to not wanting to leave this world of “society, friendship, and love.”

We think we are invincible. The suffering that the body endures is addressed, and we believe that everything will be fine. But we deceive ourselves thinking we are better than we actually are, and play at being God, the real enjoyer. This is the greatest deception, because what we really need is Kṛṣṇa’s help.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, there is quarantine, self-isolation, and now national lockdowns. Practically everybody is living in suffocated anger and frustration. This anger has taken on many faces. Anger at being forced to “stay at home” against one’s will. Anger at being forced to adhere to rules that will hopefully curb the spread of this disease. Anger by those following the restrictions that is directed at those who do not. The disease has halted people’s socializing and crushed their material aspirations. People are now frustrated and avoid each other, as this disease drives them into the tiny dark holes they call “home.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.12.3 you state, “Although he created the different influences of nescience,

Lord Brahmā was not satisfied in performing such a thankless task, but he had to do it because most of the conditioned souls wanted it to be so.”

In response to the dark side of the Lord’s creation, which consists of the five kinds of nescient engagements, Brahmā next created the four Kumāras—Sanaka, Sananda, Sanātana, and Sanat. They were enlightened and guided by their father, Brahmā, and entrusted with the four principles of spiritual advancement, which would offset the ignorance of the conditioned souls, enlighten the world, and ultimately set them free. You describe these four principles in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.12.4:

[S]āṅkhya, or empirical philosophy for the analytical study of material conditions; *yoga*, or mysticism for liberation of the pure soul from material bondage; *vairāgya*, the acceptance of complete detachment from material enjoyment in life to elevate oneself to the highest spiritual understanding; and *tapas*, or the various kinds of voluntary austerities performed for spiritual perfection.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, following in the footsteps of the four Kumāras, you are representing Kṛṣṇa in the Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya disciplic succession. You were endowed with wonderful qualities, like that of the four Kumāras. The movement that you founded, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, is a benediction for this world. Now it is your teachings that will help us come out of this pandemic. It is your teachings that will counteract the present situation and secure the future for us and for humanity as a whole.

You once told us, “There was a big plague in Calcutta. So one *bābājī* went from door to door, house to house, and he had all the people—Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsi—chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. After that the plague was driven out.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you gave us the holy names of the Lord, which we vowed to chant daily. They may shut down the temples, but they’ll never shut down the chanting of the holy name. Through the use of modern communication technology, I am engaging in a daily *japa* session with devotees in more than a thousand locations across the world. All over the globe, other disciples and granddisciples of yours are preaching and reaching out to the world in even bigger and better ways. As a result, thousands of people are now listening to *kathās*, *kīrtanas*, and discourses in their homes. We are encouraging

devotees to convert their homes into temples, and we are appealing for the people of the world to spiritualize, now that socializing is not allowed. You showed by example that prayers are powerful, so, with your blessings, we Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees are praying for the complete well-being of the whole world. These transcendental sound vibrations will permeate the ether and purify the collective consciousness of people globally.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you correctly predicted the present suffering:

So you are suffering. You are maintaining so many slaughterhouse, and when it will be mature, there will be war, the wholesale murder. Finished. One atom bomb—finished. You'll have to suffer. Don't think that "Innocent animals, they cannot protest. Let us kill and eat." No. You'll be also punished. (Class on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.1.32, 31 May 1976, Honolulu)

You taught us how to prepare food, how to offer it to the Deity, and how to then honor that sanctified food. You gave us the right food to eat. The world needs this sanctified food more than ever. People are trapped—jobless and starving. The massive *prasādam* distribution project in Māyāpur that you initiated in the 1970s has proliferated globally, and ISKCON temples in India and other branches worldwide are distributing *prasādam* to those impacted by the lockdown.

The education that is imparted today teaches one to remain bound in ignorance. When we ignore something, it means we become ignorant of that. Worldwide, the Lord is ignored; hence we are in this horrific situation.

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

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, who has opened my eyes, which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance, with the torchlight of knowledge."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you educated us on behalf of the Lord that real knowledge is not about storing masses of unnecessary data but rather having the wisdom to see every human being with equal vision and to become attached to Kṛṣṇa. The world has trained us to be ignorant, but you, Śrīla Prabhupāda have given us the knowledge to alleviate that ignorance. You have so mercifully given us your

books, lectures, room and morning-walk conversations, and more than seven thousand personal letters. We also have many biographies of you. Through your life and teachings, the world is getting your direct personal association and instructions and getting armed with prescribed knowledge to counteract the onslaught of the calamities of the material world, like the current pandemic.

We are eternally grateful that you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, have given us the proper karma-free diet of sumptuous *prasādam*, along with devotional service, transcendental books, the potent holy name, enlightening knowledge, and accurate understanding.

As the world worsens and your mission becomes even more relevant, I am renewing my vows to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to carry forward your mission with energy and enthusiasm in whatever time I have left. I most humbly beg at your lotus feet for your mercy and blessings, so that I may fulfill all that I have pledged to do.

Your humble servant,

Lokanāth Swami

*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*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my life, as your humble servant.

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

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

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

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

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

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

As the embodiment of Kṛṣṇa's divine grace, you pleaded with us to rise above petty differences and distractions and unite to receive and distribute Lord Caitanya's mercy. In your compassion for all beings, you taught us the purest meaning of love. You entrusted

us with the holy names, a medicine that can immunize all of us from the pandemic of ignorance and all its subsequent sufferings. You opened the gates to the spiritual world, which is seated in our own hearts, where Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha will smile upon us and welcome us home.

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

An aspiring servant of your servants,

Rādhānāth Swami

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

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

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

Then and Now

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

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

The sense that Śrīla Prabhupāda's so mercifully right here, tho,
Depends upon to what extent his instructions we adhere to.
We can't expect consistent and continuous uplifting
If, estranged from the founder's mood and mission, we blithely go
a-drifting.

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

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

O most dear master, do you perhaps still remember me?

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

You might recall my anxious dad who somehow came to ask you
For advice on what to do about his wild offspring, all askew.
On that occasion Your Divine Grace euphemistically replied,
“There is something wrong with that boy,” (which Poppa Herb
could not deny).

“But we can fix him up!” you added, full of confidence and light,
Now (although I still have miles to go) this is somehow proving
right . . .

(And just wondering, imagining . . .)

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

Coming from the matchless gift of your pure śāstric teaching,

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

(So, I fervently pray . . .)

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

Your yet aspiring servant,

Bhakti Prabhupāda-vrata Dāmodara Swami

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

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

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

you cannot finish even within your life, so many books are there. And you'll forget reading other books.

Brian Singer: We'll just . . . ?

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

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

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

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

Recently an American lady asked me to recommend an English translation of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Of course in America there are so many editions of *Bhagavad-gītā* available in English, but as far as I have seen, not only in America but also in India, none of them can be strictly said to be authoritative because in almost every one of them the commentator has expressed his own opinions

without touching the spirit of *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is.

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

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

One can overcome all misconceptions and entanglement in the material world by practicing *bhakti-yoga*, and therefore Vyāsadeva, acting on the instruction of Śrī Nārada, has very kindly introduced *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to relieve the conditioned souls from the clutches of *māyā*. Lord Caitanya's spiritual master instructed Him, therefore, that one must read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* regularly and with scrutiny to gradually become attached to the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 7.73, purport]

Personal realization does not mean that one should, out of vanity, attempt to show one's own learning by trying to surpass the previous *ācārya*. One must have full confidence in the previous *ācārya*, and at the same time one must realize the subject matter so nicely that he can present the matter for the particular circumstances in a suitable manner. *The original purpose of the text must be maintained.* No obscure meaning should be screwed out of it, yet it

should be presented in an interesting manner for the understanding of the audience. This is called realization. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.4.1, purport; emphasis in original]

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

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

Persons conducted by such a conception of life can never get liberation from material bondage. But even a person perpetually condemned to the miseries of material existence can get relief from bondage if he simply agrees to hear only *kṛṣṇa-kathā*. In this Age of Kali, the process of hearing *kṛṣṇa-kathā* is the most effective means of gaining release from unwanted family affection and thus finding permanent freedom in life. The Age of Kali is full of sinful reactions, and people are more and more addicted to the qualities of this age, but simply by hearing and chanting of *kṛṣṇa-kathā* one is sure to go back to Godhead. Therefore, people should be trained to hear only *kṛṣṇa-kathā*—by all means—in order to get relief from all miseries. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.5.44, purport]

The holy name and the Lord are identical. One who is completely free from the clutches of *māyā* can understand this fact. This knowledge, which is achieved by the mercy of the spiritual master, places one on the supreme transcendental platform. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu presented Himself as a fool because prior to accepting the shelter of a spiritual master He could not understand that simply by chanting one can be relieved from all material conditions. But as soon as He became a faithful servant

of His spiritual master and followed his instructions, He very easily saw the path of liberation. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* must be understood to be devoid of all offenses. The ten offenses against the holy name are as follows: (1) to blaspheme a devotee of the Lord, (2) to consider the Lord and the demigods to be on the same level or to think that there are many gods, (3) to neglect the orders of the spiritual master, (4) to minimize the authority of scriptures (*Vedas*), (5) to interpret the holy name of God, (6) to commit sins on the strength of chanting, (7) to instruct the glories of the Lord’s name to the unfaithful, (8) to compare the chanting of the holy name with material piety, (9) to be inattentive while chanting the holy name, and (10) to be attached to material things in spite of chanting the holy name. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 7.73, purport]

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

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

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

their lives but also more time to search for spiritual solace.

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

Your servant,

Vilasa Manjari devi dasi

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, there is no way to repay you for the causeless mercy you have given the world. So again and again, and yet again, I pray to you that I may be able to continue to live in the abode of your transcendental books and to serve you by sharing with as many people as I can the bliss of hearing out loud your transcendental books and spreading this process of *bhakti-yoga* by associating with you, who are uniquely empowered to deliver the Absolute Truth to anyone who agrees to hear sincerely, submissively, without argument, from Your Divine Grace.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your eternal servant,

Keśava Bhāratī Dāsa Goswami

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace. All glories to our *guru-paramparā*.

I recently memorized a statement from the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 22, Chapter Summary: “The fact is that devotional service is bestowed by the blessings of a pure devotee (*sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ*). . . . [O]ne has to receive his mercy for one’s dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness to be awakened.”

From this statement I can understand that whatever advancement I’ve made, whatever position I’m in, is simply due to your causeless mercy.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura has also said that mercy (*kṛpā*) is more important than endeavor. Of course, endeavor is required, and therefore Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī writes in Text 3 of his *Nectar of Instruction*:

*utsāhān niścayād dhairyāt tat-tat-karma-pravartanāt
saṅga-tyāgāt sato vṛttech ṣaḍbhir bhaktiḥ prasidhyati*

There are six principles favorable to the execution of pure devotional service: (1) being enthusiastic, (2) endeavoring with confidence, (3) being patient, (4) acting according to regulative principles [such as *śravaṇam kīrtanam viśṇoḥ smaraṇam*—hearing, chanting, and remembering Kṛṣṇa], (5) abandoning the association of non-devotees, and (6) following in the footsteps of the previous *ācāryas*. These six principles undoubtedly assure the complete success of pure devotional service.

But ultimately, it is mercy that carries us through the different levels of *sāmānya-bhakti* to *bhāva-bhakti* to *prema-bhakti*.

Some context: Presently it is lockdown. I am fortunate to be staying at Govardhana Hill. The house I am staying in is behind the ISKCON Bhaktivedanta Ashram. Every evening I sit on the rooftop and watch the sun (Vivasvān) set over Girirāja Govardhana, and it is like a crimson silken veil that Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī might wear. The wind (Vāyu) blows pleasantly, and the moon (Candra) is shining. In two days it will be *pūrṇimā*, the full moon, and it is going to be a special pink moon.

During this lockdown I see children playing on the roofs. I offer my respects to the pigeons, to the starlings, to the *kalpa-vṛkṣa* trees, to the cows, to the dogs, to the pigs, to the Brajabāsīs, and even to the mosquitoes that are trying to taste my blood. I am fortunate to be at the best place in this material world, in the shade of Girirāja Govardhana.

When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu asked Rāmānanda Rāya where is the best place for a devotee to practice devotional service, Rāmānanda Rāya replied, *vraja-bhūmi vṛndāvana yāhān līlā-rāsa*: “He should live in the holy place known as Vṛndāvana or Vrajabhūmi, where the Lord performed His *rāsa* dance.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 8.254)

Somehow I am here at Govardhana Hill, at least until the lockdown is lifted. What better place to be than in the association of Girirāja Govardhana!

All this is your mercy upon me. Your mercy has also extended to tens of thousands of followers, admirers, disciples, granddisciples, and great-granddisciples.

I repeatedly commit myself to practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness within your personal mission, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. I pray that I can continue to get the association of your beloved disciples and granddisciples. Just today I got an email from one of my senior *śikṣā-gurus*, enquiring about my welfare. Due to your potency, you have made so many wonderful disciples, granddisciples, and great-granddisciples—to whom I repeatedly offer my respects. Simply remembering their holy names can purify me. As it is said in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Ādi 12.92), “Simply by remembering the names of all these Vaiṣṇavas, one can attain the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Indeed, simply by remembering their holy names, one achieves the fulfillment of all desires.”

Of course, this particular verse by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja refers to the Vaiṣṇavas listed in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā*, Chapters 10–12, but your beloved disciples and granddisciples are also exalted Vaiṣṇavas. So I can remember their names and chant their names—it is like offering oblations of ghee into the fire.

Thank you for allowing me to associate with you through your sound vibration—listening to your lectures and reading your commentaries on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Thank you for allowing me to worship your *mūrti* form.

I was extremely fortunate that when you visited South Africa in

October 1975 for nineteen days, I was able to serve you. At that time I was the *pūjārī* and engaged in service of offering you *guru-pūjā* and applying *candana* paste to your forehead.

I hope in the very near future I can get your personal association. Wherever you want me to go upon leaving this body is your desire and the desire of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. I would very much like to associate with you in Goloka Vṛndāvana. But if you want me to take birth again within ISKCON, then that will also be my pleasure. I would imagine it would be South Africa again, since I have been there attempting to preach and establish your mission for forty-six years.

In *Jaiva-dharma*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura states that a *madhyama-bhakta* does not desire to live and does not desire to die but simply wants to perform *bhajana* and accept whatever is the desire of Lord Caitanya.

Of course, I am not a *madhyama-bhakta*, nor am I an advanced *kaniṣṭha-bhakta*, but I am a beginning *kaniṣṭha-bhakta*. The prerequisite for becoming an *uttama-bhakta* is to become a *madhyama-bhakta*. And a prerequisite for becoming a *madhyama-bhakta* is to become a mature *kaniṣṭha-bhakta*. And a prerequisite for becoming a mature *kaniṣṭha-bhakta* is to become a beginning *kaniṣṭha-bhakta*, who at least bows down to the Deity and follows the principles.

I pray that your personal preaching mission will continue and become more established. And, in the mood of Vāsudeva Datta, I pray that all living entities can be relieved of their material desires and the reactions of their sinful activities and become liberated. It would seem that Vāsudeva Datta has influenced you in this particular mood, since you have preached extensively not only in India but also in the Western countries.

Thank you once again for engaging me in your service and in the service of our *guru-paramparā*. I unlimitedly take the dust of my godbrothers, godsisters, and your granddisciples, *koṭi koṭi* times.

Your servant,

Pārtha Sārathi Dās Goswami

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

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

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

Prabhupāda: It is already polluted.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Candramauli Swami

My dear lord and master Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!

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

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

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

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

You also said:

If you have got brain . . . You are trying to brainwash. Actually you have no brain . . . see how important it is, this movement. You are trying to brainwash. We are not brainwashing. We are giving you good brain. That is our mission—that you are so dull-headed

we have come to give you good brain. *Su-medhasaḥ. Yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ.* We have come to make you intelligent. Receive us well, for your benefit. Tell them like that. Bring one court case, and I shall sit . . . [I shall] go and sleep there and expose them, item by item. I know my case is strong. [Room conversation, 2 November 1976, Vṛndāvana]

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

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

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted to invent a way to capture the Māyāvādīs and others who did not take interest in the Krishna Consciousness movement. This is the symptom of an *ācārya*. An *ācārya* who comes for the service of the Lord cannot be expected to conform to a stereotype, for he must find the ways and means by which Kṛṣṇa consciousness may be spread.

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

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

Your eternal servant,
Bhakti Caitanya Swami

*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*

Your Picture on the Wall

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Your servant,
Bhaktimārga Swami

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Your insignificant disciple,

Rāmāi Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you.

There is more to a story than the narrator knows, more rhythm in a poem than the poet is aware of, more music to a song than the composer can hear. Ultimately, the souls of this world express their heartfelt emotions and creative potential with a yearning hope to resonate with the universal story of enduring love that conquers any separation caused by impending death. This longing for a reality beyond the confines of *samsāra* stirs in the depths of the archetypal world.

Inspiration has always been drawn from our planet, who adorns herself in attire perfectly appropriate for each season and occasion, from springtime flowers to autumn's crimson foliage. She forever infuses her various cultures with endless exuberance to celebrate the gift of life containing the treasure of a potential relationship with God. Such hope forever resides in our individual and collective remembrance.

By acknowledging and giving voice to the unspoken wonders of God's creation, we are ushered toward a greater Reality beyond the relative. There, shining forever in the spiritual sky, we are introduced to the Beauty Who is Truth, the Truth Who is Beauty.

The nature of this highest realm is revealed in the *Vedas*, yet even they are unable to understand the mysteries hidden within their own pages. Śrīla Vyāsadeva therefore continues to write, either directly or through the *ācāryas*, to reveal the inner treasure of *Vedānta*—the pastimes and precepts of the Golden Avatāra, who joyfully declares that Kṛṣṇa's Holy Name personifies the essence and goal of all the scriptures.

There is so much more to Śrīla Vyāsadeva and his representatives than that which they speak about themselves. Therefore, the predecessor is often known more fully through his successors. This was perfectly demonstrated in the offering you wrote to your beloved Guru Mahārāja for his Vyāsa-pūjā in 1935. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī was so pleased with your words that he shared them with the assembled devotees. One verse in particular clearly reveals the heart of your guru:

*Absolute is sentient,
Thou hast proved,
Impersonal calamity
Thou hast moved.*

Overcoming impersonalism necessitates addressing its root: our conception of God, which is the basis of our worldview and relationship with everyone and everything within it. The personal feature of Bhagavān, which your Guru Mahārāja was dedicated to exalting, while minimized in empiric epistemology, is essential on the spiritual quest. Your Divine Grace perfectly embodies this legacy of your guru. Our invocation prayers, meant to acknowledge and beseech your guidance, grace, and blessings, further serve to highlight your mission of dispelling the darkness of impersonalism with the brilliance of Lord Caitanya's *vāñī*.

* * *

tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a bona fide spiritual master.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.34)

Prior to my second birth with you as my father, I had turned to the only scripture I knew, yearning for a personal understanding of a gracious God. But bereft of the dynamic effects of the *guru-paramparā*, despite my sincere efforts and prayers I found the Bible very perplexing, both as a dutiful child who loved the stories of the Good Book in my Sunday School, and later as a student of theology in a Christian college.

Biblical culture places great significance on names, which are carefully selected to indicate the nature of a person. Understanding someone's name assists in developing a relationship with them. Yet, according to the Bible, God's foremost name is too sacred, too powerful, too dangerous, too fearsome to be spoken aloud except under the most exclusive conditions. Instead, He is primarily addressed with formal titles and reverential adjectives. How can a close relationship develop with a God when His intimate name can never be known? How was I to honor the Biblical mandate to praise the Holy Name of the Lord without knowing His confidential name or even being able to freely speak His generic name? Biblical teachings go so far as to warn that to see His face would cause one's

death. How can the most pure, sweet, and innocent sentiments of the soul find fulfillment in relationship with a vastly distant, faceless, and often fearsome deity?

* * *

The notion of divine fecundity within the living, immortal, sacred Word—the seed of creation and first manifestation of Godhead, germinating as the physical forms of material elements—finds expression in the Bible’s opening words, where God speaks: “Let there be light . . .” The Old Testament introduces the Word of God and His form of wisdom as spoken with creation to reveal His hidden design for this world.

Studying the etymological origin of *logos*—the Word—drew me into a community of theologians, seekers, and philosophers who had also pursued a clear understanding of the concept for millennia. Personally, I felt called to the Gospel of John, knowing intuitively that I needed to pursue the deep truth within his writings. The Apostle John was creative and unconventional in articulating, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word *was* God.” In John’s Gospel the Word is equated with God, who first spoke creation into existence and later incarnates as His representative here on Earth.

John’s perspective was gleaned from the commentaries of those who had come before him. It left rich sustenance to nourish the church fathers who would come after. And yet, for me, the Word of God in the New Testament remained as ambiguous as its parallel, the Name of God in the Old Testament, though they clearly had a significant connection. I became increasingly confused and frustrated as the actual meaning and realization continued to evade my grasp. My attempts to establish a personal relationship with the God of the Bible left me with one clear conclusion: the empiric approach to spiritual truth is helpful mainly insofar as it leads to realizing the crucial need for a spiritual master’s guidance and shelter.

At this critical juncture, the quest for truth becomes synonymous with the search for a bona fide spiritual master. The empiricist accepts, to varying degrees, that seeing is believing. Śrī Guru, from his higher perspective, declares that believing is seeing. In other words, submissively hearing from a proper spiritual authority kindles faith, granting us the assurance of all we hope for and the firm vision in what is yet to come.

From the stage of finding, serving, and surrendering to the

proper source, the instructions of Śrī Guru form the crux of the spiritual quest. The Biblical tradition alludes to the living dynamics of the *guru-paramparā* in one of the final statements of Jesus: “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear to hear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of Truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth.” (John 16.12)

These words ringing in my ears marked the conclusion of my empiric theological studies. I became vigilant, attentively seeking any intimation of the Spirit of Truth, open to whatever tradition He chose to reveal himself in.

It was only in hearing first *about* you from your disciples, and later hearing directly *from* you, that I recognized the voice of the Spirit of Truth *within* you, who had been guiding me all along to find your shelter and guidance. In your presence, the Word of God, Spirit of Truth, and Holy Name all became perfectly integrated in a most confidential, relational, and personal dynamic. They verily came to life before my eyes and within my heart. Finally, all that I had heard and seen before began to fall into proper place and make perfect sense. It was as if you had me step back far enough to reflect on the larger picture in which God continues to write the script. And you, as *ācārya*, bring the story to life, integrating the spiritual fruits of wonder, truth, and love with the security of knowing that eternal service is our birthright—an inheritance bequeathed, by Your Divine Grace, even to those of us who are deficient in comprehensive knowledge.

Your commentary on Biblical verses, given from the Vedic view, illuminated all areas of my former uncertainty, granting congruity within the nutshell verse, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word *was* God.” In a conversation in Paris on June 9th, 1974, while discussing these very words, you crystallized vast theological commentaries into one conclusive truth by citing a verse from the *Padma Purāṇa*: “Just parallel to this Bible passage I’ll quote one Sanskrit verse from the *Vedas*. Therefore, it is said, *nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ / pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto ’bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ.*” Your translation of this verse at *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 17.133 reads, in part, “The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is transcendently blissful . . . because the name of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Himself are identical.”

The supreme theology revealed by Lord Caitanya, elaborated by the Six Gosvāmīs, and synthesized by yourself explains every

word, letter, and verbal root in relation to the Supreme Truth—the Holy Name, who is unique in personifying both the means and the goal of spiritual perfection. Your elaborations on the absolute nature of everything connected with Kṛṣṇa make it clear as day that, objectively speaking, the Word *is* the Holy Name.

Subjectively, the Word expands as all the instructions needed for the guidance of disciples under the direction of Śrī Guru, the agent and representative of Vyāsa. By the grace and blessings of Śrī Guru, the truth of the *Vedas* is presented comprehensibly in a most personal manner. All of our relationships are thereby uplifted to a more personal nature.

The grace and blessing of Śrī Guru are likened to *cintāmaṇi* dust upon his feet. The influence of that dust purifies the heart, enlightens the consciousness, and fulfills the most cherished desires of the soul. In your presence we experienced firsthand that the Word of God does indeed take human form; that the book *Bhāgavata* speaks to us in and through the person *Bhāgavata*, who, for us, is you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

You objected to us literally taking the dust of your lotus feet upon our heads, assuring us that we could achieve the same result by sitting and submissively hearing as you spoke from the *vyāsāsana*. We were like *cakora* birds, subsisting only on moonlight, nourished by the benediction moon shining in the spiritual sky as you reflected, extended, and revealed it to us. As we heard your narrations with rapt attention, the spiritual world took shape in our consciousness. Your words and deeds revealed the luster and wonder of Vṛndāvana to those living in a mere shadow of reality. Indeed, sacred sound *is* the reality it conveys, above and beyond merely representing the greater reality.

Through your grace, we see this truth manifest in countless ways. In the beginning of your mission there were no buildings, no students, no books. You came to the United States without men or money, equipped only with conviction in Śrī Guru's instructions, an implicit faith in the Holy Name, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the literary incarnation of Kṛṣṇa. By your purely delivering the message of Godhead and chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, all of ISKCON manifested. Thus, you offered us a living example of the creative power of the Word.

The Spirit of Truth lives in the immortal nectar of your words and in the echo of your *kīrtana*. They form the crest jewel of theology, the very fulfillment of the teachings of Lord Caitanya. The Holy Name continues to resound and expand to every town and village by

your divine grace. You being the *senāpati-bhakta* in Lord's Caitanya's entourage, the essence of your gift to the world, especially here in the godforsaken Western lands, is the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, the most confidential hymn of Goloka Vṛndāvana, comprised of the most endearing names of the Divine Couple. Their ever-expanding *līlā* is the original story to which no narration can reach its completion, no poem can convey in full, no melody sung can be concluded. For as soon as Kṛṣṇa approaches the extent of His glory, it further expands.

Your *cintāmaṇi* words bless the earth. They made manifest a magnanimous place of pilgrimage in the Western world, a replica of Vṛndāvana in the hills of Appalachia. Here, in New Vṛndāvana, the effects of Śrī Dhāma enhance all the nine processes of devotional service for residents and pilgrims alike. Even tourists sense something special when visiting, thereby reaping the benefits of *ajñāta-sukṛti*.

Our only access to *vraja-līlā* is found through your pastimes and precepts, which are an open book inviting us into its unending story. Your words form the choicest poetry, suitable for sublime truths, articulating and echoing the rhyme of endless spiritual rhythms. Your *kīrtana* is the hymn of life eternal. You have transformed our lives into a dance as we follow in your footsteps on the path back to home.

The Spirit of Truth is likened to the wind breathing new life into hearts who are open to receiving and serving. Your unfailing influence has touched and transformed countless lives. In your global community, many stories are told in remembrance and glorification of you. These accounts may be very different from one another, some may even seem to conflict. And yet, if we continue our pursuit to serve the Spirit of Truth, our understanding will mature by the many ways your love and compassion have touched and continue to touch countless souls.

By hearing such stories shared, whether through tears or smiles, words or silence, inquiry or explanation, tenderness or boldness, we will gradually overcome impersonalism by the supremely personal touch conveyed in all your words and deeds. We will discern the truth that we can all remain united and empowered, by the influence of a Spirit greater than our own, to overcome the quarrel and hypocrisy so characteristic of this age. We will be reminded that pleasing you is the most important consideration in life. May we all demonstrate our love for you in the cooperation needed to extend your legacy.

Unto you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the representative of Vyāsa, who expand and distill the language of *śāstra* for the understanding and

welfare of the world, worship is offered on your appearance day as Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā, the Most Blessed Event. As the outward manifestation of Paramātmā, you are the eternal companion, counselor, and comforter of all souls who find shelter in you. May every Vyāsa-pūjā offering express our gratitude more deeply, reveal your heart more clearly, amplify your glories more fully, and bless the world with ongoing remembrance of you.

Your servant,

Varṣāṇā Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu declared to Sanātana Gosvāmī: "My dear Sanātana, Kṛṣṇa has saved you from Mahāaurava, life's deepest hell. He is an ocean of mercy, and His activities are very grave."

Swiftly, most appropriately, Sanātana replied: "I do

not know who Kṛṣṇa is. As far as I am concerned,
I have been released from prison only by Your
mercy.” [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 20.63–64]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Your hopeful servant,

Devāmrita Swami

*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*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my obeisances. All glories to you!

I don't feel qualified to say I love anyone; I don't consider myself spiritually advanced enough to feel real love. If, however, I do love anyone, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I love you—for the simple reason that you saved my life and you continue to save it. You have also saved and continue to save the lives of hundreds of thousands of other people.

That saving of which I speak, however, is not just the holy name you've given us to chant and the philosophy you've given us to study. Rather, the greatest gift you've given us is the opportunity to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness on behalf of you and Lord Caitanya.

As a child and teenager, I didn't think much about helping other people. I mainly thought about my own sense gratification. But after twenty years in this body, I started to develop a desire to do good for others. Yet I had no idea how. Though I tried various ways, none of them seemed to suffice.

When I met your disciples, they told me that spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the highest welfare work. They told me that the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa goes directly to the soul, without having to pass through layers of mind or intelligence. I didn't understand exactly, but it sounded good.

I visited their temple to learn more. On that first visit, they took me out to chant with them in a crowded, sensual part of the city. I was amazed to see that the joyful *kīrtana* seemed insulated from the surrounding degradation by an invisible bubble. People stopped, apparently involuntarily—stunned, it seemed to me, by the transcendental sound vibration going directly to their hearts. They had gotten in touch with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. They were being unwittingly purified. And those interested got a *Back to Godhead* magazine that explained what they were experiencing. *This* I knew was what I had been seeking; this was indeed the highest welfare work. I was sure that this was the

work to which I wanted to dedicate my life.

That night, one of the *brahmacārīs* shaved my head, and I became a temple resident. The next morning, less than twenty-four hours into my first visit to a Hare Kṛṣṇa temple, I was on full-time *saṅkīrtana*. I was happier than I'd ever been in my life; now, by Your Divine Grace, I finally had a mission that would make people happy forever. (Many years later, I heard you say that the purpose of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is to make people happy. And when a professor in Mexico City asked you the purpose of life, you replied that the purpose of life is *ānanda*.)

We often hear that the chanting of the holy names is the *yuga-dharma* for this age. A verse in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Ādi 3.40), however, goes a step further with the word *pracāra*—that the *yuga-dharma* is not only to chant the holy names but to “broadcast the glories of the holy name.”

This was your emphasis, Śrīla Prabhupāda: you yourself were always preaching as well as engaging others in preaching the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, especially in the form of His holy names.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for sacrificing your life to empower us to help you in your most blissful service of spreading the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in a mostly unreceptive and ungrateful world steeped in materialism and impersonalism.

All glories to you!

Your servant,

Mahādyuti Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Later that same day, while walking into the back entrance of my dormitory, I saw this same follower of yours sitting cross-legged on

the grass a short distance away. This time he looked even stranger—his eyes were closed, his head was rhythmically bouncing back and forth, and all it looked like to me was that he was talking to himself. I distinctly remember feeling relieved that I hadn't taken him seriously. Little did I know the insidiousness behind that illusory relief I was feeling at the time.

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

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

What happened is that this time not only did I pick up one of your books once again, but I glanced through it. It was your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, and becoming attracted by the illustration of a *yogī*, I decided to purchase the book and take it with me. That same day I started reading it, and I continued to do so every evening after returning from work.

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

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

I continued to serve in the association of your disciples, and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Your eternal debtor, always at your lotus feet,

Nirañjana Swami

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

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

om śrī surabhyai namaḥ! om śrī gurave namaḥ!

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace on this, your 124th sacred Appearance Day Anniversary.

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

For devotees in general, and for the world at large, the pandemic should serve as a wakeup call for us to return to the basics of life, which are ultimately to be found in the fundamental teachings of the Vedic culture:

Human society needs only sufficient grain and sufficient cows to solve its economic problems. All other things but these two are artificial necessities created by man to kill his valuable life at the human level and waste his time in things which are not needed. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.2.29, purport)

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

In 2016, we celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of your establishing

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

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

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

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

Aspiring to remain at your lotus feet life after life,

Your humble servant,

Bhakti Rāghava Swami

The Highest Scoring Spiritual Performance

I was a fan of watching the Olympics when I was young. One thing that I found intriguing was that gymnastics and diving competitors wouldn't be scored just for the quality of their performance, but the degree of difficulty of the routine or dive they were attempting. I had a thought today. Why not use that same lens to increase our appreciation of what Śrīla Prabhupāda achieved in his mission by briefly highlighting the degree of difficulty of the task he accomplished?

For those of you who may not know, Śrīla Prabhupāda crossed the ocean by steamship in 1965 at the age of seventy to start his world mission in New York. By the time he left the world twelve years later, he established over 108 centers worldwide with thousands of followers dedicated to the promotion of *bhakti-yoga*, primarily focused on *kīrtana*. He also personally translated, expounded upon, and published over eighty volumes of authentic Indian spiritual texts, which were then translated into over fifty languages. More than a half a billion of those books have since been distributed worldwide. There's more, but let's keep our focus on our subject: the difficulty of his task.

Śrīla Prabhupāda alights on the shore of the New York Harbor with only eight dollars in his pocket and a trunk of his translated works. His mission is to spread *bhakti* and *kīrtana* in the Western world and to transplant an ancient culture, which, for all practical purposes, has never before left the shores of India. He stands there as a lone man with no backing, followers, or resources directly facing his opposition to the West – the full force of the most powerful material civilization known to man. Perhaps an even greater challenge is where, by providence, he was directed to start his mission.

After a short while in America, he winds up living in the Bowery sharing a loft with a young man he hopes to teach Sanskrit. One evening the young man suddenly loses his mind on LSD and Prabhupāda is forced onto the streets of the Bowery in the depth of night. With the help of some early followers, he soon settles in an apartment in the Lower East Side with use of a storefront for his lectures. The impediments he faces are unimaginable, especially for a man of his culture.

“Why have I come to this place? Why have I come to this place?” he ponders while sitting in his storefront in the Lower East Side, the last place a devotional, learned, and cultured Bengali Vaiṣṇava gentlemen would retire to serve his own personal needs. He immediately answers his own audible reflection, “I was cent per cent faithful to the order of my spiritual master!” By force of that faith, he continues with his calling.

He gradually collects a group of sincere young people to help him. It is by no means easy. His field of potential candidates is not of any noted culture or training, to say the least. He takes what comes and tries to train them. One story comes to mind:

A young lady from the Lower East Side joins the mission and is soon initiated by Śrīla Prabhupāda. To start his mission, he has no choice but to be extremely merciful. This young lady, however, hates men. After six months she requests to see Śrīla Prabhupāda. He grants her audience. “I have been chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa for six months, but I just can’t stand worshipping that man Kṛṣṇa!” Śrīla Prabhupāda, replies without losing a beat, “That’s OK, we worship Rādhā.”

It is hard to imagine a more insane place to try to transplant traditional Vaiṣṇava culture than the sex-crazed, drugged-out, hippy land of the Lower East Side.

Another story comes to mind:

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s new disciples indiscriminately organize programs for him to share his message of devotion and culture. They arrange for him to speak at a rally of Louis Abolafia, the founder of the Naked Party. He is running for President of the United States with a catchy slogan: “What have I got to hide?” When Śrīla Prabhupāda enters the room, the supporters of Louis Abolafia are dressed as bananas and are wildly dancing, mostly naked. Śrīla Prabhupāda remains sober, talks briefly, and leaves. Afterwards one of his disciples informs Śrīla Prabhupāda that Louis Abolafia couldn’t officially run for President because he didn’t meet the minimum age required. Śrīla Prabhupāda finds that hysterical and bursts into laughter. He certainly had a sense of humor and would sometimes chuckle or laugh, but the devotees never saw

him laugh so hard. I can imagine what he was thinking:
“As if his age was the reason he has not qualified!”

It is hard to imagine that a person whose mission was to create a class of Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇas* actually accomplished it within such a milieu of madness and at such an advanced age, with challenged health, I should add. He had suffered two heart attacks on his journey across the sea. Should not the score of his unprecedented accomplishments therefore be exponentially increased by the substantial challenges he faced?

A final story:

It was the disappearance festival of Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1978. Several of the most distinguished scholars of Vṛndāvana were assembled to offer their respects. I remember the homage of one of them. “If Śrīla Haridās Ṭhākura, Śrīla Rupa Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Prabhupāda were in the same room and Śrī Caitanya appeared, who would he go to first? I say Śrīla Prabhupāda! Who could be more attached to the holy name than that person who spread it around the world!”

Of course, Śrīla Prabhupāda had just recently passed from this world and the talks were in the mood of eulogy, but considering what he accomplished and the degree of difficulty of his task, is it not possible that we have witnessed the highest-scoring spiritual performance in the history of Vaiṣṇavism?

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

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

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

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

These two statements are our life and soul.

Thank you.

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

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

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

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

We cite your books from Vedabase.io and the concepts we have learned therein in our humble attempts to preach in the university,

Jungian, world classical literature, and interfaith communities.

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

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

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

Thank you.

Your very fallen servant,

Hanumatpresaka Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to our beautiful *rūpānūga guru-varga*, to Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

You are a unique *ācārya*, because you could fully accept your guru mahārāja's exalted moods and instructions, and enchant and engage fallen Westerners. You conquered over every obstacle, and realised the depths and heights of Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava principles, practice and perfection. You distributed Vaiṣṇava teachings and realisations in a way that was previously inconceivable. You also emphasised *varṇāśrama-dharma* and scientific preaching as a necessary foundation for peace and unity in society, and for Krishna Consciousness.

You gave me instructions about self-sufficiency when we met in Nairobi, and you also chastised me mildly. In London and in Vṛndāvana, you gave me instructions regarding scientific preaching. I am trying to manifest a strong, scientific proof of spirit and refutation of materialism to combine scientific preaching and *varṇāśrama-dharma*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have pointed out the supreme position for a *jīva* in the spiritual world, and you have given the practice and the moods for realising that sublime goal. You have given me beauty and love and true meaning and purpose. My life is sublime when I am following and fulfilling your instructions and mission, and totally worthless otherwise. I pray at your lotus feet for strength to go on to the very end, following in your footsteps, realising the final goal of the Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, and serving your inconceivably beautiful and wonderful and auspicious mission.

Aspiring to be your faithful and loving servant,

Your Bhaktivedanta Nemi Swami
(previously Jñānadāsa)

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

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

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

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

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

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

accepted him in my heart as my spiritual master.

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

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

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

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

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

"Please come back soon," they pleaded.

"Let's see," I replied.

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

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

After two weeks my parents came to visit me. I gave them a tour of the temple, and they liked it very much, especially the *prasādam*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had sent a letter to all temples instructing them that they should have twenty-five plates of *prasādam* always ready throughout the day for visiting guests. No guest should leave without taking *prasādam*. Thanks to this instruction, I was able to serve my family the Lord's mercy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

to ask, “What do you want?”

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bhakti Sundar Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

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

Your most fallen servant,

Guru Prasād Swami

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

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

Your prophetic words warn us:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Your aspiring servant,

Giridhārī Swami

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

O servant of His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī, you are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

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

Begging to remain your servant,

Amala-bhakta Swami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

I am not all the things that I think. Thankfully. But I had better be careful what I allow myself to drift with. We are not our bodies, and

similarly we are not our minds either. The tendency is, however, to identify with what the mind is ruminating about. The more we return to a particular rumination, the more we *identify* with that rumination and engender ever stronger emotions. If those ruminations are negative, we generate negative emotions. The positive version of this same process we called “affirmations”; sadly, they are not as easy, natural, or automatic as the negative kind.

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

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

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

If we feel lost, we should know that we can find Kṛṣṇa and ourselves in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books. If we feel unworthy, we should know that we are thinking only about our material position and should rather think of the fact that, to Kṛṣṇa, each of us is a special soul—though we will never become Rādhārāṇī; sorry, that position is taken. If we feel frustrated, we should know that the material world

is full of frustrations by its nature and that it is not accomplishments that matter to Kṛṣṇa but rather our mental state of striving-to-please-Him that does. If we feel angry, we should know that whatever or whoever has made us angry is only a vehicle of Kṛṣṇa's "special" mercy upon us and that we should understand there is a purpose for which Kṛṣṇa has made us feel this way; what is that purpose? If we feel failure, we should know that Prabhupāda also appeared to fail until very late in his life and that nothing worthy of achieving is ever achieved on the first try. If we feel afraid, we should know that fear is a sure sign of having a material mentality about having something material to lose; rather, we should think about the fact that we will, one day, lose everything; do we really want to rot here eternally in this material world with all its terrifying upheaval just because of a few shriveled raisins of material happiness? Also, we can know that just by simply reading the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or *Bhagavad-gītā* we will begin to feel fearless. Every negative thought or attitude has a positive counterpart—we need to find that positive counterpart.

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

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

Your servant,

Candraśekhara Swami

*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 unto your divine lotus feet.

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

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

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

Personality of Godhead in this world.

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

Your humble servant eternally,

Bhakti Chāru Swami

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(Excerpt from Chapter of 1973 in *The Art of Spiritual Life* by Jadurani Dasi)

On August 9, he went to Paris to install the Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities and to enliven his spiritual sons and daughters. In his work of bringing us lost souls to the consciousness of love of God, he waged war with the agents of Kali, this age of quarrel and hypocrisy.

He waged war with places of animal slaughter and animal corpse ingestion, prostitution, liquor, and gambling. To this end, while still in Paris, he and Yogeśvara – his French translator – met with the renowned Jesuit Cardinal Jean Danielou to discuss vegetarianism versus animal cruelty in the Bible.

He tried to convince the Cardinal that God is the father, not only of humans, but of all beings in all the 8,400,000 species of life. “The Bible does not simply say, ‘Do not kill the human being,’” he appealed. “It says broadly, ‘Thou shalt not kill.’ Why do you interpret this to suit your own convenience?”

As I sat at my easel in New York and heard the recording of the long conversation that ensued, my blood boiled with anger and frustration. The Cardinal simply didn’t get it.

Also agitated, but with love from his tender heart, on his ride back to his Paris residence after the conversation with the Cardinal, Prabhupāda foretold the Cardinal’s future. “That the animal-eater is going to become a tiger to get more facility.

Yaṁ yaṁ vāpi smaran, bhāvaṁ tyajaty ante kalevaram (Bhagavad-gītā 8.6). Animal-eaters, they’ll become tiger, fox, cats, dogs. What are these different species of life?”

When Yogeśvara said, “They do not accept that the soul exists below the human level.” ŚrīlaPrabhupāda was quick to reply, “That is their foolishness. What is the proof of the existence of the soul in the body? I am a human being. You accept that I have got soul... But if we see that both the animal and the human being have the same characteristics of living condition, then how you can say the animal has no soul?”

When Yogeśvara then said, “His point was that the animals don’t show the same symptoms. They don’t think as...” Prabhupāda was quick to interrupt. “Why not? The general symptom is animal eats, you eat, animal sleeps, you sleep, animal has sex, you have got

sex, animal also defends, you also defend. Where is the difference?"

When Yogeśvara said, "His point was that human beings think on higher platforms than animals do."

Prabhupāda insisted, "What is that higher platform? Eating. You require to maintain the body. I eat something, you eat another. That does not mean higher or lower. You eat, I also eat. That's all. You eat according to your taste. I eat according to mine."

Less than a week later, Prabhupāda returned to London, where he corresponded with his disciples about the building of new temples in Bombay, Hyderabad, and Vṛndāvana. He also answered dozens of letters from his followers in America, where they were becoming increasingly eager to distribute his books.

Accordingly, fanning his disciples' spark for devotional service, he encouraged them by emphasizing the urgency of getting the books out to people. He discussed wearing Western clothing wherever necessary for the purpose of selling his books in public, traveling in teams on buses and vans around the country, and taking Deities to worship during their travels. Even when quietly sitting in his room at the Manor, he was directing thousands of disciples.

Back in New York, more questions regarding the paintings for *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* arose. For example, Lord Caitanya formally accepted *sannyāsa* from a *māyāvādī* renunciant, Keśava Bhārati, so what did His dress and paraphernalia look like in comparison to the dress of a Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsī*? We again inquired from our all-knowing Śrīla Prabhupāda, who replied on June 28 from Bombay.

Please accept my blessings. I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated June 18 and I have carefully studied the contents. I am very glad to hear you have begun paintings for *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, because we will require many illustrations.

Regarding your questions: There is not much difference in the robes of Māyāvādīs and Vaiṣṇavas, but they generally use a deeper color and we use lighter saffron. Lord Caitanya did not necessarily wear the Māyāvādī robes. He carried *ekadaṇḍa*, but that is covered by cloth. The Māyāvāda *daṇḍa* has one rod, and we have four rods, but they look the same. Yes, Lord Caitanya carries a water pot."

I also asked him about Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, the great

Vaiṣṇava saint who received the blessings to write *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* from Śrī Madana-mohana, Kṛṣṇa Himself in the form of the Deity. Muralīdhara, Parīkṣit, and I would be doing this painting in shifts.

How would one go about painting that? Śrīla Prabhupāda replied in the same letter:

During Kṛṣṇadāsa's time, there was no Rādhārāṇī Deity. Madana-mohana was alone. Rādhārāṇī was later introduced. The temple of Madana-mohana was formerly on a high level, that is, the original old temple. It still exists and can be seen side by side with the new Madana-mohana temple.

You can write to Gurudāsa in Vṛndāvana to send you two photos of the old and new temple.

I will also write him requesting that he send such pictures.

No, Haridāsa Paṇḍita who was the *pūjārī* of the temple is not the *nāmācārya* Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Both the old Govindajī and Madana-mohana temples were desecrated by the Mohammedans and partly destroyed, but the Govindajī Deity was removed. The old temples are rejected and these two new temples are situated near them, as you will see in the photos. No, there was no Rādhārāṇī in the temple of Govindajī then; She was introduced later. Yes, the Deities can be painted similar to the way they are dressed now.

A bit overwhelmed by the enormous task of painting for so many books at once, and for the deadlines expected, I also asked how I can paint better and faster. In retrospect, perhaps it would have been more appropriate for me to have asked how I could inspire other artists to join us, to selflessly give myself more to new artists so that they would also be able to paint for the books.

Be that as it may, Prabhupāda replied to my question at the end of his June 28 letter:

If you sincerely pray to Kṛṣṇa, He will help you to paint quicker and better.

Hoping this meets you in good health.

Your ever well-wisher

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances,

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

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

*yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo
yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi*

Prabhupāda, I'm lost without you, without your mercy, your *prasāda*.
And without it, I have nowhere to go, no *gati*.

*śuci haya mucī haya yadi kṛṣṇa tyaje
mucī haya śuci haya yadi kṛṣṇa-bhaje*

You once commented, "very good," when I recited this verse. I'm like a crow that you tried to turn into a swan. Many of my godbrothers, godsisters, and their disciples are now swans. And sometimes inexperienced or sentimental devotees look at me and say that I'm a swan, but they don't know that I still have a crow's heart.

Still, I'm trying to become a true swan to please you and the Vaiṣṇava society.

I've written some books now, and I'm hoping to use some of them to recruit and train new devotees. In North America the temples have money. The Deity worship is going on nicely, but the *saṅkīrtana* and book distribution could be much better.

I'm hoping that by recruiting energetic young people, we can train them to make sacrifices, distribute books, and continue attracting more devotees. I want to have big festivals like you suggested to Aniruddha in 1968. I think that, using the combination of regular *harināma*, book distribution, and large festivals, we can recruit many new devotees.

By your mercy and the mercy of Mahāprabhu, I believe my ideas will be successful. Or, if they do not fructify during the remainder of my life, then after I die, others may carry them forward to increase the recruitment effort and the inevitable change of American culture to Vaiṣṇava culture.

You named me Dayānanda and told me it means, “one who takes pleasure in Kṛṣṇa’s mercy.” I’ve changed the meaning to “one who takes pleasure in *your* mercy,” and I’ve inscribed that meaning on my heart. I intend to leave it that way unless you personally instruct me to change it back.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, until we meet again, I anxiously await the time when I can join up with you and your other devotees. When that time comes, I’ll be eager to find some service that needs to be done to assist your mission to glorify Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

But until then, I remain your servant here in this miserable place, trying to teach myself and others how to enjoy the fruits of *saṅkīrtana*.

Your servant,

Dayānanda Dāsa

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S HEART & HIS
GOLDEN ROPE OF MERCY

*Jaya Jaya Śrī Caitanya, Jaya Nityananda,
Jaya Jaya Advaita Chandra, Jaya Gaura Bhaktavrinda!
Vande Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya, Nityānandau, saho ditau,
Gauḍo Daye Pushpa Vantau Chitrau, Shan-dau 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 Gauḍa, 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 Gauḍa, 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 Swāmījī) taught me this verse from *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta*. 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 innocent 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. "Swāmījī" had just 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 are 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 *saṁsāra*. 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 almost like deities (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 designations by distorting or misinterpreting Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings. Yet, 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 the 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 frankly, 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, mind, 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 Caitanya’s *saṅkīrtana* 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”

of 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, in our case, 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 claim – 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 *saiṁsāra*.

That will be most pleasing to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

You came from afar and showed us the way
For years we were suffering but you saved the day

We were wandering aimlessly dangerously
down in the street
Searching and hoping for a great soul to meet

When we saw you we knew you're of another world
Upon hearing your words, our burdens were hurled

While walking with you we felt tall and proud
We could work very hard and our preaching was loud

But then when you left us confusion descended
Our minds had deceived us, our dream-sleep was ended

But now things are changing, our backs to the wall
Without working together the whole thing will fall

Before you were gone you left us the mandate
"If you want to please me, you must co-operate"

By my godsiblings' mercy I've learned how to do it
Be truthful, be committed and develop close friendship

Be ready to share this with all souls the same
To rightly be able to honor the name

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.*

All glories to you Śrīla Prabhupāda!

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, what would I do without you? What disastrous state would my mind be in without the memory of the words I heard you speak when I was in the association of your *vapuhī*? Now you are here as *vāñī*. And the sound of those words has been part of me for decades. I want to praise you by listing here some words of yours I remember. Some of them are in the Vanipedia, others are not. Some are philosophical points, others are personal characteristics that have deep meaning to me (and perhaps no one else) because they keep the memory of you alive for me. Since not all of them have been recorded elsewhere, my quotes might not always be accurate. I beg your forgiveness for my dull brain. I'll go on nevertheless. I hear your voice saying these words.

So...

How I loved hearing your preface, your verse purports with this word. Drawn out so dramatically, promising as always a conclusion, the Vedic conclusion, right at the beginning, no time wasted in bringing us immediately to Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

There is no time. It is all just a flash.

You wiped away the material world with strong, simple statements like this. And gave us a glimpse of Kṛṣṇa's world.

You have not yet calculated a day of Brahma.

The Vanipedia gives 388 instances of your use of the word "calculated." I don't find this one. But I remember you laughing as you said it in response to a devotee's question on the subject of time.

It is quite bitter.

On a very cold morning in January 1967, you said this as you walked through the side door into the 26 Second Avenue storefront.

I find it quite bracy myself.

Then in a letter to us from Delhi in June of that year, you wrote this after remarking that Kīrtanānanda was overwhelmed by the heat.

Kīrtana is not exactly artistic.

You didn't want us to become professional *kīrtana* artists, "show-bottle" devotees. On the other hand, you were happy to sing *kīrtanas* and *bhajans* into recording devices for others' benefit. But there, it was the *prema*, not the professionalism, that made the difference.

In the end it is a solo flight.

We, your students, ourselves must become qualified. And I think of you taking your solo journey to the USA with no one to help you except the Supreme Lord.

What is the difficulty.

Just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, dance in ecstasy, feast on Kṛṣṇa *prasādam*, and discuss philosophy. "It is simple for the simple."

All business finished.

I remember you saying this to mean, finish up the material business and take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness "cent percent." The 222 references in the Vanipedia show you using the expression in many other ways – in particular as a warning not to think that once I've been initiated I have nothing else to do.

You want to enjoy? Just try to enjoy.

With this challenge you emulated Lord Kṛṣṇa's parting words to the soul who "bloops," as we used to say.

Chewing the chewed.

Eating cereal mixed with sand.

The stool eaters.

Simply hogs and dogs!

Fool number one!

Rascals and fools!

Simply rascal number one!

Nonsense rascaldom!

Tell 'em like it is, Śrīla Prabhupāda. We can always depend on you

for the “straight sauce.”

These things are going on.

Sometimes we would describe in detail the miseries in the daily news, and you would give this terse summation before quoting from scripture to enlighten us with the Vedic version.

Trust no future, however pleasant.

These words from a poem by Longfellow that your guru mahārāja used to quote were a favorite way of yours to give business advice and to defeat the scientists who are hoping to create life from matter.

This material world is no place for a gentleman.

Yes, and you are the transcendental gentleman who can lead us out.

A society of the cheaters and the cheated.

Thank you for lifting the veil of illusion and revealing the truth of non-spiritual relationships.

What you *think* does not matter!

After your lecture at 26 Second Avenue, you asked for questions. A man said, “I think...” but he got no farther than that. You stopped him dead with this. On another occasion you told us, “If you start a sentence with ‘I think,’ finish it in the closet.”

The bodily concept of life.

What a powerful summation of our mistaken identity! We’re making a conceptual error, to be corrected by the proper consciousness, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I am spirit soul, part and parcel of the Lord, His eternal servant. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

As long as you have this body there is sex desire.

Therefore, *satatam kirtayanto mam* – and as you write in your purport to Bg. 9.14, “live this life in devotional service, guided by an expert spiritual master.”

Oh? Do you think I should be fatty?

Your disciple Kṛṣṇa Devi told me that when she abruptly walked into the room where you were getting a massage, she said, “Prabhupāda, You’re so skinny,” and you said this. All glories to your sense of humor!

What is that verse?

I’m sure you were just pretending not to remember the verse, to give us a chance to show you that we were serious students of *Bhagavat dharma*.

God is God! Only God!

There were any number of people attending Your programs who had decided they were God. Their attempts to announce their Lordship status were met with Your powerful rebukes. You defeated them just as decisively as Kṛṣṇa defeated Bāṇāsura.

Q: Can you see God?

A: Yes, but you’re in the way.

This instant response of yours to a challenger deserves worldwide recognition. O Prabhupāda, you are truly a “Vaikuṅṭha Man.”

Q: Does Kṛṣṇa pass stool?

A: Yes. But it smells like rose petals.

A faithful disciple who still sits at your Feet asked this question, which raised some eyebrows. You were nonplussed and blessed him with an answer that took us straight to Kṛṣṇaloka.

Transform matter into spirit.

Engage matter in the service of Kṛṣṇa.

“This typewriter is also Kṛṣṇa,” you said, patting the old Corona you were using to write your *Gītā*. That principle of spiritual alchemy inspired us to envision an Earth planet transcendentalized by the holy name. And now your temples cover the globe.

In the spiritual world the demons are also devotees.

This statement of yours took us a while to understand. I’m still not sure I do completely!

Please chant one round.

You mercifully reduced the 32-rounds-daily requirement to 16. And just to make sure we did at least one, you made *Japa* a regular part of the morning program at 26 Second Avenue.

You must become perfect.

The way you emphasized the second syllable drove the point home to us. Nothing less than *perfect* is admissible.

You must know that everything I do is perfect!

Sitting at your low desk in the rear court building of 26 Second Avenue, you asked a disciple to get you a glass of water. The boy returned with a glass of something else, explaining he thought it was an improvement. Then you displayed a lion-like temper with this instruction, so startling to us at the time.

That is also Bhagwat.

During *Bhāgavatam* class one morning in 61 Second Avenue's temple room, Nara Narayan Prabhu was in the adjacent room using a power saw while building a new altar. It was very hard to hear anyone talking. We complained to you, and this is what you said.

This spot life.

I thought my 25 years of life in a body was a remarkable achievement. You burst that bubble very effectively! Just a spot, no more. And even more years would still be no more.

Our fasting is feasting.

Even Ekādaśī was a feast, with your menu. Carrot *halavā ki jai!*

Simply add Kṛṣṇa.

It's your recipe for happiness: "Whatever you do, do it for Kṛṣṇa." You taught us that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a positive process.

You must become God-haunted.

And after doing everything for Kṛṣṇa, you assure us we see Kṛṣṇa in everything.

When are you going to cut your Shakespearean locks?

You loved teasing your faithful servant Gargamuni for his long hippie hair.

A devotee is always anxious.

Of course we first thought that by following you we'd always be serene, in a sort of mystic trance. You soon taught us that we had a mission – to save the world! And there's no time to waste.

Sleep is bad. But dreaming is good if you dream about Kṛṣṇa.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, we know very well that “Kṛṣṇa is painted on the inside of your eyelids,” as we used to say. So you are always seeing Him and your few short hours of sleep are not mundane.

It is not an inference or a vision. It is a fact.

This is what you said to Vishnujana when he asked you about the nature of knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, “Is it an inference or a vision?” You responded in effect that it's neither logical nor mystical, but a direct perception of an actually existing Person. Kṛṣṇa factually exists.

Everything is person.

You are the preeminent exponent of personalism. And the world's greatest opponent of impersonalism and voidism. You have taught us that there is not one item in the entire encyclopedia of existence that is not personal or indeed a person. So-called matter is made of atoms that are persons and energies that are persons. Space is a person. Souls are persons. All the features of the spiritual world are persons, forms, not formless, not void. And of course, God the supreme source of all such persons is a person, the ultimate personal form of eternity, knowledge and bliss.

Thank you.

I bow to you, Jagad Guru Śrīla Prabhupāda
Learned Teacher and Compassionate
Savior of the world

who heroically blesses the entire Earth
with the sanctifying vibration of the
Holy name of Kṛṣṇa

following Nāmācārya Haridāsa Ṭhākura who
in Puri gives full throat every moment
to that Transcendental Sound

the 32-syllable *mahā-mantra* distributed
freely by your beloved Golden Avatar
Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu

Who dances in ecstasy before the mūrtis
of Jagannāth Balarāma and Subhadrā
in the temple of the *holy dhama*

appearing there as They do during
the Kurukshetra solar eclipse while
greeted by the Vrajabasis

among whom are the lovesick Gopīs
pleading with Kṛṣṇa to return
with them to Vṛndāvana

whereupon the Lord does so and sports
with them and His most beloved
Rādhā which They do eternally

and are eternally being served by you as
you imbibe the nectar of Their *līlā*
in the love groves of Vraja.

O Learned Teacher
O Compassionate Savior
O Prabhupāda have Mercy on me!

REFLECTIONS FROM THE MANOR

Stepping out through the Manor gates into the sleeping early-autumn village—Oh Prabhupāda!—I remember the empty after-party streets of Haight-Ashbury as we rushed to Frederick Street to hear your latest revelations. Passing our little lake in Hertfordshire, I pause to watch the ducks, transported to Golden Gate Park and those misty mornings when it dawned on us that you are a Special Friend from heaven. The little path behind the rhododendron dell takes me to Lennon’s place at Tittenhurst, where the ideas took root to present your royal nature to this nation. Walking by harvested fields cut to stubble for approaching winter, I see a glow in the east as we boarded our sunrise flight to Amsterdam, where—Hah!—your sober appearance on *Top of the Pops* surprised millions. Orange light tickled the eastern sky as you led us to the holy Ganges for an ice-cold awakening—Oh, Prabhupāda!—those exotic dawns in old Bombay before traffic roared in the streets below, fresh breeze off the Arabian Sea connecting us to the ancient truths of India—we saw your mystery, your mastery of every possible topic. From there we flew to *Moscow*, where you thawed the cold world in just five days! We chased rhinos on the bloody raw streets of Africa, we argued the meaning of being and time, and gambled for gold in the Alps. We sailed the skies together, you and I, to Australia, China, Japan, and across the world to Mexico, Los Angeles and New York, around the globe again and again as your temples increased from two to a hundred. You are like Columbus or Magellan, sole and complete Commander to your historical voyage of discovery, leading us across uncharted seas and deep into cloud-shrouded lands like rockets in your slipstream...

I look across shadowed lawns as early October sun gilds gabled slate roofs and fluted chimneys and slides down the storybook outer walls of Bhaktivedanta Manor, lighting the mullioned windows to rooms upstairs where you so recently played with us: I remember the unusual beauty of your face and mouth, the flowing ease and subtle lines of cheeks and crinkles wrapping around and punctuating another perfect mood; your dancing eyes, now somber, unmoving in thought—now wide and full of mischief. I recall the soft golden flesh of your shoulder—and the surprising hard tissues below; the

flow of blue veins under forearms, behind knees, how they throbbed with a cool even pulse as you lounged in the sun—and roared with power when you danced all day. Watching you shave always had me in stitches: the wide intent eyes and grimaces as you swiveled the mirror to see that your *tilak* was straight—or to check on a possible loose tooth. I remember how you dressed yourself slowly, keenly observing each cloth before choosing, then tied and tucked your dhoti with care; nor can I forget quick pink fingers at your buttonholes, and how sometimes you leaned forward for me to close the one at the neck...

Sun strikes the bright-painted rainbow windows enclosing Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gokulānanda, and I hear the ringing *karatāls* and muted voices of devotees singing your praises: *Jaya Prabhupāda, Jaya Prabhupāda, Jaya Prabhupāda, Jaya Prabhupāda*...growing louder as I enter into the temple room and bow flat, glancing to my right—wait, is he?—catching you for a moment, knowing you're still here on your very cool throne.

I approach Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and see Them well-dressed, serene and exhilarated with Their new home and family. I am weak with gratitude to Them, for gifting me this raremost destiny. I'll catch my spiritual master down in India now, hang out with him for a while, maybe chase some more rhinos, show him what I can do. How could life be any better than this?

Shyamasundar Dasa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

It is only by your forever causeless mercy that you accept me in your loving devotional service. And to begin to even approach Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and Lord Caitanya, is only by your grace.

Even though, over 50 years ago, how can I ever forget this; (this and so much more!): When I first became a devotee, I was offering cattails, moss, and bark on my altar at home with Lord Jagannāth Deities a devotee entrusted to me, thinking it so beautiful to offer Kṛṣṇa. I had written a six-page letter to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda which included this and you wrote back; “My sincere blessings are for you, for your nice prosecution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Whatever you are doing at the present moment is approved by me and I think on account of you becoming a sincere soul. Kṛṣṇa is dictating from within and you are doing things so nicely.” I was so encouraged then, but even more so as time went on. It was coupled with being astounded by your acceptance and patience, knowing how to steer me and us all in the proper direction with expertise and grace, to years later with more elaborate Deity worship in all the Temples around the world.

And then, recently I read such a sweet pastime of yours, Śrīla Prabhupāda, in Jadurani’s book, “The Art of Spiritual Life.” Śrīla Prabhupāda had Govinda Dasi and Gaurasundar do paintings of the pastimes of Prahlāda Mahārāja, while Jadurani did paintings for other Temples with Śrīla Prabhupāda’s personal guidance. One day, she went to the art store to pick up some supplies for the next painting.

On the way back, upstairs she saw His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda coming downstairs, and he stopped and asked, “What is the name of a female art director?” His query caught her off guard as she answered, “Uh.....you mean art directress?” Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “Yes, art directress. You are the art directress.” She felt honored, even though, she saw there was no one to direct. The two other artists were personally guided by Śrīla Prabhupāda too. Such is Śrīla Prabhupāda’s charm. A little while later, I, with other devotee girls were given that devotional service’ painting for other Temples under Jadurani’s direction. This just shows also, you, Śrīla Prabhupāda’s encompassing vision.

Śrīla Prabhupāda always stressed his *vāñī* more potent than his *vapuhī* association. Many times, I have meditated and felt how true, through his powerful purports and teachings. At the same time, feel so deeply inspired, feeling his loving presence, by hearing about him. Remembering any personal association and hearing other' transcendental experiences also, is like being with His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda.

By Śrīla Prabhupāda's mercy, thinking of his quotes is so uplifting, reminding us to remember Kṛṣṇa in every situation that might arise. What often brings to mind, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "When it rains, the *gopīs* are crying in separation for Kṛṣṇa." And ever since then, hearing the rain drops fall, is so wonderful to hear.

Another time, when Śrīla Prabhupāda tasted a peach, so luscious and juicy, he emphatically said, "And they say there is no God?!?"

As years pass by, I see succinctly my memory is not as sharp as it used to be, but I so fervently pray to forever grasp; holding tightly, cherishing, and never forgetting Śrīla Prabhupāda's love and all that he has given selflessly on behalf of his guru mahārāja Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Mahārāja, Kṛṣṇa, and to all of us. I beg that this impression of Śrīla Prabhupāda's unconditional love remains deeply engraved in my heart forever in devotional service at his divine lotus feet.

I beg to always remain your daughter and disciple,

Kanchanbala Dasi

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

I remember living with you in Māyāpur in 1973, and staying with Srutakīrti and Satsvarūpa in the room next to yours. You were pleased to speak with me in Bengali and I believe that you appreciated the old style training I had undergone in Vṛndāvana.

I remember you asked me to assist you to translate *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* – a mammoth work that seemed it would take years to complete. I had my copy of the small book by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, and I suggested that this book is only 11 śloka and you could complete it very quickly because it was so short.

You took the copy, told me to get paper to write on, and started translating immediately. Because you were so fast, we could not keep up long-hand so we had to switch to you recording the translations, which were transcribed.

During this intimate period of two weeks we had many Bengali and English conversations on Gauḍīya Siddhānta.

I recall you asked me: “So what you have learned in Vṛndāvana?”

I replied, “About *Nitya-līlā*, Gurudeva.”

“And?” You prompted.

“*Siddha-praṇālī*. *Aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā-smaran*. Isn’t that right?”

You said, “Yes” but who is *siddha*?”

So I started to quote the *Gītā* verse, “*manuṣyāṇāṁ sahasreṣu...* among millions of seekers hardly one can attain the goal. But that is our goal, right, Gurudeva?”

You said emphatically, “Yes! we are the followers of Rupa-Raghunāth. This is the highest understanding, to be *dasanudas* in Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s *līlā*.”

I asked you, “What about *siddha-praṇālī*? How to qualify? Who will give?”

You replied, “Guru will give. You just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.”

Then I mentioned the story of Chota Krishnadas, who tried to

drown himself by jumping into Mānasa-gaṅgā when he heard that only his guru, who had already departed, could give him *siddha-praṇālī*. I asked you how to receive this eternal information?

You told me, “Guru will give. There is no material consideration about Guru is here or there. When you reach that level, Guru will give.”

So I asked, “what about *mānasa-sevā*, like the Brāhmaṇa who burnt his finger in meditation? Isn’t that *bhajan*?”

You said, “Kṛṣṇa makes no distinction. But if you serve Kṛṣṇa by mind, He will accept, that is sure!”

Then I switched to another issue, and asked, “Gurudeva, whenever I mention anything about *rūpānūga bhakti* many of my godbrothers get angry and say it is all a bunch of nonsense, and you never taught that!”

You smiled and said, “Everything is coming.”

Then I put forward the main question I had in my heart, “Gurudeva, is the *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā* by Kaviraja Gosvāmī the REAL *Nitya-līlā* detail?

You confirmed without a doubt: “YES!”

I said, “I would like to mention ‘*aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā*’ in *śloka* 8. So we can all know from you the highest goal. What do you think?”

You ordered, “Yes, you put it.” — which I did.

I then asked, “What about *rūpānūga bhakti*? What is the eternal relationship between us disciples and you?”

Then you quoted the 2nd half of *śloka* 6 of *Gurvaṣṭaka*, and said, “Guru is serving under his master and you all can do likewise. In *Nitya-līlā* every devotee thinks that my master is the most dear to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.”

“So that means that my relationship with you is eternal, that it will continue in *Nitya-līlā*?”

You replied, “Yes.”

“As *mañjarīs*?”

“And down to *sakhya*!”

“But for ‘*Rūpānūgas*’ isn’t it always *mañjarī-bhāva*?” I asked.

“Yes. That is the highest! But in the spiritual world there is no such distinction. Everyone is Kṛṣṇa conscious, even the flowers and clouds.”

I said, “What is the meaning of “*bodhayan ātmanātmānām* in Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā *śloka* 59? Does it also mean that we realize Kṛṣṇa (God) and our own *svarūpa* simultaneously?”

“Yes,” you answered.

I asked, "What about realizing your *svarūpa*, Gurudeva?"

You smiled and replied, "That is the same thing."

These and other memories fill my heart with happiness at having somehow gained your direct personal association in such a manner and that time. The best time of my life.

Happy Birthday, again, Śrīla Prabhupāda!!!

Tavadasanudas

Hrsikesananda Dasa

To my most beloved spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Choices are made at every stage of our life. I have learned from Your Divine Grace that the choices we make have consequences. Success and happiness in our life, as well as our advancement in spiritual life, rest on these. Through your teachings, also by the example of how you lived your life, you have shown us the path of pure devotional service, the path to follow for the perfection of this human form of life.

You have shown a path that is available to everyone, and the only requirement is enthusiasm and sincerity. Chanting the holy name, taking sacred *prasādam*, serving the Vaiṣṇavas, and distributing this mercy to all is the method you have given us. The transcendental gift of your books, your glorious lectures and interviews, as well as the many talks and the letters, have left a clear and unambiguous direction to follow.

In truth, there is no way possible to ever repay such mercy as you have given so freely. I simply beg of you to allow me to make the correct choice; to follow the perfect transcendental path Your Divine Grace set forth.

Begging the mercy of serving you,

Vamanadev Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you awarded me, and so many

others, the most noble, exalted association.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Somehow, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have awarded me, and so many

others, mantras to chant three times each day that are powerful, deep meditations.

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

May I remain gratefully yours in eternal service,

Bhūrijana dāsa

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Today as we ‘shelter in place’ due to the Coronavirus, we must bow at your feet again and again and thank you for the unprecedented shelter you have given us. You have created our good fortune, and good fortune for a misguided world, that without you, remained baffled.

Just as Hanumān, the great servant of Lord *Rāma*, slipped into *Laṅkā*, the kingdom of *Rāvaṇa*, unnoticed in a tiny form and set the whole city on fire, while the evil *Rāvaṇa* prepared to wage war. In the same way, you entered New York City, the Kingdom of *Kali*, anonymously, as a penniless, elderly Indian swami, as our government waged war on Vietnam, and we, the youth, waged war on our government. We wanted to create a revolution against the system, but the revolution you sparked...

“...full of transcendental words directed toward bringing about a revolution in the impious lives of this world’s misdirected civilization...” — *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.11

...has changed the course of human history, beyond anything we could have fought for, or imagined.

Without the shelter of your compassion, and your sheltering words of wisdom, we, the youth of the 1960’s counter-culture, were perhaps the most impious and misdirected the world had ever seen.

The revolution you sparked has been noted by renowned scholars as well. Professor A.L. Basham writes in his, *A Cultural History of India*:

A new aspect of the counter-attack from the East is the importation not only of the mystical gnosis of India, but also her simple faith. This is chiefly the work of what is generally called the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, founded by Swami Prabhupāda. This society now has branches in many of the larger cities of the West and its adherents follow the rituals of the devotional Vaisnavism of the Chaitanya Sect

of Bengal...The movement...is historically very significant, for now, for the first time since the days of the Roman Empire, an Asian religion is being openly practiced by people of Western origin in the streets of Western cities.

The simple faith he refers to is the revolutionary faith you bestowed upon us and upon the world: that we are immutable spirit, beyond this world of matter, and existing eternally as Kṛṣṇa's loving servants.

Under your shelter, inspired by the pinnacle of your example, the deathless nectar of Kṛṣṇa's name, form, qualities, and pastimes is being tasted and shared all over the world.

Under your shelter, the people of the world are experiencing a revolution in consciousness: realizing the purpose of life, ending their suffering, and reawakening joy in consciousness of Kṛṣṇa.

You warned us that this world is a place of danger. Now, at a time when the whole world is sheltering in fear of the Coronavirus, we hold your lotus feet to our hearts as our only real and fearless shelter.

*Aspiring to be an eternal servant of your
revolutionary and divine instructions,*

Rukmini Devi Dasi

Our Dependence on Guru

*kali-kālera dhama — kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana
kṛṣṇa-śakti vīna nahe tāra pravartana*

(C.C. Antya-līlā 7.11)

“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.**”

guru-kṛṣṇa prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja

(C.C. Madhya-līlā 19.151)

“... one who is 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 devotion.”

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swamī Prabhupāda, taking shelter and repeating the instructions of his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, was empowered by Śrī Kṛṣṇa to propagate the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

As *guru*, by the power of his mercy, he then distributed and planted the essential seeds of devotional service in the hearts of his disciples.

Śrīla Prabhupāda chastely and fearlessly fulfilled the transcendental mission, following in the footsteps of the *paramparā* of previous *ācāryas*, by inculcating *bhakti-yoga* – through meditation on *Svayam Bhagavān* Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s name, fame, form, pastimes and entourage etc. – around the world to all classes of men.

Today we bask in the glow of his books, lectures and instructions and can choose to dedicate ourselves to carefully handing down that fruit he has passed on to us, as it is.

Any endeavor at espousing and teaching the knowledge of Vedas and *Vaiṣṇava* culture must include this essential principle of *guru-tattova*.

*yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo
yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi*

(Śrī Guruvāṣṭakam 8)

“By the mercy of the spiritual master one receives the benediction of Kṛṣṇa. Without the grace of the spiritual master, one cannot make any advancement.”

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

(Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.23)

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

A fallen and fortunate aspiring servant of Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Toṣan-Kṛṣṇa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

I sit here in the comfortable lap of *māyā*, still trying to squeeze some small drops of pleasure from this material world, despite this 76-year-old body's limited capacity to enjoy anymore. I marvel at those who can give up sense gratification to please you and to follow the path you have given us that leads back to Godhead. I am still attached to you, and it is only by your mercy that I have not turned my back on my godbrothers and godsisters. I am so grateful that they have not turned their backs on me.

In the past I tried to be of some small service to you and your devotees, but over the years, my enthusiasm has waned. I pray for your mercy to become inspired to give up my quest for sense gratification and turn my will and my life over to Your Divine Grace. I sincerely hope that this is not an empty and insincere request.

You have blessed the entire world with your presence and with your books, but my appreciation for these tremendous gifts is not commensurate with their magnitude. I can only pray that you will continue to be merciful to me despite my lack of gratitude.

Your servant,

Ranadhir Dasa

Who is Śrī Guru?

Śrī Guru is impossible to understand and only the rankest of foolish disciples thinks that they have understood his divine ways. Once the arrogant follower believes that he has understood Śrī Guru reveals to us an unseen facet of his eternal mystique, by his divine empowerment from Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself.

For it is the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, Who directly empowers Śrī Guru in a myriad of spiritual ways that the actual disciple never pretends to understand. The relationship of Śrī Guru with Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa is not a subject for speculation for the eternal duty of the disciple is one of blind serve to the will of Śrī Guru. Śrī Guru never deceives, misleads or harms his disciple in any way and his loving kindness engenders the highest love in the heart of his servant.

The sincere follower treads only in the footsteps of his master by constantly rendering the most menial service to Śrī Guru. Such a humble disciple is showered with his causeless mercy which is the panacea that delivers the conditioned entity to the transcendental world of Goloka. No proper initiate of Śrī Guru ever mistakes that he can ever master Lord Kṛṣṇa's direct representative, for such misguided thoughts only serve to spell the doom to devotional service just as milk is polluted with venom when a cobra sips it.

Śrī Guru is constantly pulling and pushing those followers who are sincere along the Holy Road to the Transcendental *Dhāma* of Kṛṣṇa. That foolish disciple who thinks he has mastered Śrī Guru dooms himself. One who sees Śrī Guru in terms of his own material profits condemns and seeks to make a business of his service to Śrī Guru sends himself to the form of poverty that is born of obscurity and ill repute. Śrī Guru is the eternal master and the servant is the eternal servant. Śrī Guru is the selfsame representative of the Flute-player of Vrindavana Himself and serving his lotus feet through serving his servant's servant is the greatest fortune imaginable in all the three worlds.

Śrī Guru appears in order to deliver the entire Universe because he is none other than the very representative of Śrī Gaura Hari, Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself. Lord Caitanya is none other than Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself in the divine guise of His own pure devotee. Śrī

Guru as the servant of Mahāprabhu personifies the highest fruit of the Vedic tree which is pure *bhakti*—the loving essence of the divine nectar that is nothing else but pure love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Throughout the timeless time that measures eternity, Śrī Guru’s love for the Lord and His holy name only grows unlimitedly. Śrī Guru spends every millisecond of each and every day doing one thing only—serving the lotus feet of the Lord at the highest level of *prema-bhakti*. Śrī Guru renders his *sevā* unto Śrīmatī Vṛndāvanēśvarī together with Her Lord Śrī Vṛndāvana Candra in infinite varieties of divine *līlā*. Śrī Guru is wrapped in the *chadar* of eternal love for Kṛṣṇa which is a blanket that warms, soothes and comforts the world with Śrī Kṛṣṇa-*prema*.

We have nothing but sympathy for any unfortunate egoist who thinks that he can change the teachings of Śrī Guru or who thinks that he knows better than Śrī Guru. We have nothing but spite and contempt for the great imitators and posers who think that Śrī Guru is the sum total of whatever fools imagine his external manifestations to be. Even if Śrī Guru becomes the richest man in the world, Śrī Guru does not mind kicking it all aside in an instant so that he may take a grain of sand at the feet of the servants of the Gopī Girls of Vṛndāvana upon his learned brow. Out of compassion Śrī Guru sheds tears of joy that purify a world spinning out of sync with the actual orbit that all living entities are meant to follow—Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrī Guru sets the example and all the wise of the world follow his lead keeping just a little distance behind.

Śrī Guru shelters the entire Universe, and the guardians of the Universe headed by King Indra in the East, and blessed by Lord Śiva in the Northeast and Agnideva in the Southeast continually chant the glories of Śrī Guru. Even Lord Ananta, the great Śeṣanāga who holds up the Universe and whose countless mouths continuously sing the glories of Kṛṣṇa, is stunned by the endless example of pure devotion embodied by Śrī Guru. Śeṣanāga holds up the Earth, but it is Śrī Guru who has given us the example for the spiritual upliftment of the entire world. Whether in the highest heavens of Devendra or in the depths of Ananta’s Universe, the glories of Śrī Guru are sung by the Devas, the Gandharvas, the Apsaras, the *Kimpuruṣas*, the *Nāgas*, the *Yakṣas*, the denizens of the different *varṣas*, the followers of mystic *yoga*, the knowers of the *Veda*, the apostles of brahminical principles who serve the other *varṇas*, and the holy *vaiśyas* of Vṛndāvana. The glories of Śrī Guru are as endless as *sanātana dharma* itself because Śrī Guru directly sings the message of Lord Caturamukha and his

bride Sarasvatī the Goddess of Learning. Śrī Guru speaks only the divine message that the head of our *sampradāya* and Creator of the Universe speaks. Śrī Guru is the pure devotee who carries the direct essence of he who awoke on the lotus flower and whose divine voice echoed throughout the new universe with the sacred song: *Govindam Ādi Puruṣam Tam Aham Bhajāmi*.

Śrī Guru is the master who expresses the greatest depths of wisdom through sharing his realized knowledge in the simplest of methodologies. The learning and realization of Śrī Guru are endless. Śrī Guru is not to be imitated—for one who merely imitates or puts an envious eye upon the divine *gaddi* of Śrī Guru courts his own doom and disaster. Though imitation, it is said, is the highest form of flattery, the wise disciple never attempts to imitate Śrī Guru. When the foolish so-called disciple minimizes Śrī Guru by appropriating his paraphernalia he misses the essence of divine love that is the mature fruit of devotional service. One who believes that he can correct Śrī Guru, or that his wisdom might supersede he who speaks as one with the very mouth of the Supreme Lord Himself skates upon very thin ice. The unwise disciple who considers that Śrī Guru is somehow subject to his direction will never be liberated. The errant followers will be relieved only when there is total repentance before the sacred presence of Śrī Guru. There is no other recourse for the arrogant student who promotes himself over the position of Śrī Guru, for the divine twin lotus-red feet of Śrī Guru are nothing less than the shelter of the Universe.

The essence of the teachings of Śrī Guru are understood when the disciple is in complete fidelity with his order for, without faith in the love and mercy of Śrī Guru, there is no question of deliverance. As followers, our position is but to follow—and to shelter ourselves under the great guru *paramparā* of the Śrī Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya Sampradāya. The bona fide disciplic line has been carried from the Spiritual Sky through the divine energy of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and given to mankind by Śrī Guru. It is the wish, nay order, of our Śrī Guru Prabhupāda, that this *mantra* must be carried in our throats twenty-four hours a day as the great *mantra* for deliverance.

For only the true and loyal servants of Śrī Guru achieve the final and coveted destination of going back to home back to Godhead by the absolute grace of his divine empowerment. That transcendental divine realm is the playground of the Cowherd Boy Kṛṣṇa who has sent Śrī Guru to us with the secrets of salvation. It is there in the

supreme abode that in Their eternal *līlās*, one day Kṛṣṇa encountered the daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu Rādhā at Sankhet. And as the Divine Couple bathed in the Prem Sarovara of Their shared love, so Śrī Guru has captured some buckets of this panacea and has proceeded to pour it over the entire world in the form of the *sankīrtana yagna*.

Now at this very rare and divine crossroads in the history of all the infinite Universes—taken as a whole—Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared at last as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. And through the analogous electricity passed down from the silver wire of Śrī Guru *paramparā*, this supreme order has descended for the deliverance of mankind. Like never before, Śrī Guru is urging us to accept our one chance at salvation and to quaff deeply this nectar that he has showered upon us. He has carried the message from his predecessors: Lord Brahmā, Śrī Nārada, Śrī Vyāsa, Śrī Madhva, Śrī Mādhavendra, Śrī Īśvara Purī, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, Śrī Nityānanda, Śrī Rūpa and Sanātana, Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa, Śrī Narottama, Śrī Viśvanātha, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābajī, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. The essence of their love in the form of divine instructions have been lucidly explained in modern language by none other than our very own Śrī Guru Śrīla Prabhupāda, and it is for us to take his every word to heart as the rope out of the dark abyss of material existence.

Let there be no confusion in the matter—we are nothing but the adopted dogs of the *sampradāya Ācārya* Śrī Guru. If Śrī Guru orders us to go sleep in the dirt then, like an obedient hound who is faithful only to his own master, we must make our beds under a tree until he calls us. Our prayers must echo as one that we may increase our eternal *sevā* to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, through service to the spiritual master, for Śrī Guru Prabhupāda is none other than Kṛṣṇa's direct representative. Let us therefore celebrate each and every moment that we may spend in the bliss of service to his lotus feet, for the feet of Śrī Guru, our Śrīla Prabhupāda, shelter the world through the tsunami flood of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Celebrating your Vyāsa-pūjā for this year of 2020.

I offer my most humble obeisances unto you.

*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*

Thank you for the greatest gift you have given to me and to all humanity. Maybe not everyone has received it, but it's there always, through the mercy of your books, where your great presence lies. I am always thankful that I had the opportunity to serve you through typing/composing/transcribing your books – *Bhagavad-gītā*, *The Nectar of Devotion*, *Kṛṣṇa Book*, *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. I am most fortunate to have come in contact with you and to have been able to listen, and type your holy words. Millions of thank yous cannot really express my gratitude for the gift of being able to serve you.

And as well, to be with you Śrīla Prabhupāda, while you were present on the earth in your body. It was a great gift. I thank you over and over. I think I needed your physical presence so somehow you came to me. I love you Śrīla Prabhupāda. You taught me yourself what love is.

I saw you first at Tompkins Square Park, heard you chant and speak about the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. I chanted along and the seed was planted, and eventually the circumstances of my life brought me directly to your service.

Things are crazy in the world right now, Śrīla Prabhupāda, with the coronavirus. Will we get through this? Is it the end of the world as we know it? Will it be a wonderful new beginning? We don't know how it's all going to turn out. The one thing I know is that I can chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and that the glorious *mahā-mantra* protects me and nourishes me and frees me from fear. As you sang, *bhajahū re mana śrī nanda-nandana abhaya caraṇāravinda re*. "My dear mind, just worship the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa which is the place of all fearlessness." I am still fearful in the mind at times, for sure, but the *mahā-mantra* is my true shelter. What would I do without that? So I thank you over

and over again.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, all glories to your lotus feet! They are my true shelter. Through them I can come to connect with the beloved cowherd boy, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as well as His beloved Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and all the residents of Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma.

I pray I can offer some more service to you in this lifetime, and that somehow I can share your eternal gift to others. By your grace it will be. All is your grace.

Haribol Śrīla Prabhupāda! I love you! Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Your aspiring servant,

Arundhati Devi Dasi

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to you, our beloved spiritual master.

We hear their hoofs pounding the Earth as they run, their dewlaps fiercely swaying from side to side, their long ears flopping in the wind. Where are they going? Are they running with fear away from harm?

A new, tasty, hay bale is arriving pierced by the tractor’s spear and lowered into the silver hay ring. Fresh hay is pure joy for the cows unfettered by any fear or anxiety.

We, humans, are hoping and waiting for the unseen germ COVID-19 to pass us by or destroy us; in the meantime, the cows are joyful, their stomachs full. Humans are worried about their health, their longevity, and how long the government restrictions of isolation and “lockdown” is necessary to preserve the health of as many people as possible. Then there is the fear of financial ruin due to restrictions of isolation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have saved us from this mental anguish. You have given us a purpose, a mission that forces us above fear and loneliness. Your mission of cow protection has forced us out of self-pity, forced us to think first of the cows and their happiness. You have given us the holy name to take shelter under, both *japa* and *kīrtana*. You have given us your books to ease our minds with supreme knowledge. But for us here at ISCOWP, it is your cow protection mission that unites with our hearts most deeply. We hear your praises of how dear the cows are to Lord Kṛṣṇa. We hear your instructions about how we can become happy when the cows are happy.

People do not know what they are doing in the name of economic development. The influence of Kali will keep them in the darkness of ignorance. Despite all endeavors for peace and prosperity, they must try to see the cows

and the bulls happy in all respects. Foolish people do not know how one earns happiness by making the cows and bulls happy, but it is a fact by the law of nature. Let us take it from the authority of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and adopt the principles for the total happiness of humanity. (Śrīla Prabhupāda in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.17.3 Purport)

Fortunately, the cows are easy to please. How uncomplicated they are! Even more wondrous is how appreciative they are of our smallest human efforts to care for them. Some hay, some fresh grass, some fly wipe, fresh cool water, sufficient pasture to roam, companionship with us, and their sisters and brothers are enough for them to be satisfied with their lives.

Following the worn cow path through the woods, we find Akshobhya wearing his woolly winter coat utilizing a fallen tree branch to scratch his forehead and then his neck. His heavy winter coat must itch as the weather turns warmer and spring approaches. Deeper in the bushes are Nara and Jahnava enjoying a private moment of affection as Nara licks Jahnava's neck. Jahnava is in ecstasy until Nara forgets he has horns, and one lightly pokes Jahnava in the neck. Jahnava is a bit surprised but continues enjoying Nara's continuous licks. Jahnava is a resilient girl.

As the woods open to the fields, the cow path takes us through the front pasture. Padmaganda is guarding the pathway and not allowing anyone to walk beyond him. Anasuya is the first one to approach Padma, and they begin to swing their heads (both adorned with sharp-pointed horns) at each other, echoing loud clicking sounds when their horns clash. The battle goes on until Anasuya steps back and decides upon a different tactic. She approaches Padma with her tongue extended and gives him a few licks on his forehead. Anasuya then calmly walks beyond Padmaganda towards the new hay bale.

Most of the cows are gathered around the new hay bales eating happily. Some members of the herd are sitting, eyes closed, ears perked up, peacefully chewing their cud. Sitting next to Amrita, we can hear her deep, rhythmic breathing. All three of the Brahmans in the herd breathe with the same otherworldly peacefulness. The ISCOWP staff and members provided the cows the hay, which has made them happy. When the cows are happy, everyone who helped make them happy is happy. Pleasing the cows pleases the human soul.

You have given us a simple solution to these most challenging

times. We, as your disciples and grand disciples, must protect cows. Protecting the cows means keeping the cows happy. We must convince others to protect cows, and we must spread the knowledge of cow protection worldwide. Why? If we do so, you have instructed us the entire world will become happier under the protection of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

A society devoid of cow protection and brahminical culture is not under the direct protection of the Lord, just as the prisoners in the jails are not under the protection of the king but under the protection of a severe agent of the king. Without cow protection and cultivation of the brahminical qualities in human society, at least for a section of the members of society, no human civilization can prosper at any length. (Śrīla Prabhupāda in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.14.34, Purport)

Please, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, bless your devotees with the strength, knowledge, determination, and perseverance to establish cow protection worldwide for the happiness of the cows, all the inhabitants of the Earth, and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Your servants at ISCOWP,

Balabhadra Dasa and Chaya Devi Dasi
International Society for Cow Protection, Inc.

*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*

All glories to His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Of the many memories I have of the early days, I decided to write one that has probably not been heard before.

In the spring of 1972, my so-called husband decided to take *sannyāsa*, and that meant I had to leave the temple we were in because he was never supposed to see me again. The closest temple was in Hong Kong (we were in Tokyo) and that meant it was also the cheapest ticket. So off I went, myself and the Lord Jagannātha Deities, which is another pastime.

In Hong Kong were Bhūrijana and Jagattāriṇī Dāsī, struggling to make devotees. Passing through were Sudāmā Vipra Mahārāja and Romaharṣaṇa who were going to Manila to open a temple. They invited me to help out, probably because I knew how to cook and had Deities.

In the Philippines I was surprised at how receptive some of the people were. We went out on *harer nāma saṅkīrtana* daily and started the Sunday Feast program. So many young people started coming, many from the Ananda Marga Society. The Ananda Marga Society was a synthesis of tantric and Vedic philosophies. Some newspapers called them tantric terrorists. Six defectors were murdered and the leader was imprisoned for a few years, although he declared himself innocent. Human skulls were used in their practice and the goal was impersonal liberation. So, I guess they were told to meditate in the graveyards because some would ask me if we meditated in the graveyard. When I said no, it seemed as if they were relieved. One person wanted to join us, but his relatives showed up with a gun, so we didn't try to convince him.

One time we were invited to a gathering of Ananda Marga devotees to give a talk and *kīrtana* after they gave their presentation. It was in a very large room with lots of windows with wooden shutters. At one point it was as if a large cloud came through the room and the shutters started opening and slamming shut. I knew

it was a bunch of ghosts coming through! I guess that is what can happen when you meditate in a graveyard, you may have some ghosts (*bhūtas* and *pretas*) follow you back. The Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra seemed to clear the bad vibes in the room.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving us such a wonderful path. I am so grateful, otherwise I may have been one of those people meditating in graveyards.

Śrīla Prabhupāda kī jaya!

Chintamani Dasi

The Ballad of Corona Gaol

Epic facility on the salver of Fortune, She
Serves us good moment for gathering wit
Sombre in plenty, a twist of acidity, for
To contemplate gravely the part we inherit:
Your impetus, honesty, frankly, the majesty –
All souls imbibe that sense of your verve
That turns on surrender and your place in descendency
A matchless mentor for this soul to serve
. . . if only I could!

For how should that attempt look, it's pallor and savour?
What will our world make of the tale of our saviour?
Will I still guard against prejudiced neighbour?
Smelt Judas Iscariot in my behaviour?

The person, the person. . . your personality
Was who was trusted, with no turning back
No calamity here, you were meta-reality
With all provided, whatever the lack
As a vision of clarity , carried over for thirstiness
Of future seekers who, when tired of cant,
Turn upon turn in the quest for the genuine,
Arrive at your prose, esteem it best extant
. . . if only I would!

How should that attempt be without any waver?
By trust in the fatherly love of our saviour
Transforming the life of an errant craver?
“Believe me and trust, you'll not be a failure”.

With all considered, it's far from rosy
In the jailhouse of life – so much to despair
Of and love and safety devoid of a laity,
Beggars we are for the Supreme Affair.
With measures in place we're set to resume
The proximity link with our dearest Lord

A matter of faith, endurance and greed
For treading the path you have led us toward.
. . . so then I could, I would, I should
. . . .serve my Śrīla Prabhupāda!

My dear respected Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

It is with the greatest humility at my command and with a straw between my teeth that I offer this Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā offering to you, on this your 125th Appearance Day.

In the life of a devotee there will be many ups and downs. No one is immune from that. That is the nature of this world. And as one continues in his devotional service steadily over the years, he will definitely see changes in himself as to how he is developing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Without doubt he will sometimes even surprise himself when he tries to push forward the mission and Movement of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

It is therefore not surprising when one meets opposition to this advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. People will try to criticise and even attack him for his stance. But a steady devotee continues to do his duty under the protection of the Lord and so makes steady progress in his march back to Godhead.

This year, I finally bit the bullet and decided to write and publish my first book *Our Vaikuntha Planet: How To Eliminate Anxiety For 8 Billion People*, which is available on Amazon, incidentally, or from my website: www.daivalimited.com.

I must admit I was feeling some of the ecstasy you expressed when you were writing your own books, Śrīla Prabhupāda, when you made the following statements:

“Writing is the real business.”

“Books are the basis.”

“Books are our family business.”

“Whatever little success we have had in our Movement, it is because of our books.”

“Book distribution is for everyone.”

“It is the duty of every disciple to see how he is advancing in Kṛṣṇa consciousness by putting into words our philosophy in writing.”

And one Chinese proverb that kept reverberating:

“The faintest writing is more powerful than the most powerful memory.”

With all these wonderful instructions and realisations, I felt truly blessed by this one drop of mercy you have bestowed upon me. For writing is surely one thing I can learn to do nicely, and so encourage all devotees to do the same, including my brother, Caturbhujā Prabhu.

Writing is perhaps one of the most difficult things to master, but by continually honing our skills and meditating on the right words to use at the right time, to edit for force, and to realise only a fool takes himself to be his own editor – all these ecstasies that you have given us, Śrīla Prabhupāda are truly mind-boggling.

Our only business is *śravaṇam-kīrtanam*, that is listening and chanting Kṛṣṇa’s glories. What that means in my case is reading and writing. You ordered me: “...continue your education and become Kṛṣṇa conscious”. So, reading is listening to your eternal voice in your books, and writing is *kīrtanam*, putting what we have understood from you in some format, from our mouth, into print or digitally. Input and output, as it is understood, in this age of technology. Both give the devotee the greatest pleasure. When we are finally giving of ourselves, imparting what we have understood from our eternal guru, that is the greatest welfare work.

One time you said, “what is all this haribol business?” We have to do something that has eternal effect. That is writing. We should be able to pick up any book and see Kṛṣṇa and be able to write Kṛṣṇa from any field of endeavour. It is being able to have an intelligible conversation with a child or the greatest Nobel prize laureate or statesman. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Not simply, “*neti, neti...*” I

don't want you to come here.... I am this...I am that..."

The fools and rascals are unable to truly understand what is Kṛṣṇa consciousness, although they may profess to be practicing it for many years together. Unless they take shelter of a pure devotee, their life is simply a misery, and it will continue to be more and more miserable, until they stir from their slumber and come out of their wolf clothing and learn to follow. Unable to understand what is what, they are simply wasting their time. So life goes on. The elephants will dance and the dogs will bark and simply take everyone down with them. This is going on. That's all. Unable to distinguish between matter from spirit, the fools and rascals are continuing to play their music and so drowning themselves and their rats into the sea. When the pied-piper is himself a rascal, what to do? We have simply to separate the milk from the water. That is our only business.

I am truly indebted, Śrīla Prabhupāda and I simply request that I be allowed to continue writing for my own purification and benefit, and for the benefit of others, until I leave the planet.

Thank you very much, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your insignificant servant,

Karanodakasayi Visnu Dasa Adhikari
London

*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*

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my most humble obeisances at your transcendental lotus feet.

You wrote in a letter to Kadamba Kānana (December 8, 1975), “The mercy of the spiritual master is always there, but we have to take it. Just like the sun, it is there for everyone, but we at least have to stand in a receptive place to get the benefit.” You came and personally grabbed us and lovingly practically forced us to take your mercy, to put us in that receptive place. You conquered us by your love and devotion to your spiritual master and to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and by your love for us.

Thank you for your divine books, thank you for all your instructions in your lectures and letters, thank you for your *kīrtanas* and *bhajans*. It is inconceivable how you did so much in just a few short years – and you always remained above the material qualities, and always completely dependent on Kṛṣṇa’s mercy.

Thank you for giving us the knowledge how to differentiate spirit from matter. Thank you for giving us the means to remember Kṛṣṇa always by chanting His holy names: *Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare!*

Thank you for teaching us what good qualities are and for personally exemplifying each one in full:

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Fearlessness; purification of one’s existence; cultivation of spiritual knowledge; charity; self-control; performance of sacrifice; study of the Vedas; austerity; simplicity; nonviolence; truthfulness; freedom from anger; renunciation; tranquility; aversion to faultfinding; compassion for all living entities; freedom from covetousness; gentleness; modesty; steady determination; vigor; forgiveness; fortitude; cleanliness; and freedom from envy and from the passion for honor — these transcendental qualities, O son of Bharata, belong to godly

men endowed with divine nature. — *Bhagavad-gītā* 16.1-3

Just as Lord Kṛṣṇa cannot be seen by ordinary eyes, but by transcendental eyes, so you gave us this transcendental vision to be able to see Lord Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee. You are not an ordinary person to be seen or recognized by material senses. Your quality of unexpected mercy was shown in so many ways. I once made a "Prabhupāda" hat for you and you accepted it and started wearing it. It was actually a little too large for you, but you wore it for a long time. There are so many photos with you wearing this hat. So for a little gift, you bestowed so much mercy on me.

I pray to be eternally engaged in service to your lotus feet.

Your humble servant,

Balai Devi Dasi

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-salākayā
cakṣur unmīlitaḥ 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 124th Appearance Day, also coinciding with the 54th 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 ourselves 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 centre 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 festival and spiritual welfare programmes enacted through you 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 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” which could become a magnet for attracting devotees. **This is precisely what** Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s Movement emphasised. It is fitting in these troubled and panic times to remember Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His devotees.

At a talk recently, I spoke on the following which is reproduced from an article I wrote:

In the 15th and 16th Century, the stage was set for the mesmerising movement of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu to begin. The glorious vibrations were going to be felt far and wide from where He was born, Śrī Māyāpur Dhām, Yoga Pīṭha, in West Bengal. The Lord predicated this during his presence.

Three centuries later, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur, in archaeological findings and in discovery of the birth place of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu in 1871, enchanted devotees all over India who awoke to this news.

Throughout his lifetime Bhaktivinoda Thākur wrote prolifically. He contributed a great deal to writing Vaiṣṇava poetry, and shaped development of communities towards self-realisation, touching the lives of millions who benefitted not only in Calcutta (Kolkata), West Bengal, but throughout British India and beyond its shore. Articles appear in *The Times* and in other prominent British media outlets.

Disciples of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī came to London in 1933 where Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, a towering personality’s message was being propagated for the first time in the West.

Under direct instructions of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī, some of his senior students, His Holiness Bhakti Bon Mahārāja and Bhakti Pradip Tirtha Mahārāja went to London in 1933. There, they met with Secretary of State of India, Lord Zetland and Miss Daisy Cellia Bowtel (alias, Vinod Vani Devi Dasi who became an ardent student of Bhakti Pradip Titra Mahārāja) in England, and who was part of the genteel English Aristocracy, and with others unearthed further works, of Bhaktivinoda Thākur.

The focus of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu's message was to leave a lasting legacy. He addressed the human condition by bringing everyone to a pure devotional platform of God or Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's message and its relevance today is that people can unite under a common platform in elevating themselves through congregational chanting of the holy names without resorting to a bodily platform of designations and false identities created through *māyā*.

With scholarly works in more than six languages, including Sanskrit, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and his disciples' writings brought the teachings of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu to the modern age, and to millions of Vaiṣṇava devotees. Such works are to be seen at the British Library.

Today the mission of Gaudiya Mission is to promote the message of the Lord to the West. The paradigm principle for doing this is universal brotherhood and pure unalloyed love of Godhead among communities and reference to such textual scriptures as *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

So I finally return to my point which is love of Godhead. By example and by your books, you Śrīla Prabhupāda have provided us a method and a tremendous insight into developing our role and attitude in devotional service. By highly practical advice and guidance you have steered devotees along the path loving Kṛṣṇa, and imbibing the science of Kṛṣṇa with adulation.

Today, of all days, we seek your causeless mercy.

Your humble servant,

Cathurbhuj Dasa
London

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my obeisances.

In your purport of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.22.47 you write, “A joker’s activities simply arouse laughter, and a person who tries to repay the spiritual master or teacher of the transcendental message of Kṛṣṇa becomes a laughing stock just like a joker because it is not possible to repay such a debt. The best friend and benefactor of all people is one who awakens humanity to its original Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

As always happens whenever I attempt to express my appreciation for the gift you have given me – the gift of pure and perfect knowledge, the gift of hope and light, the gift that keeps on giving eternally, the gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness – I feel very foolish and inept and yes, I do feel like a joker.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, all of us who became your disciples when you were present are now entering into the final stage of life. Many of my godbrothers and godsisters have already left their bodies. Old age, disease and death are all around and even some of our children, one of my sons included, are already gone.

By presenting the words of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, in your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, we can understand that it is only the material body that undergoes birth, death, disease and old age; the soul is eternal. You gave us the transcendental teachings of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism and taught by example the process of *bhakti-yoga*, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As such you have given us the path of awakening to our original pure blissful existence. By your mercy we’re able to overcome all adversities in this world and rather than grieve and lament for the loss of loved ones we instead rejoice, knowing that even the slightest endeavor on this path guarantees an opportunity in the next life for further advancement. What’s more, if we follow your instructions and example with utmost sincerity and determination we can go back home, back to Godhead in this very life.

So I beg you Śrīla Prabhupāda, on the occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā to please accept at your lotus feet this feeble offering of gratitude from this laughing stock joker to whom you gave the name,

Swarup Dasa

Husband of a Prostitute

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to my beloved spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda. I was born in the darkest ignorance and you are opening my eyes with the torch of knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I offer you my sincere obeisances as you unhesitatingly offer us pure devotional service even though we persistently reject many aspects of your transcendental advice and our minds present arguments and excuses contrary to going back to Godhead.

I pray I can embrace all of your Kṛṣṇa conscious teachings and enthusiastically implement them daily into my practical life. You are so kind to show us how we can engage 24 hours a day in service to Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya in a very practical way. Especially to turn the conditioned souls around and save them, as well as ourselves from going to the deepest darkest regions of hellish existence. *Harināma*, book distribution, temple programs, traveling and preaching, home programs – the list is practically unlimited and exciting at the same time. Devotee life is very ecstatic.

As a materialist I played the part of a husband of a prostitute. There is no auspiciousness in such a life. It is such a tremendous disturbance, and there is no peace for even a moment. Service to my unchaste senses which were never satisfied and relentlessly haunting me with attraction to unlimited mesmerized dreams of chasing fantasies and mirages in the desert like universes of this material world. The husband of a prostitute is tormented and tortured constantly. He is always threatened by the consorts who are intensely vying for the opportunity to eschew every inkling of sense pleasure possible in material nature especially in sex indulgence. And the result of such a contaminated life is only misery. There is never any satisfaction. You very intelligently explain that this life of ignorance of self-realization is the greatest defeat in this human form of life. Materialists do not realize how they are wasting such a rare opportunity.

On a morning walk dated March 23, 1968, you gave us this beautiful prayer, “And praying to Kṛṣṇa, ‘Please give me strength.’ Hare, ‘O Energy of Kṛṣṇa, O Kṛṣṇa, I am fallen, I have no strength.

Please accept me.’ That’s all. ‘I have no qualification. I am frail. I am trying, but I am failing.’ All these appeals should be made. And Kṛṣṇa is all-powerful, He can do anything. Even we, we do not perform, trying our best, if we fail, Kṛṣṇa will help us. Just like a child tries his best, but he falls down. The mother takes up and, ‘All right. Come on. Walk.” Like that.’

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I pray to you for the inspiration to submerge myself constantly in pure devotional service. In these final moments and last few days of my life I pray to offer you practical devotional service. I hope to do that in the form of Kṛṣṇa Lunch. I am not sure if that will be the path I will be able to traverse. I pray, pray and pray that it will be. It will be such an opportunity to offer *prasādam*, Kṛṣṇa conscious literature, association, the holy name, and many other opportunities. Especially I wish to bring full-time devotees to your lotus feet. But whatever path you offer me I pray that I may wholeheartedly embrace it so that at the very end I can meet you with my head held high that I pleased you devoting this life to you.

Hare Kṛṣṇa and thank you, thank you, thank you for bringing me to your lotus feet and devotional family.

Your aspiring servant,

Govinda Datta Dasa

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

You saw a beautiful piece of land in Raman Reti and desired to let there be a temple here and devotional service to the Supreme Lord. By your strong desire, the most lovely temple of Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma manifested. In this way you introduced Vṛndāvana to the world.

Still today, the gorgeous worship is expanding and with it, the glories of Śrī Vṛndāvana. Now people from every part of the world come here and see this elegant temple. They take *darśana* of Their most beautiful Lordships Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi, Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma, Śrī Śrī Rādhā Śyāmasundara, and see how with great devotion and opulence the worship is continuing.

I have been told by my older godsiblings that you once said that Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma Mandir is the beating heart of ISKCON. Here, many sincere devotees are engaged in maintaining this wonderful legacy that you in your supreme kindness have bestowed upon the world.

Although I'm completely fallen and addicted to useless sense enjoyment, you, out of your causeless compassion, accepted me as your disciple. You have mercifully allowed me to try and assist in helping to maintain this glorious temple and expand the glories of Vṛndāvana.

We have seen the amazing pictures that Gurudasa Prabhu had the presence of mind to take when you took the devotees on *parikrama* of Vraja. Circumambulating Nanda Baba's Temple in Nandagram, riding the palanquin in Barsana, and bathing in the Yamuna at Brahmanda Ghat. You have so kindly engaged me in this service to the Vaiṣṇavas and I beg for your mercy to be able to continue this service as long as I am able. I hope by serving the feet of the wonderful Vaiṣṇavas from all over the world in this way, I will obtain your causeless mercy.

On this day with all my humility, I bow down to your soft lotus feet and thank you for saving me from the darkest of ignorance that was my life before meeting Your Divine Grace. I was hopelessly going in the wrong direction, seeking the purpose of life through the basest of hedonism. Your wonderful books turned my head from searching through the grossest illusions for the truth. Now I search through the transcendental reality that is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, engaging in His divine service.

I will never be able to repay the limitless debt that I have to Your divine self. I only seek that by my insignificant service of continuing to spread the glories of your amazing Vṛndāvana, you will kindly put your compassionate glance upon this useless soul.

Your most insignificant servant,

Deena Bandhu Dasa

Your Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

*mūkuṁ karoti vācāraṁ
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

Fifty years ago I listened to you warn us that the present ways of living we condemned, doomed and would 100% collapse. Very few took your warning with the seriousness it deserved. Now all around us we see the world as we have known it is collapsing, and I at least anticipate it will become much worse.

Yet, while most of the world is cowering in fear and hysteria, and governments are creating trillions of new Dollars and Euros and Pounds and Rupees from the air in hopes of saving everything, I personally feel no fear at all. Why?

Because you brought the message of *Bhagavad-gītā* to us. We know the body is not the self, and we know the self cannot be touched or harmed by anything material. We know we have this body because of our enmity towards Lord Kṛṣṇa. You taught us to take the medicine of *bhakti-yoga* to get cured of this enmity. We keep taking it and we are confident that some day we will be lifted from this ocean of insanity.

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*

I Was Born to Serve You

I sometimes wonder, “Was I your servant in the past? Is it possible that I and your other disciples were sent by your guru Mahārāja to help you spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness?” Or was I just a lost and useless soul, a frustrated hippie fortunate enough to meet Your Divine Grace and engage in your service?

The latter is certainly true. Regarding the former, you spoke these encouraging words:

My spiritual master knew it that alone I could not do this great work. Therefore He has very kindly sent you all to help me in this task. I accept you therefore as representatives of my guru Mahārāja playing as my affectionate disciples.

Some may argue that this statement was just an expression of your humility. And no doubt it was. But it’s deeply inspiring to think that I took birth to serve you and your Movement.

During my teenage years I sometimes saw devotees in my hometown of Los Angeles. They even started a temple in my neighborhood. In 1967, when I visited Haight Ashbury, I ran into devotees there. Then when I went away to University in 1969, devotees from the local temple were doing *kīrtana* daily on campus. And I often heard the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra on the radio. So from the age of seventeen, devotees became part of the landscape of my life. Was this a coincidence or was this part of a divine plan for one who takes birth to serve you? Perhaps we’ll never know for sure. Still, for me it feels like meeting you was meant to be.

But maybe I did take birth, like everyone else, to pursue the mission of being God. If so, it would be audacious of me to think that I took birth to help you spread this Movement, especially because I

wasn't born in a devotee family; not even a brāhmaṇa or religious family? Plus, my teenage pastimes often centered around breaking the regulative principles. Certainly the path I was traversing was a dark and dangerous one. Still, the thought that I took birth in America to serve you, that maybe in the past I had a connection with devotional service, not only inspires me to no end, but ingratiates me to your eternal service. When I feel, "I was born to serve you," it deepens my connection and commitment to you, and gives me the determination I need to overcome the obstacles on the path of becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious and sharing it with others. The thought that "I was born to serve you" keeps me constantly endeavoring to more deeply understand you, your teachings and your mission, and it impels me to try, day in and day out, to personify your teachings.

But maybe I am proud and foolish to think this way. Maybe I just happened to be in the right place at the right time and by some stroke of luck I took up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Maybe that fortune had nothing to do with me or my past; maybe it was entirely due to your mercy. Yet, if I can dance to your drum and imbibe your thoughts and teachings, don't I have the right to believe that my birth was ultimately meant for your service?

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I have always felt most fortunate to be able to do something, anything, for you. I often think that if I didn't have your service I wouldn't have a good reason to do anything. And even if I were showered with material opportunities, opulences and pleasures, what happiness could it bring if not engaged in your service?

You know me better than I know myself. I never felt qualified to serve you, but I knew that serving a pure devotee is a rare opportunity and should be taken advantage of. It was your mercy to engage me in your service and tolerate my feeble attempts to serve you. You know I am a fallen soul, but somehow I had a desire to serve and thus you gave me responsibilities in your Movement. And even when I didn't serve well, made numerous mistakes or sometimes even gave up my service, you never gave up on me. You continued to engage me, tirelessly supported and instructed me, and continued to pray for my spiritual advancement. Therefore, how can I ever give up your service. How can I ever think of doing anything other than pushing on your Movement, the Movement you risked your life to give birth to and raise?

So, was I Kṛṣṇa conscious in my past life? Were we together before

and again reunited in this life? Was I sent by your guru mahārāja to help you? Who knows? But one thing is for sure, no matter how I or anyone looks at it, I was born to serve you!

Your unqualified but fortunate eternal servant,

Mahatma Dasa

Always Crying for My Service

My dearest father and eternal spiritual master,

I am not inclined to make public offerings. You remember that in front of you, despite your best efforts, I remained reserved and reticent. I preferred remaining distant and not enjoying familiar talks. My intention – to avoid familiarity. I wanted to do everything to encourage you to correct me without hesitation.

I regularly speak to you from my heart – especially how, after you left, I felt lost. Fortunately, for many years I was able to be of service and, in that service, I felt you with me, guiding me. I remember your first assignment for me – sending me to Delhi alone. For six months I wandered, alone, homeless, often starving, criticized by godbrothers, meeting opposition in my preaching. Luckily, I took shelter of something you shared with me, “I always see my spiritual master present with me.” You enabled me to experience the same – your spiritual companionship as I endured the unendurable. Your divine kindness turned the externally hellish into nectar. Taking inspiration from *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* I’d pray the sun would never set, so 24 hours I could serve your objectives.

You already know, but I write it today, that my sins are so vast, my offenses so many, that I am due many lives in wretched bodies and circumstances. I accept what is due me would take billions of Brahma’s lives, who lives 311 trillion years.

You repeatedly referenced *śāstra* how Kṛṣṇa is supremely grateful. Even a speck of devotional service unintentionally done is so savored by the sweet-hearted Prince of Dwarka, He gratefully forever remembers it. Kṛṣṇa guarantees to give any such person a second chance in his next life as a human being. Yet, I feel my store of misdeeds should not be forgiven. Enduring the sufferings in this world, I must maturely learn the lessons offered by Kṛṣṇa’s Department of Corrections.

Despite being open to accepting this suffering, I see you, my dear spiritual master, bestowing upon me your divine grace. I understand you’re grateful for my insignificant and bungled attempts at service. I have seen this personally, hundreds of times. You forced me, despite my resistance, to sit by your side. Thus, I could closely inspect your actions. I have noted how unaffected you are by material things,

only caring for spirit – for Kṛṣṇa Himself and the lost souls you were here to save.

A special instance in Vṛndāvana comes to mind. Having a *satsaṅga*, the listeners packed up tight, an elderly Bengali widow, adorned with a tattered saree, entered holding a marigold she likely plucked from your garden.

When that Vaiṣṇavī entered the room, your eyes became fixated on that poor excuse of a flower she proffered in your direction. I studied you carefully. As you spoke, your eyes flowed from person-to-person, establishing a rapport. Then your glance returned to that lonely flower. The lady slowly wended her way towards the front, creating quite a stir – causing people to lean this way and that so she could pass. You patiently ignored her disturbance, without missing a beat, adroitly weaving a narrative customized to the heart of each person, surcharging their attachment for Kṛṣṇa. In between, your eyes snapped back to that marigold. You expressed such eagerness. It was almost like lust, but you certainly were free from even a tinge. Yet that blossom called out to you. You couldn't keep your eyes off it.

At long last that *mātājī* arrived in front of your desk, where she bowed down, offering her respects, forcing those crammed in front of you to disperse. Quite dexterously she held aloft her gift. Rising, cradling her right elbow in her left hand, she delivered it to you. I watched the two of you, eyes locked and the great compassion and love your face reflected.

Gracefully with the flower between your thumb, index and middle fingers, you put it in front of your nose. Closing your eyes, you deeply inhaled the fragrance. I attended the nuances of your tone as you stated, “Thank you very much”, which expressed a degree of gratitude suitable to receiving a most cherished valuable gift.

Let me restate that initially I didn't want to be your disciple. In India I wanted to find a perfect teacher who could perfectly answer my questions on *Vedānta*. I learned from daily *Gītā* study, and local Vaiṣṇava practice, that I should find a pure soul in disciplic succession and serve them hand and foot. When pleased that person would enlighten me. That was my mission and method before knowing you.

I had heard of you and it was certified you were a “very good Swami.” However, when I came within the fold of ISKCON and read your books, it became resplendently clear that you were the rarest of souls, a *Mahājana* of the likes of Sripad Madhava-Acharya. Please

don't be upset by this praise. I listened as devotees gave me a new definition, coming from your humble advice, that one should not be eager to serve *vapuhī*, but to serve *vāñī*. Frankly, I was astonished devotees were taking initiation from you. You were so high above us.

I heard how your excellency manifested from birth all the behaviors of a pure devotee – yet you waited eleven years before taking initiation. Indeed, it is imperative to take initiation. However for me, I was so sinful, so foolish, I thought that it would take a lifetime to be fit to be a disciple, to be certain to follow the vows.

I considered the facts; you waited 11 years. Analyzing my family history I discerned that I had barely 35 years left to live. Thus I decided to prepare for initiation by staunchly observing *sādhana* for 33 years (3 x 11). You were far above me. Better I not bring on you the burden of being your disciple, better to take *dīkṣā* from a disciple of your disciple, just as they did in the Madhava *sampradāya*. However, Srīman Rupanuga Prabhu, your representative, had his way, and here I am 50 years later still trying to come up to the mark as your disciple.

You summoned me to India, and I couldn't refuse. Serving as temple commander during the 1971 Delhi festival, I was trying to build a fire for cooking. Coming out to see me, and giving some suggestions, you then invited me into your room, and had me read *Nectar of Devotion* to you. After some time you nodded for me to stop and then, leaning forward, stated, "Whenever you have a spare moment you should come and sit and listen." I was disquieted by this. It was delightful, but fearful, that the worst could happen – becoming familiar with you. I countered, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, I understand you're reluctant to instruct disciples when you think their feelings will be hurt. But please, don't consider my feelings. When you find any fault, please correct without hesitation." I did not need to say this, but still it felt appropriate.

Soon after you appointed me as Delhi T.P. During my time in Delhi you came to visit 18 times, gave me many managerial roles and called me to visit you 49 times. Thus I had to frequent your room, not only on your order to come and listen, but also out of duty to discuss projects. Also when you visited Delhi you were my special 'guest' for me to frequently look in on.

Six and a half years you tolerated my undaunted attempts at keeping a strict distance of respect from you. Six and a half years you allowed my attempts at distancing, yet you always prevailed,

directing my respect so I became ever more intimate with you.

I would silently enter your room, hoping, praying, you'd not notice (or at least ignore me), just carrying on with your vastly important business. Yet you would, to my great consternation, stop everything and divert your full and undivided attention to me.

My dear Lord, my dear Master, my dear Father – many years my body has been racked with disease and overwhelming pain. Yet, I don't pray for relief. These are shadows to be tolerated. You gave me many assignments that I failed to complete. So much kindness you gave me, yet I am failing you. This is my real pain and suffering. I don't ask for relief from future suffering or horrible rebirths. My burning desire is throughout every moment, every life, to never forget our relationship and be allowed to serve. Please accept my only request: when at last I re-emerge in human form, I be as independent as in this life. That by the age of three, latest by eight, I find you out and offer, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, here I am, your Tejīyas Dasa reporting for duty. My Master, give me any assignment, no matter how impossible. I will work, sacrifice, shed blood, tears, my life, until it is done." Awaiting our next reunion, begging to eternally remain your disciple.

A lost soul

From the darkness of the womb, through bewildering childhood, I held onto an inexplicable hope that someone called God, would reach into my life and give meaning, purpose and the joy of His companionship. After lifetimes of wandering without achieving anything worth a farthing, I finally came to the point of begging in prayer for this miracle to happen. Reading *Gītā* from the age of 14, giving up meat at 17 and attempting yoga, still more eager for this revelation to come upon reaching 19, in 1969, I fell on my knees and cried out loud; “Oh Lord, wherever I must go, whatever I must do, however difficult it will be, please, please show me the way back to my natural state, as this just cannot be all my life is supposed to be! This just is not where I belong. I am alone, cold, lost and very sad”

A prayer answered

Within days of that desperate prayer of claiming my readiness to accept any new identity, role or tribulation, that Lord, that Great God within our hearts and pervading all, reached out with His kindest gesture to answer my request, in the form of His own dearest friend and servant, appearing on Earth and in front of me as Om Vishnupad, Paramahansa, Parivrajakacharya 108, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. The actual helping hand of God reached out to me, in the form of Śrī Gurudeva. Just seeing his photo, emanating divine wisdom, humility and dignity, I instantly heard within my core **“this is whom you seek, He shall save you”** and I accepted that gift, then turning the next page, I read His first words: **“Kṛṣṇa, the sound is transcendental”** and I thought, “of course, it is true”. Thus 50 years ago, I began an incredible journey, a great adventure, which step by arduous step, began to pull me out of my prison of false presumptions, muddled thinking, self-imposed loneliness/lowliness and darkness, all the while encouraged, constantly forgiven, instructed and led by my Divine Master, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Step by step I dragged behind my godbrothers, who were doing so much better than I, yet Śrī Gurudeva never abandoned my need, holding my hand, speaking in my dreams, convincing me by his words and actions that this indeed was the way forward. This was the journey that I had long before begged to begin.

A journey begins

Although I claimed myself ready to undertake any trouble, Śrī Gurudeva knew how shallow was my resolve, how superficial my sincerity and kindly offered so many enticements to continue the journey. So much encouragement, so many options of how to proceed. Feeding me *prasādam*, far tastier than the finest delicacies. Forgiving my constant failures, He dragged me along the path ahead, ever the vanquisher of my stupidity, yet always the kind and doting grandfather and my divine master. But the adventure, oh the adventure! From middle class oblivion to enlistment in the Lord's own army, quickly elevated to Saṅkīrtana leader, having one of the first *saṅkīrtana* bus parties, speaking the philosophy of *Gītā* in hundreds of college classrooms, an assistant temple president, then president, founding temples, then temple president in Calcutta, India, His divine place of birth and within six exciting years, being asked to accompany His Divine Grace in the last months of his mortal pastimes. Qualified for none of it, but holding on by the grip of my fingernails, these first years were so fascinating, rewarding, enriching and sublime, it is hard to look back and believe it really happened, but it did, oh it did.

A debt incurred

What can be said about His kindness and to what extent can Śrī Gurudeva be praised before the debt incurred repaid? **"never enough, it is too large an amount!"** comes the refrain! This debt will enslave me in a labor of love, where just attempting to pay the interest charge will be my life's sole occupation and yet greatest joy, for the principal obligation incurred can never be repaid. But if I cannot repay, then at least let me bring a small bit of happiness to my divine master, instead of headaches and trouble. Let me be seen as an obedient son, who gives back those things which Śrī Gurudeva will appreciate and bring him pleasure. Yet again I am surprised to find that those things which bring him pleasure, also please the Lord and bring great happiness to me as well! Ahhhh, will the limitless horizon of his mercy ever end, as my debt has now increased again a million-fold and I am trapped in an endless cycle of debt upon debt! Will I ever escape it? **"No, never, but why would you wish to?"** comes the refrain! And it is true, for this 'debt' gives me purpose, a labor to grow my love and animate me in the actual service of the Divine Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which is the companionship for which I

prayed! Who would wish to escape these ropes of love, this service to our true master? Only a fool!

My last years

Now approaching my seventh decade in this fast-paced lifetime, my impending departure from this mortal frame becomes more clearly in focus. What will my epitaph read? Will I lose the human potential of transcendent thought altogether? Will my many offenses and failures demote me to some lower species, with no awareness of The Lord's beauty? More importantly, will my divine master Śrīla Prabhupāda be pleased with me? Will I give him any joy, or be only a burden? Will all my mustered sincerity be overwhelmed by my many failures? So many brothers in arms have fallen along the path, taking new births in higher dimensions, ever closer to the Lord's lotus feet, yet I remain here, still in need of much reform and improvements, with past regrets that haunt me and a doubt about my core strength to come up to the mark set by him. **"Do not yield to this impotence, this coward's shame"** comes that familiar voice. **"No, I shall not!"**, I reply. **"I shall not yield. I will fight, with my last gasps of air to please him, to honor him, to be what he always wanted me to be; a much better me, a dedicated follower, a genuine pilgrim. I may fail, but I will not stop trying."**

Having made this vow, today in front of my many godbrothers and sisters, in front of the Lord of all, may you all grant me your blessings to succeed, although I am prone to failure. Please help me remember that this is the end of this lifetime's opportunity, never to come again. We were given the kind helping hand of Śrīla Prabhupāda. We have his image burned into our hearts and even feel tears of love for him; a Vaiṣṇava, a dear friend of Lord Kṛṣṇa. We have every opportunity, under the dancing feet of Lord Nityānanda and His *senāpati* Śrīla Prabhupāda to reach the stars that shine upon the sublime land of cows and cowherds, where the divine flute animates every being. Let us stand up again, it is not too late today, but it may be too late tomorrow!

My final prayer

My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, I beg, with my face on the ground for your mercy. In your manifestation as Lord Nityānanda, please help me to serve your representative Śrīla Prabhupāda with dedicated sincerity. May my many advanced godbrothers and sisters, kindly forgive

my numerous offences and failures. May all my family members bless me with forgiveness and support my efforts to go forward. I beg Śrī Nāma Prabhu to someday dance on my tongue, just for the benefit of others. I am condemned, but let me bring your mercy to all those innocent souls who look towards me for encouragement. And may my wretched body be engaged always in your service, until it is consumed by time. The final boon I pray for, is to take birth in any place or condition that will allow me the direct service and association of my divine master Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Abhiram Dasa
Bhaktivedanta Rishikula, Mookambika Wildlife
Sanctuary, Udupi Dist. Karnataka

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

In this letter to Mrs. Sally Agarwal, you humbly and powerfully, reveal the depth and intensity of your unwavering determination to follow the instructions of your guru Mahārāja, at all costs.

New York
19 November, 1965

My dear daughter Sally,

I beg to thank you for your kind letter of the 16th instant and I have noted the contents carefully. I am glad to learn that you had been to your parent's house for a few days and now you have returned home. I am still more glad to learn that you are going to observe the third birthday of Miss Kamala Agarwal on Saturday next. On this occasion I should have presented her some ornaments but as I am a *sannyāsī* I can simply offer my blessing for her long life and good prosperity. She cannot now read otherwise at least I should have presented a set of my books. But you set aside one set of my books for her future reading when she will grow up a beautiful and educated girl with full God consciousness. I am obliged to your good daughter for awarding me a good degree as SWAMI JESUS which is actually a great honour for me. Sometimes the Lord speaks through an innocent child and I take this honour

as sent by Lord Jesus through an innocent child free from all formalities of the current society. Lord Jesus preached the message of God and I have taken up the same mission, and it would be a good luck for me if I can follow the footprints of Lord Jesus who preached the message of God in spite of all persecution. Lord Jesus is a living example of how one has to suffer in this material world simply for the matter of preaching the message of God.

Also, in your conclusion to your Bombay Vyāsa-pūjā address of 1936, you succinctly articulate the essence of love for Guru and Kṛṣṇa:

Personally, I have no hope for any direct service for the coming crores of births of the sojourn of my life, but I am confident that some day or other I shall be delivered from this mire of delusion in which I am at present so deeply sunk. Therefore let me with all my earnestness pray at the lotus feet of my divine master to allow me to suffer the lot for which I am destined due to my past misdoings, but to let me have this power of recollection: that I am nothing but a tiny servant of the Almighty Absolute Godhead, realized through the unflinching mercy of my divine master. Let me therefore bow down at his lotus feet with all the humility at my command.

With these two quotes as examples of your timeless *vāñī*, I humbly pray that I might imbibe their potency in the moment to moment living of the dwindling remainder of my life to render some meaningful service in your glorious *sañkīrtana* mission and Movement.

Your aspiring servant,
Madhukanta Dasa

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I am happy to report to Your Divine Grace that by Kṛṣṇa's arrangement, and with the help and guidance of many wonderful caring godbrothers, I have been given another chance to render service to Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā Govinda at the Brooklyn temple. A twenty year ban from leading *kīrtana* and giving classes has not dampened my enthusiasm to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness and chant the holy name of the Lord on the streets of New York City, by your order.

It was in August of 1977 when you were in Vṛndāvana that you decided to go on a world tour of ISKCON temples. Your opinion was that the future of our Movement was very bright and the devotees were strong, but by traveling in your physically frail condition to see them one last time, they would become even stronger. And so you undertook the final stage of your preaching mission and came to the West to bless us with your divine presence.

You had confided in me in 1974 that your plan was to spend four months in Los Angeles, four months in India, and four months at the Bhaktivedanta Manor so devotees could come from all over to see you at these locations while you continued to work on the translation of the final Cantos of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. It was no surprise then that the first stop of your world tour would be the Manor.

It was around the 18th of August that your blessed appearance day was celebrated at the Manor and many devotees from various European countries traveled to England to be with you on that auspicious occasion. The devotees of the Amsterdam *yātrā*, on the other hand, remained in Holland to take part in the first installation of your deity form on the Vyāsāsana in an ISKCON temple. As Temple President, along with Parividha prabhu, our Head Pūjārī, I placed a call to the Manor and, through Pradyumna prabhu, you instructed us how to install and worship the deity of your divine self on the Vyāsāsana.

As the most humble servant of Kṛṣṇa, you were not insisting on any exalted level of worship, only that your attire be changed when it looked un-ironed or “crumpled”. You said multiple daily offerings of foodstuffs would not be made to you as we were accustomed to offering the Deities of Gaura Nitāi, Jagannātha, Subhadrā and Baladeva, and Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā Gopinātha who had been installed just months earlier.

It is with a great sense of transcendental pride that I take every opportunity to perform *guru-pūjā* whenever I am invited to a Sunday program at one of our temples, or to lead *kīrtana* to chant your glories as the friend of the poor and the lord and master of the devotees. All glories to Your Divine Grace! All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda, whose fame is spread throughout the three worlds. We take shelter at your lotus feet.

Your eternal servant,

Locanananda Dasa

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Your Divine Grace.

Many of my godbrothers and godsisters have made that journey beyond death, and we are all confronted with the possibility that we could depart at any moment.

We are fortunate to have heard your message of Vedic truths early in our lives, and to have had your living example to witness what it means to be Kṛṣṇa conscious. Now please give us the strength to follow your example and accept the death of our body as an ever approaching reality, and to begin and end each day singing your glories, chanting the holy names, and giving to our families and others what you so tirelessly gave to us. Give us the strength and determination to follow your instructions and to have good and strong association to help us. I thank you and Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa for giving me the association of your dear humble godbrother Śrīla Bhakti Pramode Purī Mahārāja for one *darśana* during Gaura Pūrṇimā celebrations in Māyāpur in 1986. My heart went out to him immediately and many years later I would have the association of his appointed successor His Grace Bodhayan Mahārāja who represents so humbly the Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava line of *ācāryas* (of yourself and Bhakti Pramode Purī Mahārāja, and of His Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and all of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*).

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for your determination to come to the West and give Lord Caitanya's message, and for working tirelessly (sleeping so little so you could give so much) to bring Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the Western world. Help me to do whatever I can to spread Lord Caitanya's message, and to live it as well. I remain eternally indebted.

Your servant always,

Aditi Devi Dasi

Expressing my Undying Gratitude

Śrīla Prabhupāda, You have given us the best of the best of the best. The highest knowledge, glorious lives of singing and dancing and feasting. Studies of *Bhāgavatam* and the life and teachings of Śrī Caitanya and His amazing associates. We thank you for the bountiful blessings you have bestowed on our wild and crazy lives here on this fading planet Earth.

As we age, we begin to understand the risk and personal sacrifice you took to bring us your blessings and change our lives. We now understand the aches and pains of aging. You never complained. You did tell us about suffering in this world, but we were so young, we only now are just starting to comprehend your sacrifice.

We want so much to get out in Pañca Tattva's garden and rake and weed. So we do. We want so much to sing and dance out at *harināma* too! We want so much to share both morning and evening ecstasies of devotion, but these bodies just can't keep up.

Still our cup continues to run over with the sweet ecstasies of devotion you continue to share and the miracles of faith leading to love of that beautiful Blue Boy, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya!

You alone braved worlds of the cold unknown to bring us a glorious life. Your gift is unprecedented in the history of mankind!

Our never ending grateful joy is a testament to your eternal blessings.

My Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

My prostrate obeisances over and over to you. Everything wonderful, joyful and peaceful in my life is due to you. So much mercy you have showered on this world. With your deluge of selfless mercy, you've created an ocean of opportunity for the conditioned souls, to leave the cycle of repeated birth, death, disease and old age. How a wretched soul like me got caught in this mercy is a mystery. As I struggle to show you my appreciation and gratitude, please accept my offering.

There are so many components of your mercy. I'll try to give some proper appreciation for a small part. As the most profound spiritual leader the world has ever experienced, you taught us more than just knowing the basics of right and wrong on the material level, the moral level and even the spiritual level. You've reintroduced us to our eternal loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa. This process in itself has given me a taste of transcendental pleasure that can't be replicated in any other way. Striving to apply my body, heart, mind and intelligence, in His loving service is not just the path, it's the goal. The ability to be engaged is from your mercy. You fortify us with proper instructions in your books, and lectures, so we can curb the petulant mind. We conquer the tongue with *prasādam*, and overcome the demands of the senses with proper engagement. This wonderful structured life has been designed by your causeless mercy.

Because of you, I can understand the important concept of using something for my pleasure, or in the service of Kṛṣṇa. I can see the pathways leading to hell or back to Godhead. I understand the difference between temporary misery and eternal pleasure. The only way to truly give you my gratitude is to continue on in your service. At the same time, there is nothing else I want to do but be completely immersed, with no deviation, in your loving service.

Please forgive my material conditioning. Help me rise above the modes of material nature and be firmly fixed at your lotus feet. Let

me understand my humble position, of being lost in this material world since time immemorial. Without you, there would be no hope. Help me to put my false ego in its proper place. In this way, I know that one day, you'll smile at me again.

Your adoring, loving daughter,

Nagapatni Devi Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

When one devotee spread the rumor that you said that soon there would be repression and book distribution would be stopped, you answered, “what rascal has said this in my name. Go on making your lifetime plans for distributing my books. These books will become the law books for the next 10,000 years.”

This is being shown by your most dear servant Vaisesika prabhu. Even though everyone has been confined to their homes due to this pandemic which you predicted would be one of the reactions for the sinful activities of human society, he and his servants have distributed 25,000 of your books in the last month. This is the greatest news in this time of great difficulty. It gives us faith to go on making our lifetime plans for distributing your books.

This month in our little preaching center in Bologna, Italy, one of the hardest hit countries by the pandemic, despite the fact that everyone is confined to their homes, we managed to distribute four sets of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or 108 Mahā big books, plus another 60 Mahā big books and 34 medium books.

We just want to dedicate our lives to reading your books and distributing them life after life if we can thus please you. Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for giving us this lifetime service.

Your servants,

Trai Dasa and Krsnaloka Devi Dasi,
and all your servants here at the Bologna yatra

Most dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances in the dust at your beautiful feet.

I sit here in awe at the prospect of somehow making an offering unto you. Although I am unqualified and embarrassed to present myself to you, still a feeling of enlivenment is already arising within me at the mere thought of approaching you for your Appearance Day. What a wonderful day this has been in our lives for all these years that you have graced our lives. It is always unfathomable to even begin to understand how you picked us up. Most of your disciples are reaching the age you were when you came to the West and inaugurated ISKCON. Now we have more realisation of the austerity you performed in setting out to do what you did at this time of life. Everything you have done is cloaked in the divine mystic potency of your beloved Lord. How you came, how you touched our hearts and brought us to life, giving us the only true purpose – it is beyond any earthly logic that you appeared to bring us back to Kṛṣṇa's service.

In your purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 11.54 you write:

One who has unflinching devotion for the Supreme Lord and is directed by the spiritual master, in whom he has similar unflinching faith, can see the Supreme Personality of Godhead by revelation. One cannot understand Kṛṣṇa by mental speculation. For one who does not take personal training under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, it is impossible to even begin to understand Kṛṣṇa. The word *tu* is specifically used here to indicate that no other process can be used, can be recommended, or can be successful in understanding Kṛṣṇa.

Day-by-day, year-by-year, your words ring true and as a slow learner with countless inebrieties, somehow I am beginning to see a little more clearly Kṛṣṇa's hand in whatever is happening. You have opened our eyes with the torchlight of knowledge but just as when we arise from sleep with cloudy vision, it takes time for that cloudiness to dissipate. It is incredible that in spite of these coverings of ignorance, your words light up the day and enable us to retain the vision of truth that you have shone upon us. Little by little is

a slow process and one can become discouraged by one's retarded growth, then one only has to pick up one of your books and read your ecstatic purports to become rightly situated again.

In the above text 54, you have translated:

My dear Arjuna, only by undivided devotional service
can I be understood as I am, standing before you,
and can thus be seen directly. Only in this way can
you enter into the mysteries of My understanding.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, when I read this, I feel I am kneeling before you and feeling your presence. You stated in the purport the words "directed by the spiritual master." So Kṛṣṇa being seen 'directly' means for us only by 'being directed' by you. We can't see anything without your presence in the many ways that you pervade our consciousness by your training and tireless effort to educate us.

I have such regret and remorse at my tardiness and neophyte lacking in resolute determination. Being aware of one's offenses, what can one do but keep engaging and endeavouring with confidence in your magnanimity and Kṛṣṇa's love for us. Such blessings enhance our faith, sincerity and honesty. You gave the example of pouring milk into an inky cup and explained that eventually the inky atmosphere would be replaced by the milk. You have also used the phrase, 'gradually and proportionately' we make advancement in this process.

In regard to the need to atone for sins or offenses, you explain in your purport to Text 1 of "*Nectar of Instruction*" that real atonement "*is the awakening of our dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Real atonement means coming to real knowledge, and for this there is a standard process. When one follows a regulated hygiene process, he does not fall sick.*" You always provide the merciful and clear way forward, despite the mind's condition.

In your presence, everything becomes auspicious, all opportunities for preaching and sharing this transcendental knowledge open up, simply by following your direction. You have stated that it is an urgent situation so preaching must be vigorous and that we are like your army of monkeys, just as Lord Rāmacandra's servants. So how can we ever show sufficient gratitude for this incredible engagement in sharing what you have bestowed upon us.

I beg you to accept the humble attempts I make to share Kṛṣṇa consciousness with others. Kṛṣṇa puts the words in our mouths

when we engage in preaching, only because we are under your direction. The taste of repeating your teaching is so relishable, Śrīla Prabhupāda. So many unwanted things are there in my heart but my one true desire is to be an instrument – blunt as that presently might be – in your preaching army. By the grace of the spiritual master, a blind man can see the stars in the sky and a lame man can cross mountains. Thank you eternally for these opportunities to engage in Lord Caitanya’s Saṅkīrtana Mission at your beloved feet. Your exalted disciples exist in this world as rays of your mercy. May I follow in the footsteps of those who have pleased you in this way. My hope and prayer is to become a better instrument of Your Divine Grace, the most munificent Ācārya.

Your eternal servant,
Sarvamangala Dasi

Memories of You

This morning memories of you crowded my mind
Carried on the mantra you gave my soul.

Here in this world of shadows
I drift in dreams within dreams
Drawn in wonder and confusion
From one imagined room to another

Beside my bed I glimpse a Watcher
Whose hand reaches from great height
Through swirling mists
Wipes my fevered brow.

His voice enters my dream
Brings memories of lost love
Expanding light and song
Of dazzling beauty

You gaze inside my heart
I hear laughter, a tinkle of bells
Echoes from another world—
In the darkness I waken.

Wherefrom these tears that damp my cheeks?
This shimmering that draws my heart
These memories that carry me
Into your shining eyes

Kṛṣṇa gave me your company
You entered my dreamworld
Clouds parted to reveal the sun
Then Kṛṣṇa called you home

I had no power to keep you
I fall at your feet my beloved master

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Two things in Krishna Consciousness are not as easily accomplished as we, sometimes, may have ourselves or others believe. The first is our proverbial declaration, “I am not this body.” Rūpa Gosvāmī says: “Unless and until we are beyond the bodily concept of life, one can fall down at any moment.” *Ahaṁ Brahmāsmi*, not just theoretical but fully realized, is *mukti*. Although such *mukti* is a foundational stepping stone for Vaiṣṇava *bhakti*, we should not think a devotee is bereft of, or does not require to have and possess this stage of palpable realization. Pragmatically, this *mukti* is interpretable as one having obtained a ‘higher taste’ by which we can give up the lower taste, attachment and thought for ‘dead material things’ and sense enjoyment, chief of which is sex:

The embodied soul may be restricted from sense enjoyment, though the taste for sense objects remains. But, ceasing such engagements by experiencing a higher taste, he is fixed in consciousness. — Bg. 2.59

The second thing is *śaraṇāgati*, full surrender to Śrīla Prabhupāda and Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says:

“There can be no obstruction at any given moment to fully surrendering to the Supreme Lord, save and except our own willful obstinacy.” After all, we need only take a few seconds and say to Śrīla Prabhupāda and Lord Kṛṣṇa: *“From this moment I am yours.”* And then we should act and think upon it as a spirit soul on the spiritual platform of *bhakti* and devotional service.

Arjuna said, My dear Kṛṣṇa, O infallible one, my illusion is now gone. I have regained my memory by Your mercy, and I am now firm and free from doubt and am prepared to act according to Your instructions. — Bg. 18.73

More than 40 or even 50 years in ISKCON, as a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, may not necessarily entitle us to automatically assume and fully tick off the boxes of *ahaṁ brahmāsmi* and *śaraṇāgati*, which, by definition, means to be beyond the bodily concept of life and totally free from *māyā*.

We are, no doubt, making sure and steady progress very near that divine vicinity. But, at least, regardless of our position, we can

be honest and humble. The Madhva Sampradāya gives a beautiful and vivid analogy. Madhvācārya is compared to a *huge pot of sweet rice*. All the subsequent initiating gurus are each compared to a *chamuch, a big ladle or spoon*. The spoon's only business is to dip into the huge pot of sweet rice and distribute it to their respective disciples, generation after generation.

No one of us is a Prabhupāda! And the unique *sampradāya* situation for the foreseeable future is that every forthcoming generation of ISKCON devotees shall require their *living guru and Śrīla Prabhupāda in a sacred combination*—Prabhupāda's books, lectures, mercy, transcendental potency, and blessings to enable us all to go beyond material existence *Back Home Back to Godhead!*

Your humble servant,

Satadhanya Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my fallen obeisances at your lotus feet. Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Well, you warned us: Kali-yuga would continue its decline – and our only shelter is the holy name.

For the past several months virtually the entire world has been on ‘lockdown’ because of a global pandemic – meaning that no one may leave home except for essential business (buying food and other necessities).

The entire world has been brought to its knees because of a microscopic entity called the coronavirus, against which human beings have no immunity and no vaccine. It has spread like wildfire, and if one’s immune system is compromised it can cause an agonizing death due to respiratory and organ failure.

With most commerce halted, the global economy is in free-fall. No one alive today has ever seen such an unprecedented failure of the social order.

I’m happy to say, however, that the devotees have rallied in the face of this disaster. Although by government order all your temples have temporarily closed and book distribution, *Harināma saṅkīrtana*, and *prasādam* distribution have halted, the devotees are finding novel ways to stay enthusiastic in their Krishna Consciousness. We’re meeting in very small groups (which is permitted), chanting the holy name and reading your books. Forced to rely on ourselves individually and in family groups, many of us have discovered spiritual strength we didn’t know we had.

Above all, we’re trying to take shelter of your instructions by remembering that not a blade of grass moves without the sanction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has engineered the current situation to purify everyone – devotees and non-devotees alike.

For example, air pollution – a tremendous problem in cities like New Delhi – has dramatically reduced, and many slaughterhouses have closed because the unspeakable working conditions have caused so many employees to catch the virus.

We gain strength by remembering your personal example of “sailing into the unknown” on the Jaladuta in 1965 at great personal risk. This material world is a huge, risky “unknown,” but our spiritual master’s orders and the holy name provide strength to

carry us through the current disaster and the inevitable disasters that will follow as Kali-yuga continues its decline.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for providing us with your personal example and the instructions to safely navigate this material world – with our minds firmly fixed on the ultimate goal: complete surrender to your instructions, pure chanting of the holy name, and final shelter at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your aspiring servant,

Jaya Jagadisa Dasa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Thank you for being you. You once stated that trying to purify your disciples was like trying to wash coal. With every year that passes, I realize more and more that you were very serious about that statement.

All glories to Your Divine Grace, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Your “coal-like” disciple,

Anadi Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your exalted lotus feet on this your appearance day. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda the saviour of the world.

Although I'm completely worthless, it was my/our inestimable good fortune that we all came in contact with such an exalted, topmost Vaiṣṇava Spiritual Master, *uttama-adhikārī*, as Śrīla Prabhupāda who was authorized and empowered by Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself to enlighten the conditioned souls suffering in the material world.

Previously we had no spiritual knowledge and were completely in the darkness of ignorance, engaging in so many sinful activities to gratify our senses, thinking this was the normal way to live our life. Śrīla Prabhupāda came armed with the torchlight of spiritual knowledge, dispelling our ignorance and enlightening us about the real purpose of this rare, short, human form of life. He told us the human form is a chance to revive our original spiritual identity and relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. To not waste precious time by engaging in animal propensities simply eating, sleeping, mating and defending, but use this rare opportunity to free ourselves from the cycle of repeated birth and death by performing devotional service, under the direction of a bona fide spiritual master in the guru-*paramparā* from Vyāsadeva.

The mission of the guru is the mission of Kṛṣṇa, to spread Krishna Consciousness all over the world. You came alone to the West, without help from anyone, armed with a case of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatams* and a few rupees, at the advanced age of 70, when most *karmīs* at that age had either retired or died. On March 6th, 1966, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote in His diary, "I am here alone without any devotee companion. But I have come here to serve the Lord and not for personal happiness. I am prepared to live in hell even, if I am able to serve the Lord. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted that His mission should be propagated all over the world and that is my objective. I do not mind the inconvenience personally felt." This expresses the humble attitude and strong desire Śrīla Prabhupāda had to serve Lord Caitanya by spreading His movement all over the world and working so hard, regardless of all the difficulties.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's sacrifice was unimaginable and we can never repay our debt for all He has done for us. He said, "Actually my

health has been down for a long time. From 1965 to 1977. I was never healthy. It has been bad from the time I went to abroad at the age of seventy. I suffered heart attack three times, and since then something or other is always happening to my body". Śrīla Prabhupāda made so many sacrifices and is full of compassion for all the fallen souls.

Śrīla Prabhupāda left us his instructions and the great legacy of his transcendental books. He went to so much trouble to write them for us. All the transcendental knowledge we need to know is contained in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, They are the literary incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and Śrīla Prabhupāda said they will be the law books of mankind for the next 10,000 years.

All glories to our great spiritual Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Your useless servant,

Govinda Mohini

Earth's Greatest Benefactor

Come one come all into the street
Dance with joy to the *mrdanga* beat

Raise your hands up toward the sky
Sing out loud, don't be shy

It's Kali-yuga, the winter of time
But the cure for this Age is simple; sublime

Lord Caitanya gave His sacred prediction
You carried His message with firm conviction

Starting small in Tompkins Square Park
On Caitanya's mission you did embark

Every town and village throughout the world
The *sañkīrtana* banner you have unfurled

Young American *sudras* you wholly engage
In the antidote for this iron-age

Harer nāma hare nāma hare nāmaiva kevalam
Chant and dance in the streets with cymbal and drum!

And spread out from that park like sunshine's beams
Soon all the world's people were chanting, it seems

The greater world may have no notion
Of the blessings unleashed when you crossed the ocean

The benediction is real for all on this Earth
Thus we rejoice on the day of your birth.

*With respect and affection;
your eternally grateful daughter,*

Mahasini Devi Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

We worship your lotus feet which can extinguish the blazing forest fire of suffering of this material world. We saw in Australia how only the rainclouds could put out the gigantic bushfires devastating the forests. So we pray for your raincloud of mercy to cool down our heart from *māyā's* devastating fire.

Sometimes you went into ecstatic trance and sometimes you danced and induced thousands to give up their reluctance to immediately dance with you. We pray you make us dance for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in ecstasy.

You worshiped Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities and gazed at Them with love and you encouraged us to also worship Gaura-Nitāi and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa so we would become liberated. We pray you inspire us to always worship your dear Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Gaura-Nitāi with devotion.

You happily fed us Kṛṣṇa *prasāda* and encouraged us to eat more. In one lecture you encouraged us to become self-realized by tasting Kṛṣṇa *prasāda*. We pray we may always eat our way back to Godhead.

You always thought of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and wrote *Kṛṣṇa Book* so we could also relish them. We pray to always read *Kṛṣṇa Book* and live forever in Goloka Vṛndāvana.

You always serve Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the forest of Vṛndāvana. We pray to one day help you serve Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vṛndāvana.

You are empowered by Kṛṣṇa to spread *harināma* all over the world and you inspired us to always chant the holy names. We pray to be your servants to inspire others to chant as you inspired us.

You are Kṛṣṇa's dear servant and one who serves you also becomes dear to Kṛṣṇa. We pray to always remember our relationship with Kṛṣṇa through you because if you are pleased, then Kṛṣṇa will also be pleased with our service.

Your servant,

Narayani Dasi

WHERE WOULD I BE WITHOUT YOU?

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda...

Where would I be without you?
Chasing super heroes
All with feet of clay,
Sportsmen, mystics, two-legged Beatles
Where would I be today?

Where would we be without you?
Fighting over who-to-be-who
Delusions of grandeur
Distracted by lucre
Where would we be today?

Where are they now without you?
Lacking your books not a clue
Their proud academics
Wonder why the pandemics
When will they to turn to you?

Where would I be without you
You gave me a duty to do
Share Kṛṣṇa with others
As sisters and brothers
And someday...come back home...to you.

All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Your grateful servant,

Suresvara Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Lying face-down in obeisance, prostrate at your divine lotus feet, I know that I am unqualified to speak in your presence or even to lift my head or to show my face. Yet this body, this mind, and these words are yours—your property, meant to be used in service to Your Divine Grace and in service to your mission, which is, ultimately, the mission of Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya Mahāprabhu: the Yuga Dharma, the *Saṅkīrtana* Movement of the chanting of the holy names of God:

*Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare*

Like so many of your disciples and followers world-wide, I have many thoughts, aspirations, regrets, emotions, and on and on. These are at the heart of my relationship with Your Divine Grace. Still, with your permission, I would like to set most of these aside, lest they interfere with my primary objective. I beg to offer a single revelation regarding your sacred identity and transcendental position as Jagad-guru.

Regardless of my personal aspirations, failures, and insignificance, my primary purpose here is to glorify my merciful spiritual master on his Vyāsa-pūjā day. To do this, I would like to quote your own quoting of your own spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

A dear godbrother of mine and I were reading together from Your Divine Grace's translations and purports to *Śrī Caitanya-caritamṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, Ch. 25. In your purport to text 9, we encountered a very beautiful passage. I believe that anyone who deeply and attentively meditates on those words will experience a glorification of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Therein I find powerful, transcendental truths far more realized and wonderful than anything I might offer.

Yes, I am acknowledging that your own spiritual master was eager to praise you, his own disciple. And, as we have seen, this is not at all unusual. Indeed, most of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Seventh Canto* is devoted to Śrī Nārada Muni singing the praises of his own disciple, Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja. Your Divine Grace has so kindly given us these words from your own spiritual master. His words

prophetically establish the important role his own disciple would one day assume.

I simply would like to repeat Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's words in glorification of a very rare and empowered world *ācārya*, who, although unnamed, I recognize to be Your Divine Grace, my eternal spiritual master. The essence of that quote is as follows:

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura 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 *paramahansa-ṭhākura*, a spiritual form only fit to be addressed as *paramahansa* or *ṭhākura*.

With humility and eternal gratitude, I come before you today, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to say, "Thank you. I am eternally indebted." You are an ocean of mercy. I beg to remain your servant eternally.

Your servant and servant of your servant,

Mandalesvara Dasa

I offer my most respectful and humble obeisances in the dust of the lotus-like feet of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa on this Earth, having taken shelter of His Lotus Feet.

All glories to you, oh spiritual master, servant of Sarasvatī! You are kindly preaching the message of Śrī Caitanya-deva, and delivering the Western countries which are filled with voidism and impersonalism.

By the mercy of the spiritual master, a lame man can cross over mountains and a dumb man can compose eloquent poetry!

“If you simply chant 16 rounds a day and follow the four regulative principles, there is nothing that can keep you from going back to Godhead in this lifetime.”

This is what you promised us Śrīla Prabhupāda, at our initiation ceremony in August of 1971, at your Bury Place Rādhā-Londonīśvara Temple.

And then you raised your index finger and said, emphatically, “And that is a fact!”

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am convinced that the best way to glorify you, is to be exemplary – to follow your instructions fully, especially these foundational ones.

I may see your power and glory differently, but you *always* gave credit to your spiritual master for anything you achieved. However, you often qualified that, by saying that if you deserved any credit, it was because you had not changed anything. In other words, you followed him perfectly. And I understand that to mean that you followed his instructions, and more than just the basic ones.

Your glories and, in a sense, his glory and success in fulfilling Lord Caitanya’s prediction was a result of your following his instructions. I take this as a clear indication that my possibility for glorifying you lies in how well I follow your instructions.

As I do that, I will become pleasing to you, and others will understand your inconceivable potency and love, and want a taste for themselves. Naturally, they will become interested in Krishna Consciousness, and thus surrender to you, the perfect, loving, all-attractive representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead... the “Supreme Personality of Servitor Godhead”—C.C. Adi 1.46, ppt. *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, Preface:

...We hope, therefore, that people will derive the greatest benefit by studying *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* as we have presented it here, and if even one man becomes a pure devotee of the Lord we shall consider our attempt a success.

[signed] A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami
12 May 1971, Sydney, Australia

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you know that I am struggling. I know that the better I follow your instructions, the more you are glorified. Your glories are magnified when your followers – your benediction to the world – manifest your supernatural potency, your love and compassion.

I am praying to you to help me to become most serious about following these foundational instructions, as if my life depends on it...because it does.

You are giving us these foundations of real life . . . and all the floors on top of that foundation. Best of all, you give us the topmost floor, the ever-expanding palatial suite: love for our dearest Mentor, Friend and Deliverer.

You're also giving us all the steps on the way, from *śraddhā* to *prema*; and most importantly, how to practice them and realize them, and share them with others.

You always strongly emphasize these foundations – the basics: chanting minimum 16 rounds a day while avoiding offenses – ultimately without any offense – and strictly following the four regular principles. Without these, you declared repeatedly, we simply remain crying in the wilderness, chewing on sharp thorns and swallowing our own blood.

As much as I am strong in these, I can please and serve you, expansively and gloriously.

I may inform you that in order to maintain our status of spiritual strength, every one of us must very rigidly chant daily sixteen rounds without fail and follow the regulative principles strictly. This is essential for understanding our philosophy clearly and for being able to impress Krishna Consciousness in the hearts of others; so our sincerity in this respect is most important, and all such duties should be observed regularly by everyone. I hope that you will see that all the boys and girls there

are following this process, and studying our literatures carefully. — Letter, 22 February 1970, Los Angeles

I can thus be exemplary by following your trail, in your footsteps, and therefore naturally attract the most intelligent and qualified souls to your effulgent *saṅkīrtana* family. But I cannot do so by imitating you, and thus risking everything.

As you stated in a lecture in 1968, “Those who are powerful, if they somebody does something which is very extraordinary, that is not to be imitated. You have to follow the rules and regulations. That will give you progress. Don’t try to imitate. Just be in your position, try to follow the rules and regulations, and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and gradually you’ll get result. There is no need of being hasty.”

This requires the ‘*trṇād api*’ mentality, as you explain in a letter on March 17th, 1973, “A pure devotee always thinks himself as not-devotee. That is a good attitude. If one thinks he is big devotee that is not good, thinking that he is first degree. We should not be puffed up, a devotee avoids it, remaining always in the second degree. A dog is a faithful servant. *To become lowest dog is to become on the highest platform of service.*” [my emphasis added]

So, as I claim to be your aspiring disciple, your genuine follower, then my focus must be on how well I am chanting Kṛṣṇa’s holy names, giving up all offense. Of course, that means I must be chanting at least 16 rounds every day.

If I am chanting sincerely, then I will see Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, entourage, paraphernalia, form, name etc. As you say in a letter, “... hearing the vibration of Hare Kṛṣṇa automatically reminds one of Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. So both of them arise simultaneously in the mind when one is sincerely chanting. So you cannot make any distinction between listening to the sound and thinking of the pastimes. But the process is to hear, and then Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, form, qualities, etc. will automatically come to mind: That is very nice.”

Being such a fallen, rebellious and faithless fool, I doubted that this was actually true. So, in beating my mind, I’m choosing to accept what you say, instead of doubting, even though I have not the experience of thinking of and remembering Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes etc. I am rather choosing to conclude that I am not chanting sincerely.

Then, I found this statement Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and I understood more deeply what you meant, also encouraged to progress without discouragement.

I am overjoyed to hear that your enthusiasm for chanting is increasing. As our contaminations are removed by chanting, the Lord's form, qualities, and pastimes will be revealed to us in the holy name. There is no point in making a separate effort to artificially remember the Lord's form, qualities, and pastimes. The Lord and His name are one and the same. This will be understood clearly when the coverings in your heart are removed.

By chanting without offenses, you will personally realize that all perfections come from the holy name. Through chanting, the distinction that exists between the self, and the gross and subtle bodies, is gradually effaced and one realizes one's own spiritual form. Once aware of the spiritual body, as one continues to chant, one sees the transcendental nature of the Lord's form.

Only the holy name reveals the spiritual form of the living being and then causes him to be attracted to Kṛṣṇa's form. Only the holy name reveals the spiritual qualities of the living being and then causes him to be attracted to Kṛṣṇa's qualities. Only the holy name reveals the spiritual activities of the living being and then causes him to be attracted to Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

By service to the holy name we do not mean only the chanting of the holy name; it also includes the other duties of the chanter. If we serve the holy name with the body, mind, and soul, then the direction of that service spontaneously manifests like the sun in the clear sky of the chanter's heart. What is the nature of the holy name?

Eventually all these understandings spontaneously appear in the heart of one who chants the holy name. The true nature of *harināma* is revealed by listening to, reading, and studying the scriptures. It is unnecessary to write anything further on this subject. All these things will be revealed to you through chanting.

From *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava*,
written by Bhakti Vikāśa Swami

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have given me some impetus, a little desire, to chant with sincerity. According to your advice for offensive chanting, I have been praying to have the strongest desire to have the strongest desire to desperately desire to chant without offence, with full undivided attention, and with love and devotion.

Please continue to bless me to become fully surrendered in actively living according to your instructions, without deviation!

Your struggling, yet committed servant,

Atmananda Dasa

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

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

Covered with ignorance
steeped in illusion
mired in arrogance
awash in confusion

In such a state
I met with great fortune
that came without cause
other than your compassion

And stepped on your ship
now buoyed with confidence
with you as our captain
we embraced Divine Providence

And set off on a journey
to the spiritual world beyond
all pain and unhappiness
reawakening our eternal bond

Of pure loving service
to the source of all existence
Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person
we come to Krishna Consciousness

On this ship of service
you have so kindly kept me
overlooking my unlimited faults
I can only keep begging

That I may somehow remain
always engaged in your mission

to bring the whole world
on your ship of transcendence

Delivering the divine *harināma*
to every village and town
until the whole world
embraces the transcendental sound

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

Begging to remain,
Your eternal servant,
Pancharatna Dasa

*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*

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

O Prabhupāda, you are so merciful. I offer my humble *praṇāma* to you and am praying from the core of my heart that, with the torchlight of divine knowledge, you will open my eyes which have been blinded by the darkness of ignorance.

*jīvo jāgo, jīvo jāgo, gorācānda bole
kota nidrā jāo māyā-piśācīra kole*

“Wake up, sleeping souls! Wake up, sleeping souls!” calls Śrī Gaura-candra. “How long will you sleep in the lap of the witch called *māyā*?

Awake sleeping souls awake
Religion of sound

We worship consciousness...conscious in love...in loving exchange with God – Kṛṣṇa.

We worship sound, the sound of God, the consciousness of God is revealed in sound

Om tat sat...that is the sound of the Vedic *paramparā*...*āmnāya paramparā*... the descending flow of transcendental knowledge through the heart-to-heart transmission.

That is how Kṛṣṇa approaches us, through transcendental sound. Revealed truth *āmnāya* the knowledge that has descended from

the transcendental world from the transcendental realm.

This sound enters the region of the heart and expands or opens the heart to the world of transcendental love, *prema*, the land of God, Kṛṣṇa.

Our consciousness is opened and expands like rays of light.

Our experience grows from a small bud to a full-grown flower.

We are coming from the world of contracted awareness... darkness of our true identity...with no thought of our identity

beyond the world of time.

It is explained in Vedic teachings that consciousness is a symptom of the soul, and the supreme soul is the root of all, or the complete whole of whom we are a part

It is this knowledge that the spiritual master gives. And who is the spiritual master?

When Kṛṣṇa, God wants to give mercy to the *jīva* soul, he approaches the soul through the bona fide spiritual master, guru. Kṛṣṇa is guru manifested in the heart of his pure devotee giving teachings of his transcendental self-manifested world. If you have met a true spiritual master then you are receiving the grace of God.

Like the sun and the moon the Lord has appeared in the Age of darkness as Nītāi Gaur.

Guru and Gaurāṅga...

We cannot approach the sun directly, but the moon reflects the light of the sun, the mercy of the sun in a suitable manner, and is easier to approach.

The mercy of Śrī Nityānanda knows no limit. He is the direct expansion of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and is the fountainhead of mercy for the suffering *jīva* souls.

As we say the Pañca Tattva mantra *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhunityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*, we worship godhead in all five features complete.

But Krishnadas Kaviraja informs us that without approaching the mercy of Śrī Guru first, the door to this transcendental realm is not opened. We first seek the mercy of the *vaiṣṇavas* and guru and learn to perform service, to be humble and sincere.

Our dearest Śrī Prabhupāda was and is the most approachable moon of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya *āveśa* of Śrī Nityānanda. An incarnation of His Divine Grace, the form of God as a serving teacher, living so intimately with his disciples as if he is one of them. Our good fortune cannot be measured.

From him a river of *prema* is flowing from the ocean of the loving pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa, appearing in this world to us, at this time, in the advent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

How is it that we are so fortunate? What qualification do we possess? As for myself...none.

Somewhat like a credit card grantor it seems. My credit may not be good, but if one who has most excellent credit with the higher-ups will back me up, vouch for me, take a chance on me, then I can

be given a chance to be enrolled in the loan program.

Still I must do my part. Without *praṇipātena*, surrender; *paripraśnena*, sincere inquiry; and *sevā*, service; transcendental knowledge will not reveal itself in the heart. We are performing devotional service under the shelter of the pure devotee who makes our entrance into the house of *bhakti* possible. The *āśraya tattva*, supreme shelter, our service to Kṛṣṇa goes through the merciful heart of Śrī Guru who is the agent of the Lord for accepting *bhakti*, devotional service.

Guiding and taking his disciples to the lotus feet of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa which may be the journey, the sojourn of many many lifetimes.

The relationship of guru and disciple is very near and dear. We approach the spiritual master in a mood of loving service. Proportionately to our realization our determination will manifest. As we realize the near and dear relationship of guru as our dearest friend and eternal guide of our soul and that in this world of sorrow and darkness we have found our way home to the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Om tat sat. Hare Kṛṣṇa. Jai Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Yes. We want to feel deeply.

We want to be real...a stone is cold and alone.

We are not matter...we are pleasure-seeking entities.

We are after joy and a life of affection.

The closer we are to someone, we identify with them as our own, as part of us.

A feeling of fullness of love and affection...no separation...that is the dominant quest of the heart.... the lonely hunter. Affection and beauty is what we hanker for.

We are meant to see ourselves in the light of god, otherwise our true identity cannot be known. To be as one of His own, a kinsman, a *kiṅkarī*, one who is so dear, so close who shares the deepest places of the heart. Kṛṣṇa is mine and I am his. When one is in deep spiritual love, there is no sense of loneliness. God and his service are one, and that shelter is overflowing with affection, from every atom of that spiritual existence.

Guru lives in the region of the heart and through the purifying force of the presence of His Divine Grace which is none other than the force of Bhakti Devi, we begin to cast off the shrouds of illusions and enter into the world of the inner life of God, Kṛṣṇa and our relationship with him. *Premā pumartho mahān*, love of Kṛṣṇa is the

supreme goal of life.

Transcendental sound carries the grace of God, Kṛṣṇa. The words of the spiritual master is the sound of Kṛṣṇa calling us home. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says *tat śṛṇu*, come close and listen, sit at the feet of the person *bhāgavat*, guru, and hear the holy sound and free yourself from this mortal frame. Our dearmost Śrīla Prabhupāda lived and breathed in holy sound. The Bhaktivedanta purports are pure *śabda brāhmaṇa*, a window to the spiritual world. Come, come very close and listen...Prabhupāda is calling us home.

Your servant,

Paramesvari Dasa

Oregon

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

rights.” This is a part of our ecology of the spirit.

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

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

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

Begging for Śrīla Prabhupāda’s blessings,

His fallen servant,

Ravīndra Svarūpa Dāsa

My most revered spiritual master His Divine Grace Om Visnupada Paramahansa Parivrajakacarya 108 Śrī Srimad A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Please accept my prostrated obeisances.

Sometimes it seems like so long ago and sometimes just like yesterday, that we were engaged in the practice of devotional service under your direction. Materially, we wanted nothing because our lives were so spiritually enriched by you. Serving you, hearing directly from you, getting the remnants of your foodstuff and observing and remembering your transcendental qualities brought the greatest good fortune, *mahābhāgya* to our lives.

To this day, many of your disciples are sincerely engaged in your service. I pray that, by Your Divine Grace, someday I will be like them, serving you with sincerity and determination. Until then, this useless, so-called disciple, named Tilaka Devi Dasi begs for your mercy.

Please give me the shelter of your lotus feet.

The Boeing 737 took off from Philadelphia about 11 in the morning flying southwest following the eastern coastline. I had a window seat. After about two hours I peered out the acrylic pane of my cabin window down toward the surface of the Earth six miles below. I noticed the craft had just passed the edge of the Florida shore on its way to Puerto Rico, crossing into an expanse of water someone had named the Caribbean Sea. The jet sped on. A half hour later I looked again and now beheld the ocean stretching on and on as far as the eye could possibly see no matter which way I gazed, in every direction to the horizon and beyond. No land in sight, only endless deep-sea water. In that moment, I was struck by the awesome vastness of the ocean with an accompanying sense of feeling very, very tiny and powerless.

And there, in the middle of that broad expanse of ocean, was a small white boat. It appeared so miniscule and vulnerable, sitting as it was on the surface of a limitless and mighty sea. Nevertheless, the small boat was plying its way diligently, slowly, and resolutely eastward despite having absolutely no discernible destination in sight. How could it possibly reach its port? What if a storm erupted?

At that moment, I realized that to be a passenger on that little vessel required a great deal of confidence in the boat's captain to even attempt to traverse the gigantic ocean.

And then I remembered. The human body is likened to a boat. The Vedas are favorable breezes. The immense ocean is akin to the ocean of repeated birth and death upon which the tiny ship of my eternal soul has been tossing helplessly for countless lifetimes without approaching a destination and while accompanied by constant worry of drowning and sinking to Davy Jones' locker. Without you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, as the well-wishing and expert captain of my ship, what chance would I have of crossing such an ocean and coming to safe harbor? Exactly none. Relying on my own speculation and paltry strength, I would flounder here and there and find myself in exactly the same hopeless situation as when I started.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the best and most qualified captain since your instructions, leadership, and example are perfectly in line with those of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and Lord Kṛṣṇa. And it is true that not just me, but each one of us in this world has been lost at sea, struggling for

eons to keep our heads above water. We all absolutely require your navigation skills and guidance to make any tangible progress. On this day, let me meditate on how lucky I am to have had the good fortune of meeting you and the opportunity of your association. Let me ponder how I can more earnestly strive to understand and follow what you have so munificently given. And let me hope that I may someday soon be able do something worthwhile to serve you.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your servant,

Visnugada Dasa

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

While giving a lecture on the Nectar of Devotion in Mumbai, India, on 7 January 1973 you told us that the whole world is waiting for India's culture, India's *bhakti*, India's spiritual knowledge. This means that we must now become the properly qualified educators who can deliver to the people of the world the Krishna Consciousness that they are waiting for. In this connection it is stated in the *Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Madhya Līlā, 22.65*:

One who is expert in logic, argument and the revealed scriptures and who has firm faith in Kṛṣṇa is classified as a topmost devotee. He can deliver the whole world.

The obvious conclusion is that we, your disciples and grand-disciples must now come to the topmost platform of devotional service so that we can successfully give to the world the Krishna Consciousness that deep down within their hearts they are all hankering for. If we do not do so, we are failing to execute the duty you gave us to deliver the world.

Please bless us, Śrīla Prabhupāda, so that we can all come to the topmost platform of pure devotional service and thus be successful in giving the entire human population the Krishna Consciousness that they are all hankering for within their heart of hearts.

Your humble servant, always begging for your mercy,

Sankarshan Dasa Adhikari
ISKCON Austin

*tvaṁ naḥ sandarśito dhātṛā
dustaraṁ nistitīṛṣatām
kaliṁ sattva-haraṁ puṁsām
karṇa-dhāra ivārṇavam*

“We think that we have met your goodness by the will of providence, just so that we may accept you as captain of the ship for those who desire to cross the difficult ocean of Kali, which deteriorates all the good qualities of a human being.” — SB 1.1.22

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace from the fragrant harbor of Hong Kong. I am your disciple and a soul surrendered unto you. Please continue to instruct me. By your teachings I am understanding everything that is occurring around my body and mind within the field of matter. But more than that, by following your instructions my understanding of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and my relationship with Him is unfolding.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you kindly initiated me in 1971. Most of my association with you, however, was through your books, your recorded lectures and *bhajans*. Hearing or *śravaṇam* is the first step in the process of *bhakti-yoga*, and through the blessing of technology I was able to associate with you – much as people around the world are all able to do now. Currently it is possible to see pictures and videos of you during your association with your disciples on your travels. I have to admit, the warmth, friendliness and charm of your personality is much more evident in the videos.

With all the recordings of you speaking that I have listened to over the decades, I have never heard you make a mistake. Not once. Your explanations of subjects are clear and easy to grasp and you use examples that are sometimes modern – such as giving analogies referring to microphones and sputniks. You also adapted the methods of practicing spiritual life to the times in which we live without compromising the principles. For example, you permitted unmarried women to live in the temple ashram, calling us *brahmacāriṇīs*. This was something for which you were criticized, but you gave no heed to such ridicule. You treated your female disciples

equally to the men, having us assemble in the temple room with men on one side, women on the other and an aisle between the *Vyāsāsana* and the altar. You even gave us second initiation and taught us how to worship the Deities, which was one of my earliest services.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you welcomed everyone to come and join in chanting, dancing and taking *prasādam*. But when it came to speaking, you were a fighter. Your teaching was for serious students. In fact, the morning *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class was more serious than the evening *Bhagavad-gītā* class, the latter being suited for a more general audience. In the battle for our souls you never compromised. You never watered down the teachings just to get more followers. The rules were clear and for everyone. You declared war on the material energy and cut the knots of our ignorance with the shining sword of knowledge.

I learned so much from your persistence. Finally I took up the task of teaching yoga philosophy in 2004, providing internationally recognized certification courses in *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* for yoga teachers and students. In my spare time I have been writing for the past thirty years on various topics, all with the *Bhāgavata Vedānta* perspective that you have given us and references to your written translations. Your explanations of Sanskrit terms shine light on the underworld of the unmanifested forces of the material and spiritual worlds. Working in cooperation with BBTI, I have published five books so far. I endeavor to stay on good terms with devotees both here and abroad, giving talks at the temple whenever I am invited, as well as bringing yoga students over for discussions and *kīrtan* events.

With the invention of the internet, time and space are no longer an impediment for studying and association. I can find your quotations and references on any subject within seconds. I can see and hear you much more than when I lived in the ashram back in the 1970s. Your disciples interact in forums and share memories of you, excerpts from your writings, along with discussions of their insights and realizations which can be very inspiring. With all these changes in daily life, however, Your Divine Grace remains the center, the foundation upon which everything stands.

My home is a temple where *maṅgala arati*, bathing and dressing of the Deities, Tulasī worship, *śāstra* reading and fasting days go on as you recommended. I chant my 16 rounds every day without fail — *japa* is the number one task at the top of my daily list. There is no other way to remain connected to the Source and be spiritually

charged, which is the secret to all success. Anyone who visits feels they have entered a very special place.

Old age is like going bankrupt; at first it happens gradually, then suddenly all at once. At this point I am managing the decline, which is a great impetus for serious devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. Personally, I have achieved everything I ever wanted. I could die this moment and be happy. My only desire is to serve you and the best friend of all the universes, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, wherever He likes.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you saved me. I am overwhelmed with tears of gratitude and am prepared to spend eternity serving you with love. Even then, I will never, ever be able to repay your kindness. Without you I would have been lost. I was most unfortunate and it was Your Divine Grace who made me most fortunate. Thank you, my dear father, thank you.

Your humble servant in the dust,

Sravaniya Devi Dasi

On the most auspicious day of Śrī Gaura Pūrṇimā

9 March 2020, Hong Kong

I offer my most humble obeisances to the lotus feet of His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Below, I will attempt to share with my godbrothers and godsisters, some of my *vapuḥ* moments of magic and wonder, while associating with Śrīla Prabhupāda.

In *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, 7.3, Śrīla Prabhupāda mentions in his purport how Lord Kṛṣṇa states that, *māṁ tu veda na kaścana*, “No one knows Me as I am.”

If one does know Him, Kṛṣṇa says *sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ*, or “Such a great soul is very rare.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda is that very rare soul who knows Kṛṣṇa. Simply by His unalloyed devotion He communicates with Kṛṣṇa face-to-face as per the examples shown below.

Before Śrīla Prabhupāda attempted to come to the Western countries, there were literally no pure Vaiṣṇava devotees concentrating their preaching solely on sharing the philosophy of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Lord Kṛṣṇa. There was no collection of writings like *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and *Caitanya-Caritamṛta* readily available and being distributed to the masses of fallen condition souls that were privileged to get a human form. As a result, for human civilization there only existed a false sense of security – the blind leading the blind. The cheaters and the cheated were living together in a headless society resulting in a total sense of *hopelessness* and *despair*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda came...*vāñchā-kalpa-tarubhyaś ca, kṛpā-sindubhya eva ca*...full of compassion for the fallen conditioned souls. Śrīla Prabhupāda was an *ācārya*, from his appearance to his disappearance in his *vapuḥ* form. Every action he performed was a living model of teaching us through his example.

Śrīla Prabhupāda shared with us his attachment to his guru’s *vāñī* – his deep love in separation. We virtually experienced Śrīla Prabhupāda feeling the weight of the entire world on his shoulders. He prepared in Vṛndāvana for his Mission, to come to the West to preach the most confidential knowledge. Carrying with him he would bring the beautiful treasures of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the most practical process to realize these treasures – the *mahā-mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare*, which he agreed to take on this journey as

a representative of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Prabhupāda came to the West with the transcendental seeds – *bhakti-latā-bīja*, as the transcendental gardener to plant these seeds into the hearts of the conditioned souls.

Every morning I pray to Tulasī Devī for the privilege of continuous service to Śrīla Prabhupāda. We aspire to become Śrīla Prabhupāda’s representatives as transcendental gardeners, engaging in the service of maintaining and growing those transcendental seeds bestowed to us by our beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Side by side we get the mercy of imparting to others the potency of chanting the holy names, feeding the fallen souls *prasādam*, and most importantly distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books. Slowly but surely, we practically experience our *bhakti-latā* growing and develop faith that eventually our *bhakti-latā* will pierce the walls of this universe to take full shelter at the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had a golden hue effulgence to his person. He was a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra* from the spiritual kingdom. He was the most special person with the most special mission. How unbelievably fortunate we are to be associated with such a transcendental personality as Śrīla Prabhupāda.

At the Bury Place Temple in London during the summer of 1972, Śrīla Prabhupāda had asked Dhananjaya Prabhu, the Temple President, for someone with some construction experience to go to Vṛndāvana to help build the Kṛṣṇa Balarāma Temple. Dhananjaya mentioned me, so Śrīla Prabhupāda said to fetch me. When I entered his room, I experienced a glow in the room. Śrīla Prabhupāda had an effulgence. I was dumb struck, but felt blessed to experience such a sight.

In the *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatamāmṛta*, Śrīla Sridhar Swami, a great *ācārya* in our Gauḍīya *sampradāya* line, comments:

When he finished his meditation, Dhruva’s body became brilliant like molten gold. Vaiṣṇava preachers drink the tonic of pure *bhakti-rasa* and develop a golden like hue colour, a golden complexion. The complexion is explained as *hiraṇmayam*, full of effulgence.

A number of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciples have commented on seeing such a golden effulgence emanating from Śrīla Prabhupāda at times.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda was on the merchant cargo ship the Jaladuta, he experienced intense sea sickness as the boat navigated waves 20 meters high, sometimes for multiple days. Śrīla Prabhupāda additionally experienced two heart attacks. He had every reason to give up and return to Vṛndāvana, but did not.

On September 13, 1965 Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote:

O dear friend, in Your company I will experience great joy once again. In the early morning I will wander about the cowherd pastures and fields. Running and frolicking in the many forests of Vraja, I will roll on the ground in spiritual ecstasy. Oh, when will that day be mine? Today that remembrance of You came to me in a very nice way. Because I have a great longing, I called you. I am Your eternal servant and therefore I desire Your association so much. O' Lord Kṛṣṇa, except for You there is no other means of success.

Following in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Six Goswamis and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Prabhupāda rediscovered, then shared with the whole world the authentic pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma in the forests of Vṛndāvana. Śrīla Prabhupāda educated us that his real home is Kṛṣṇa's home Goloka Vṛndāvana, then gave us the formula for us to go back to home, back to Godhead. We only have to follow it without adding or taking anything away.

In *Ādi-līlā*, volume 1, Introduction, Śrīla Prabhupāda tells us:

When Kṛṣṇa descends to the material world, this same Vṛndāvana descends just as an entourage accompanies an important personage. Because when Kṛṣṇa comes, His land also comes. Vṛndāvana is not considered to exist in the material world. Therefore, devotees take shelter of the Vṛndāvana in India, for it is considered to be a replica of the original Vṛndāvana. Although that one may complain that no *kalpa-vṛkṣa*, exist there, when the Goswamis were there, the *kalpa-vṛkṣa* were present. It is not that one can go to such a tree and make demands; one first must become a devotee. The Goswamis would live under a tree for one night only, and the trees would satisfy all their desires. For the common man this may all seem very wonderful, but as one makes progress in devotional service, all can be realised.

This is but one example of the transcendental vision Śrīla Prabhupāda has enabled us with, to see further than what the limitations of these untrustworthy eyes provide.

At the 40th Anniversary of the Kṛṣṇa Balarāma Mandir Opening in Vṛndāvana, Gopal Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja told an amazing story. He said that a conversation took place between Śrīla Prabhupāda and Their Lordships Rukmiṇī Dvārakādhīsa at Their temple in Los Angeles (USA). From my memory, Mahārāja said that Lord Dvārakādhīsa spoke to Śrīla Prabhupāda and said that he was to return to Vrindavana to build a temple that would be far more beautiful than the one there.

In the early 1970s we were blessed to be with Śrīla Prabhupāda in Vṛndāvana. One day, Śrīla Prabhupāda announced that he was in complete union with the Supersoul. Śrīla Prabhupāda told us that his every action and words were coming from the Supersoul within his heart.

In downtown London at the Bury Place Temple, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked that at each side of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Londonīśvara's altar, two beautiful *āsanas* be made from red velvet. They were both relatively small to fit so snug. Śrīla Prabhupāda told us that from time to time both Lord Brahmā and Nārada Muni would come to take *darśana* and experience the *ārati*.

In 1972 Śrīla Prabhupāda gave a public lecture at a big hall in London. When His Divine Grace finished speaking, he invited questions from the audience. A mature lady in her fifties was dressed in Buddhist robes. She asked Śrīla Prabhupāda, "How does one come to see Kṛṣṇa?" There was a moment of silence, then Śrīla Prabhupāda replied: "First one must have *śraddhā* or faith, then hypothesis (following the Kṛṣṇa conscious process of *bhakti-yoga*) then direct perception. You will see Kṛṣṇa face-to-face, this is a fact."

In the early 1970's there was a faithful godbrother of Śrīla Prabhupāda's who resided at Rādhā Kuṇḍa, and highly valued what Śrīla Prabhupāda had achieved. His name was Kṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī. He would tell us that he believed Śrīla Prabhupāda was the greatest *ācārya* in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava line. Bābājī would say, "Because he (Prabhupāda) took the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to every town and village on the planet."

The spiritual master is always considered either one of the confidential associates of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī or a manifested representation of Śrī

Nityānanda Prabhu. — CC *Ādi līlā*, 1.46, purport.

Let me share my lived experiences during Śrīla Prabhupāda's last week before his demise in Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhām.

Śrīla Prabhupāda kept translating until he was unable to do so. Many of Śrīla Prabhupāda's godbrothers and friends came to be with him. Śrīla Prabhupāda, frail and emaciated in body, exhibited humility beyond belief. Everyone that came before Śrīla Prabhupāda offered his *praṇāmas* and apologies and begged for forgiveness.

I observed this incredible transcendental mellow of humility and simplicity. Previously seeing Prabhupāda as a preaching *sannyāsī*, he used discrimination. He would associate with his godbrothers and disciples, preach to the innocent and avoid the demoniac. Now in these last moments there seemingly was no discrimination, just pure humility and love.

Śrīla Prabhupāda seemed to be emanating the highest form of love. We saw tears in his eyes. This swan-like devotee seemingly seeing everyone better than himself. It looked like we were being privileged to see the expressions of pure unalloyed love of an *uttama adhikārī*.

Kṛṣṇa inconceivably arranged so I was able to remain at Śrīla Prabhupāda's lotus feet the whole night Śrīla Prabhupāda departed, leaving his body for us to put in *samādhi*. I will never forget the sounds of my godbrothers and godsisters crying and chanting in despair.

I continue to serve you, my Master, be-it-all now in separation... until you decide otherwise.

Your most fallen servant,

Gunarnava Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

It's Tuesday, 21st August 1973. I'm standing a short distance from you in the Deity room of Bhaktivedanta Manor, transfixed as I watch you offer incense to Kṛṣṇa and His divine consort, Rādhā.

I'm captivated. You seem lost, as though in a dance of love with Them. This is all new to me. I see your sheer joy, as you personally welcome Them into this place of worship you have created in the English countryside.

I sense your feeling of gratitude that knows no bounds. They have come personally at your humble request. How have I become privy to this deeply intimate moment?

As young worshippers throng forward for a better look, you seem absolutely alone in communion with your Lordships, unfazed by the surrounding clamour. Yours remains a tender and private affair.

You sprinkle sacred water over the heads of the dancing devotees as a little child, looking happy, mischievous and carefree.

Soon after this wonderful arrival occasion, you explain the meaning of what has just unfolded. The mystery of Kṛṣṇa's appearance in the form of ARCHA VIGRAHA. How He is, indeed, non-different from this beautiful marble image before us.

Someone next to me asks, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, is it possible for a pure devotee to ever forget Kṛṣṇa?" I watch closely as you gaze lovingly at Rādhā Gokulānanda on Their brand new altar and almost tearfully reply, "Every day I pray to Kṛṣṇa: Please don't let me fall down."

Thank you for including me in this divine pastime, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and for forcing open my eyes with the torchlight of your knowledge and mercy.

Kishor Dasa

My dearest Spiritual Master, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I can never thank you enough for the wonderful gift you have given us by making such a great sacrifice to come to the West to start this Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement on the order of your spiritual master Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī.

Where would we have been without your mercy?

Lost completely lost in the merry-go-round of this material world.

I have been so fortunate in so many ways for what I have learnt as an aspiring devotee in your Movement. When I came to you I had no skills but I have learnt so much. Cooking, selling, playing the Mridanga drum, singing, to be able to talk to people, to train devotees, to speak in public. I was shy when I came. I never thought I could do these things. Many wonderful things I have learnt from being part of your wonderful Movement.

I am eternally indebted to you over and over for giving me a wonderful family of devotees to have spent my life with.

I hope I will be able to reach your lotus feet at the end of my life.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your eternal servant,

Surabhi Dasi

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, 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.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my obeisances at your lotus feet, offered today with whatever limited humility I can muster. In truth, it's so very difficult to write this, because I just cry—in appreciation for all you have given, in the sadness of missing your presence, and in lamentation for my inexcusable failures in your service.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the manifestation of Kṛṣṇa's mercy in this world. In this Age of Kali, what hope would there be for us? Even though the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa Himself, manifested wonderful pastimes on this very planet only five thousand years ago, and then the Lord Himself as Caitanya Mahāprabhu delivered the simple process of chanting the holy names, the contamination of the Age again brought forgetfulness.

And then you came! Came to the Western countries, filled with impersonalism and voidism! Out of your perfect devotion to your spiritual master, you crossed the ocean on a seemingly impossible mission to bring Kṛṣṇa to "this terrible place," as you wrote on the ship shortly before arriving here. "Most of the population here is covered by the material modes of ignorance and passion. Absorbed in material life, they think themselves very happy and satisfied, and therefore they have no taste for the transcendental message of Vāsudeva."

Nevertheless, you had complete faith in the Lord and complete confidence in the plan of your spiritual master: "But I know Your causeless mercy can make everything possible, because You are the most expert mystic . . . All living entities have come under the control of the illusory energy by Your will, and therefore, if You like, by Your will they can also be released from the clutches of illusion."

But, speaking for myself, I did not deserve to be released from illusion. I can see no reason why the Lord Himself should intervene in my path of gradual degradation. Rather we were picked up from the

mire of material existence by the most merciful intercession of Your Divine Grace: “O Lord, I am simply praying for Your mercy so that I will be able to convince them about Your message . . . I am seeking Your benediction so that I can convince them, for I am powerless to do so on my own. . . . O Lord, I am simply praying for Your mercy so that I will be able to convince them about Your message!”

Your pure desire, Śrīla Prabhupāda, made our good fortune! I thank you millions of times from the core of my heart! But now I must manifest that gratitude in more than words.

You taught us nine processes of devotional service for our purification, following all or even one of which we will be saved from the worst kind of degradation. But you hoped for even more from us. By your example you showed us, and by your words you implored us, to try to give to others what you have given us.

But who am I to do so? I have no qualification. But fortunately for us and for the world, you manifest yourself and your mercy in your books! As your books and their message are distributed, your mercy and your blessings continue to benedict the fallen souls. My only prayer, therefore, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is that my desire to bring you to the world will more fully manifest in this life. In my heart of hearts, I wish to “dance as you like.”

Your aspiring servant,

Srikanta Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisance and this trivial attempt to glorify you for I am most unqualified to do so.

On behalf of ISKCON Harrisburg, I write this humble homage to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

You have given us so much from your heart and are the source of our inspiration. You touched so many lives with your universal love and affection which is continuing each day. You have had the utmost patience, perseverance and unflinching faith in your Gurudeva. You prayed and asked Kṛṣṇa to help you fulfill Lord Caitanya's mission and, this, the Lord did because of your pure, unflinching faith and devotion. Now, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am at the end of my life and I am hoping that when the time comes, I'll be reunited with you but, due to my *anarthas*, I am not sure if this will happen.

You have placed me in Harrisburg, PA, for a reason – to help continue your mission in this small capital city of Pennsylvania. Here, we are trying to develop humility, respect, and servitude towards one another. From the teachings of Mahāprabhu, we are still learning that the goal of our life is to reach the platform of servant of the servant of the servant of the devotees of the Lord. Your exemplary life is showing us that living in a society of humility, respect and servitude is a happy society.

We have seen a photo of you, from the early New York temple days, waiting in line behind other devotees to take a shower. Such humility and simplicity that we are still trying to understand, Śrīla Prabhupāda. You also cooked, served the Sunday feast and cleaned afterwards. You began with so little, materially, and what you accomplished is a miracle.

Please continue to shower your blessings on all the devotees here in ISKCON of Harrisburg as we try to preach and share your mission here. Please allow us to offer some service at your lotus feet because you are *patita-pāvana*, savior of the fallen.

One behalf of the devotees of ISKCON Harrisburg and myself, we are praying for your mercy.

Your servant,

Bedangi Devi Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Since your disappearance, the world has seen many natural calamities—devastating tsunamis and earthquakes, huge floods and widespread droughts, unbelievable forest fires, tornados, hurricanes, avalanches. These disasters have been confined to nations or areas within those nations. Now as I write this, however, we’re seeing something unprecedented in our lifetime: a new coronavirus pandemic, a calamity that’s affecting the whole world.

Collectively, humankind has prodigious intelligence and has made phenomenal strides in all areas of its endeavors, yet from your teachings we know that these natural calamities, especially the present one we’re in the midst of, are a stark and inescapable reminder that we are insignificant, weak, vulnerable beings in the face of Kṛṣṇa’s material energy. You have taught us that His material energy is *duratyayā* – very difficult to overcome. Try as we might, in the end we cannot control material nature. It is more powerful than us. We are controlled by it.

The basis of all true knowledge is humility and as we think soberly about our current international crisis and the many national crises before this one, we want to be truly and deeply humbled. We are small. God is great. He is our shelter, our solace, and ultimately our only protector. Thank you over and over for giving us this clear and unambiguous knowledge. Without it, we would now be overwhelmed by anxiety.

We’re trying to take the opportunity of this pandemic to come closer to Kṛṣṇa by hearing about, chanting about, and remembering Him. Regardless of the terrible dangers the material energy presents, those who seek your shelter and protection will, without a doubt, attain it and also fully experience the shelter and protection of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Your servants,

Yadubara Dasa and Visakha Devi Dasi

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

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

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the faithful implementation of your instruction:

- we read your books and follow them in our daily lives;
- we make time to chant our rounds properly;

- we preach Krishna Consciousness, especially by book and *prasādam* distribution, in whatever condition of life we find ourselves;
- we maintain association with devotees;
- we sustain ourselves with *prasādam* only; and
- we willingly work for the correction of any problems in your Society and never leave.

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

Your loving servant always,

Guru Gaurāṅga Dāsa

MOTI

From the beginning of your life you were very *śobha*
Your neighborhood toddler friend for your love was very *lobha*
Without you he wouldn't get in the pram, he called you his "Moti"
Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept our *daṇḍavats, koṭi! koṭi!*

Hanumān lifted a mountain, but Bhīma couldn't lift his tail
Without your mercy, O dear guru, we will surely fail
You lifted mountains of doubt and also let us put on your shoe
Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept our *daṇḍavats, uru! uru!*

Before the rain there was a drought
People were hopeless, who could help them out?
Then came the torrential downpour, it was a Sunami Tsunami
Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept our *daṇḍavats, praṇāmi! Praṇāmi!*

Delinquent monstrous philosophies were lurking in the deep
They hid the light and caused all, out of their fear, to creep
You swallowed them all, you truly are that revealed Timiṅgila
Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept our *daṇḍavats, kila! kila!*

Your innovation was groundbreaking
Your humility was heartbreaking
You accepted all, for you there was none ever *acchūt*
Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept our *daṇḍavats, adbhut! adbhut!*

As purifying as the wind, your instructions remain forever utmost
significant
You benedicted all with your glance, O topmost wandering
mendicant
Your smile was like the flowers on the wish-fulfilling *kalpa taru*
Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept our *daṇḍavats, sādhu! sādhu!*

One who can live in both worlds at the same time is the true mystic
To say you were always thinking of Kṛṣṇa is too simplistic
You were constantly directly serving the Divine Couple of
Vṛndāraṇya

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept our *daṇḍavats, dhanya! dhanya!*

How to please you? You replied “When you love Kṛṣṇa”
We will always follow your example, you have given us this *tṛṣṇa*
You are our “*Moti*” , O Śrī Kṛṣṇa Priya *ati priya*
Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept our *daṇḍavats, sukriyā! sukriyā!*

Advaita Acharya Dasa

It's been 50 years since I found you, what a fortunate day
You who have guided me and shown me the way
It's been quite a journey, lots of ups and downs
Unfortunately, my offensive service no better than a clown's
To your sincere disciples and their compassionate merciful
association
I bow down and offer my prostrations
As old age creeps in, and my body and mind become weak
Prabhupāda, I fall at your lotus feet
A human being you have taught me to be
Gradually I'm beginning to see
I hope and pray I can remain humbly in your service sublime
And approach Lord Kṛṣṇa in eternal time

Thank you for your patience.

Advaita Acharya Dasa
Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga kī Jai

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to the Mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu which you have come to distribute to a world in great difficulty. All glories to your pure exalted example of a saintly leader who will stop at nothing to serve that mission.

Today, as with every other conscious person on the planet, who has even a drop of thinking capacity, I am brought to wonder at the present situation worldwide. Without caring to understand the complex strategies and intricacies of the Kali-yuga leaders whose political intentions are deeply corrupt and insane, like all of us, I am watching as countries are forced to turn themselves upside down due to a viral transmission that is so apparently invisibly dangerous and is driven by the hellishly impious lifestyle and eating habits of most of the world's people.

For years, I've watched the harsh anomalies increase in the world. You did too. I have also read from your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* translations and purports, how Kali-yuga is to dangerously unfold day-by-day.

Thus I have heard and also seen how human beings are becoming viciously forced to walk a pathway of darkness, while destructive tendencies are rewarded and taught within a hellish education system that perpetuates atheism and materialism. Everyone, even our community, are sending their children to these institutions, with the belief that career far outweighs the risks of degradation. You in your wisdom saw this coming and requested us to form farming communities which could be self-sufficient in both food and education. I tried to be a part of one such community and discovered how difficult it was to create and sustain, and also how painful it was when we failed to achieve your desire.

Now, today, when I turn to you, I hear you speaking an opposite message to the message being spoken by the worldly experts. You inform us that this Iron Age of machines and sinister things will

not bring any happiness to anyone, even the so-called experts themselves. No-one, not even the most powerful political leaders nor the world's famous corporate magnates can be happy despite their vast amounts of money and influence.

The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* assures us that everything is on schedule and has indeed a Supreme Controller above and beyond all these supposedly powerful rascals who are busy trying to ruin the world with their greed, nationalism and terrorism.

I discovered this quote from your class spoken in 1969 at New Vrindaban. I keep this message by my side when chanting and read it many times.

The whole world is problem for ordinary persons, but to us it is not a problem. Because we see everything Kṛṣṇa's. If there is problem, it is Kṛṣṇa's problem. Why my problem? Kṛṣṇa can know how to solve problem. So we have no problem practically. Kṛṣṇa's problem. Kṛṣṇa will see to it.

Just like Arjuna was encouraged that *nimitta-mātram bhava savyasācin*. "You don't worry about your victory. I have already arranged."

So we should have such faith and conviction and let us try. Let us do very sincerely and seriously. Then everything Kṛṣṇa will do. I haven't got to do anything.

You ensure that Kṛṣṇa is in control of everything. Just as a chess player moves the pieces on the board, similarly Kṛṣṇa is behind and within all that is happening. With this perspective that you have given me I can understand what is my duty. As an insignificant servant, I must work on developing consistent realization of the fact that everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa, everything is Kṛṣṇa. That is my work. If I can do that, my responsibility is complete, because then I will know my place and Kṛṣṇa will do everything. I will be freed from both fear and illusion.

Dear Prabhupāda, for me this is easy to write about but very, very, very difficult to perform!

Yet clearly it is my most important task now, in this crisis, and of course always. Although I am so faulty I wish to push forward in this respect. Even as a foolish person with no abilities what a difference this perspective would create.

So dear Prabhupāda, as once more I most fortunately worship

your lotus feet and place my head upon them in prayer, I beg from you the strength and clarity that will allow me to continue to keep pushing beyond my frailties and allow me to see how I am meant to serve within Kṛṣṇa's blessed, stressful times.

Thank you endlessly for your compassion and for having entered into this world of grief and corruption.

I beg to remain your insignificant servant,

Jagattarini Dasi

*samsāra-dāvānala-līḍha-loka-
trāṇāya kārūṇya-ghanāghanatvam
prāptasya kalyāṇa-guṇārnavasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

The spiritual master is receiving benediction from the ocean of mercy. Just as a cloud pours water on a forest fire to extinguish it, so the spiritual master delivers the materially afflicted world by extinguishing the blazing fire of material existence. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master, who is an ocean of auspicious qualities.

**Causeless mercy – You said, “I will go on trying as long as I live”.
“But what kind of intelligent persons they are?”**

No intelligence have I – from your *causeless* mercy I’m made. My only substance – the absolute knowledge you’ve showered – and still do even from afar.

Because the spiritual master enlightens with *divya jyana*, one feels obliged to him...

You are my breath to reality – your books are my light. Without your mercy – my existence certainly has no value.

“The Lord’s knowledge is unlimited, and therefore one cannot touch where it ends.”

At Juhu Beach on a walk, I asked a question... and you replied...
“**everything is in my books – read them!**” At the time my schedule was full – but I hadn’t prioritised reading. You frequently showed how you know the heart and mind of your disciples. Every opportunity you connected us to Absolute Truths. You taught me the unlimited unending knowledge of the Lord is the only answer to any query of value.

“Your love for me will be shown by how much you cooperate to keep this institution together after I am gone.”

“The honeybee seeks the honey and the fly, the sores”... you gave us the formula. Once I said: “Śrīla Prabhupāda, I want to take every one of your instructions as my heart and soul.”

You replied, “Do this very thing and your journey back to Godhead is guaranteed.” With this you taught me not to be selective of which instruction I value more; my obligation is to value equally all of your instructions.

“I may live or die. In either case I am with Kṛṣṇa. I asked Kṛṣṇa to give me enthusiasm to death. A soldier should die fighting on the battleground.”

You created an army of faithful soldiers. Many continue to serve you in the most astonishing ways. Your disciples wear your footprints stamped on their hearts. You have said: “One should follow in the footsteps of the Lord’s beloved devotees, who are deeply attached to His devotional service.” I remain profoundly grateful to each godsibling, that continues to sacrifice so much to honour your teachings and spread your message. Even though some of your soldiers have now become wounded, I hear inspirational descriptions of how they have creatively nurtured their attachment to you and Kṛṣṇa’s devotional service.

You told us, “I have given my ideas and directions in my books. Just you have to see it. I think I have done my part, is it not?”

Your will to go to the West to serve your spiritual master’s instruction (against all odds), saved us from a blazing fire of material existence. Your sacrifices forced our eyes open with the torchlight of knowledge and taught us that ‘Kṛṣṇa is the doer, don’t complicate matters - by getting in the way’ (SB 1.1). Śrīla Prabhupāda, Vaikuṅṭha Man, you taught us to be solely reliant on Kṛṣṇa’s mercy...then anything is possible.

You live forever – You’ve said “I am not going to die. *Kirtir yasya sa jivati. One who does something substantial, he lives forever.*”

You’ve told us “This life is just a passing flash”, “Not a fit place for a lady or a gentleman.” “Finish up your business now, it’s going to get harder.” I believe through your association anything is possible. I know how undeserving I am. Regardless, I keep chanting, following and praying to you and feel your presence each time.

You have warned us “Krishna Consciousness is not an old man’s recreation”.

One time in Vṛndāvana with the help of your friend Bhagatji, I had a walking stick made for your Vyāsa-pūjā. I ran out of the temple and bowed down while you walked by. Then I felt ‘tap, tap, tap’, on my head. I looked up to see your beaming smile, then you poked the stick at me saying “your stick”! May I continually feel that tapping on my head by you...please remind me of the gravity of immersing sole-heartedly in Krishna Consciousness, whatever the age this body is.

“In Vṛndāvana there is a place where there was no temple, but

a devotee desired, 'let there be a temple and *sevā*, devotional service.'"

In the early 1970s I went to Vṛndāvana with a one-way ticket, when there was only an empty plot of land with four arches. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you allowed me the greatest mercy to be present during the inception of the Vṛndāvana project. For over fourteen years, so many experiences, opportunities and realisations. However, the greatest nectar of all was your lotus association – incomparable causeless mercy. The lessons of those years became my foundation. You many times gave us extraordinary glimpses of your transcendental personality traits. Sometimes you would look 'through' a disciple, during a lecture, saying something that felt particularly personal to them. You taught us to be practical and conscious in our dealings "To be Kṛṣṇa conscious means to be conscious – to be conscious means to be Kṛṣṇa conscious. " One time you said, "Kṛṣṇa is witnessing the decisions that you make, even in your dreams. You should act in a way like your spiritual master is sitting on your shoulder". I pray that my obligation and gratitude to you increases with every last breath, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

You promised "I will always be with you through my books and through my orders. I will always remain with you in that way."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, my master, my eternal father, my best friend, you are everything to this unworthy soul. This is a time when many of your disciples are more or less the same age that you were when boarding the Jaladuta cargo ship. I have no doubt many such as myself now feel the withering of this body and are realising, in a deeper more authentic way, the transcendental astonishment of your accomplishments at such an advanced age. Somehow, we have been blessed by your most merciful transcendental association and with observing your extraordinary transcendence. Yet still the biggest lesson – you still remain available to us through your books, devotional service and by chanting and praying with sincerity.

The world wants to see miracles – we saw actual miracles in how you defied nature and personified transcendence. Your living example cemented our faith. Many of your disciples have now left this world, lots of us are currently lined up to make the journey. This insignificant beggar pleads that you never kick me away. Rather with each breath left, let me use it only to serve you and reach for your all-powerful transcendental lotus feet.

(Excerpts primarily from *Just as I Have Shown You*, 1986)

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*

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

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

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

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

I have already formed a Governing Body Commission,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GBC does not mean to control a center. GBC means to see that the activities of a center go on nicely . . . but not to exert absolute authority. That is not in the power

of GBC. . . . The GBC men cannot impose anything on the men of a center without consulting all of the GBC members first. [Letter to Girirāja, 12 August, 1971]

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

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

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

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

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

Since your departure, Śrīla Prabhupāda, under your continued leadership and the guidance of the GBC, ISKCON has flourished. We now have over 600 temples, 100 vegetarian restaurants, and 70 farms and eco-villages. More than 550 million of your books have been distributed, and more than 100,000 devotees have taken Vaiṣṇava

initiation. The Temple of the Vedic Planetarium is rising in Māyāpur, ISKCON's contributions have been honored by governments and the United Nations, Vaiṣṇava colleges have opened, devotee scholars teach in universities, and devotee lawyers practice in the courts. Your movement is now more than ever an international society.

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

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

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

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

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

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

And we have endured, to a large extent, because of the wisdom

you showed in creating a Governing Body Commission. Creating the GBC, despite its frailties and human limitations, was one of the greatest gifts you gave us.

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

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

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

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

Wherever there are individuals there is bound to be difference of opinion. Therefore for this purpose I have

formulated the GBC. [Letter to Rūpānuga, 14 February 1973]

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

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

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

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

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

Aspiring to be your eternal servant,

Anuttama dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

How time has passed...I am now the same age as you were when you came to the US. Because of your causeless mercy we have survived the turbulent sea of the material world. The best day of my life was the day I met you in Calcutta. I knew you were someone very special but could not fathom the full depth of Your Divine Self. Since then you have enlightened us about Kṛṣṇa through your spotless books, and now we know you are an emissary from Vaikuṅṭha sent by Kṛṣṇa to call us back home.

By Kṛṣṇa's mercy we have found you, and by your mercy we are reunited with Kṛṣṇa. The human form of life is extremely rare, and in that human form of life to be Kṛṣṇa's devotee is the rarest among rare. Hence it is our extreme good fortune that you gave us the shelter of your lotus feet.

Dearest Śrī Gurudeva, I am now 70 years old and am married to Rose, a Kṛṣṇa conscious chaste wife for over 44 years. Both of us have retired from our professional life. I was a chemical engineer, Rose, a PhD nurse, we have no children. Holding onto your lotus feet, our journey was fairly smooth. Kṛṣṇa fulfilled all our desires and gave us guidance to cross this ocean of nescience, and survive.

As advised by you in Dallas in 1975 to financially contribute to ISKCON Temples, we have been sponsoring special events such as Śrī Gaura Pūrṇimā and Śrī Janmāṣṭamī at New Talavan in Mississippi, and Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī at New Orleans. We have been doing these for almost two decades. Plus we contribute to the TOVP, Festival of India, Vrinda Kunda in Vṛndāvana, your Samadhi Maintenance at ISKCON Vṛndāvana. We also sponsor Narottama Dās Ṭhākura's festival, and when the situation permits, we feed *sādhus* of Vṛndāvana. We also individually help other godbrothers and godsisters when they approach us for help. By your blessing and Kṛṣṇa's mercy, we hope to carry on as long as we live.

Dear Śrī Gurudeva, at this point our planet is going through a deadly crisis. We are under attack from a deadly pathogen identified as COVID 19. It has virtually turned our planet upside down. We do not know how, where, or when this crisis will end. But we know in crisis to hold on to Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet very tight. We also have taken shelter of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and pray to you every

day. Please guide us. We have no shelter other than you, and have full faith in you. As you have always said, it will be done as Kṛṣṇa desires. Yes, that is always the best solution because it came from the perfect Lord of Lords.

Happy Vyāsa-pūjā 2020, Śrī Gurudeva. I may go on writing for ages, but even then I will not be able to say even one portion of your divine glories.

I remain your ever grateful disciple and servant,

Asokamrita Dasa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble and grateful obeisance to your all merciful lotus feet.

It has been 48 years since you formally accepted me as your disciple and I think that I am finally beginning to get a small understanding of your greatness and some appreciation for your unwavering dedication to your guru mahārāja Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda and the exalted spiritual lineage descending from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

You came to America with no money and no friends, experiencing what we would consider great hardship. But you never considered it so. You chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, and people came to you, their lives forever changed. After only a brief period of association with you, they were infused with a spark of your compassion and energized to go to new cities and countries to chant and preach. Having been touched by your power, they attracted more followers who then carried that same energy and compassion to more places around the world. In a mere ten years, 108 temples and farm communities had arisen all over the world.

With unwavering determination and fortitude, you broke the dam holding the flood waters of the *prema* that Mahāprabhu had come to deliver to the world. How was this possible?

I believe the answer lies in one quality that is the special hallmark of your personality and character. That quality is your deep sense of mercy and compassion for all. And I truly feel that this is what empowered you and allowed you to accomplish such amazing things.

What is the nature of mercy, from where does it come and what is its power?

In his book *Mādhurya Kādambinī*, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī gives a detailed analysis of the cause for *bhakti* awakening in the heart of the conditioned soul, establishing that *bhakti* only comes from Bhakti-devi herself, through the agency of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's special devotees, whom He infuses with that mercy potency.

The mercy of the devotees is said to be the cause of *bhakti*. The *bhagavad-bhakta*'s mercy, like the mercy of Bhagavān, is causeless....

Śrī Bhagavān is conquered by His *bhaktas*.... In other words, only by attaining the mercy of the *bhakta* does one attain the mercy of Bhagavān. (MK First Shower Text 3e)

... Śrī Bhagavān, who accepts a mood of submission to His *bhaktas*, personally offers His mercy potency to them, so that they can elevate those who are desirous of performing *hari-bhajana*. Thus He has established the *bhaktas'* excellence in this regard. (MK First Shower Text 4a)

Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī explains that Bhagavan Śrī Kṛṣṇa instills the heart of a special devotee with His mercy potency and then gives the devotee complete freedom to distribute mercy and bestow *bhakti* as the devotee wishes.

The particular significance of *mahat-kṛpā* (the mercy of His devotees) is that if it were not independent, it would have been impossible for anyone in this world to have obtained the mercy of Bhagavān....

Śrī Bhagavān is the condensed form of supreme bliss (*paramānanda*). Although all potency always resides within Him, still, it is not possible for Him to express compassion directly for the wayward *jīvas*. That is why the mercy bestowed autonomously by great souls is in fact the sole means to effect the deliverance of the abject and unhappy *jīvas*.

Like Bhagavān, *sādhus* also wander in the realm of *ānanda*, which is made up of *śuddha-sattva* (pure existence), and therefore, they cannot be touched by any of the unhappiness of the material world, which innately consists of the modes of passion and ignorance. Still, as a man waking from sleep can remember the miseries he felt in his dreaming state, the *mahāpuruṣas* sometimes remember the miseries of this world. When their hearts are thus melted with compassion, they show mercy to the wayward souls. Because of this, Śrī Bhagavān, who is all-compassionate, places His own mercy in the heart of these great souls and keeps their mercy completely independent, so that the common people can become inclined to Him. Therefore, Bhagavān's mercy is transmitted into the

heart of the *jīvas* in the wake of *mahat-kṛpā* (the mercy of great souls), and not through His own personal will.

Bhakti-sandarbhā (Anuccheda 180)

In the years following your departure from this world, some of your godbrothers and many of their disciples have followed the path you blazed around the world. Many, after seeing the world that you preached in, have expressed wonder and astonishment at your achievements. The depth of your love and compassion is evident in the breadth of your success in introducing Krishna Consciousness everywhere. In fact, it is now generally acknowledged in the greater Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community that you are *Nityānanda-āveśa*. That is, you are directly empowered by Nityānanda Prabhu with the *śakti* to deliver Krishna Consciousness in astonishing ways.

For myself, I can only express extreme gratitude to your lotus feet. My wonder comes from trying to imagine the extent of your compassion that gave you the unwavering determination to create a grand mission to awaken the world to the extraordinary teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. And happily, your disciples continue that work, still inspired by your vigor and kindness.

This lowly servant is praying for a drop of the unlimited mercy that you carry in your heart. Please soften my stone-like heart and fill it with that quality of compassion that I may render some service to you and help to spread the glories Śrī Śrī Rādhā Govinda, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu and our *guru-paramparā* to a suffering world.

A truly insignificant *jīva*,

Bhaktivedanta Vaikhanas Mahārāja, aka your disciple,

Janardana Dasa
(the Brooklyn one)

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Thank you for all your blessings, kindness and mercy upon me, your undeserving disciple. Thank you for creating a society of honest spiritually-minded individuals as well as a shelter where others are not out to “use” you as in this mundane material world. In the bright light of your unequaled purity, Śrīla Prabhupāda, pretenders, imposters and “bad apples” stand out clearly.

You taught us about two kinds of people in this world, the demons and the devotees, so we would not be cheated or misled by unscrupulous manipulators. You were a kind and loving father always guiding us properly and protecting us from the pitfalls of life. Most of us had little knowledge of spiritual life and like a tolerant and loving father, you took our hand and taught us how to be respectful, decent human beings.

Most importantly, you told us who God is and about how each of us has a personal eternal relationship with Him, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. I am so grateful to you for all your mercy.

Please allow me to remain your humble servant, eternally.

Gostavihari Dasa

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

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

A Message to the Future

The world is battling the coronavirus, but the United States has been hardest hit, having suffered more than 70,000 fatalities as of this writing. Many more are expected, from among the more than one and a quarter million confirmed cases. Practically everyone is afraid of catching this deadly disease. It's not hard to do. People are also worried about how they're going to live. Many people are not able to go to work due to government restrictions. More than \$2.3 trillion has been put into the economy to keep it from collapsing, but if the virus doesn't relent, the United States economy will still be in dire straits. People are anxious. Stress levels are up. Taken at face value, we're in a crisis situation.

Those who've been fortunate enough to come in contact with the teachings of the Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya* are able to understand this crisis from a different perspective and consequently respond to it in a different way. That understanding is explained by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, the foremost exponent of those teachings in recent times, in his purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.14.10:

Material advancement of civilization means advancement of the reactions of the threefold miseries due to celestial influence, earthly reactions, and bodily or mental pains. By the celestial influence of the stars there are many calamities like excessive heat, cold, rain or lack of rain, and the aftereffects are famine, disease, and epidemic. The aggregate result is agony of the body and the mind. Man-made material science cannot do anything to counteract these threefold miseries. They are all punishments from the superior energy of *māyā* under the direction of the Supreme Lord. Therefore our constant touch with the Lord by devotional service can give us relief without

our being disturbed in the discharge of our human duties. The *asuras*, however, who do not believe in the existence of God, make their own plans to counteract all these threefold miseries, and so they meet with failure every time. The *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.14) clearly states that the reaction of material energy is never to be conquered, because of the binding effects of the three modes. They can simply be overcome by one who surrenders fully in devotion under the lotus feet of the Lord.

In a lecture given in 1974 in Māyāpur, India, on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.8.23, Śrīla Prabhupāda tells us how we should respond to the dangers of this material world:

So fact is that even Kuntī or Devakī, so intimately connected with Kṛṣṇa, but they had to face so many dangers, so what to speak of others? What to speak of ourselves? So when we are danger, and we are in danger, we should not be discouraged. We should take courage that even Kuntī and Vasudeva and Devakī, they were also in danger, although they were very, very intimately connected with Kṛṣṇa.

So we should not be disturbed by the dangers of this material world. If we are actually Kṛṣṇa conscious, we should face the danger and depend on Kṛṣṇa. *Avaśya rakhibe kṛṣṇa viśvāsa pālana*. This is called surrender, that “I may be in danger, but I have surrendered to Kṛṣṇa. He must save me.” Keep this faith. Don’t be disturbed when you are in danger, because this world is such... *Padam padam vipadam*. Every step there is danger.

Just like we are walking on the street—immediately there is some pinprick, thorn. And by pinprick of that thorn, it may become a boil; it may become dangerous. So even by walking on the street, by talking on the street, by eating our food . . . In English it is said, “There are many dangers between the cup and the lip.” So you should always remember that this material world is simply full of dangers. If you think that “We are very safe; we are very expert; we have made this world very happy,” then you are fool number one. *Padam padam yad vipadam*. But if you take shelter of Kṛṣṇa, these dangers are nothing.

That Kuntī will say, that *vimocita*. *Vimocita* means “released from the danger.” So this is the study of Kṛṣṇa, that if you become Kṛṣṇa conscious, a sincere servant of Kṛṣṇa, don’t be agitated by the dangerous condition of this material world. You simply depend on Kṛṣṇa, and He’ll save you.

The best and easiest way to take shelter of and depend on Kṛṣṇa is to chant His holy names:

*kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ
kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ paraṁ vrajet*

“My dear King, although Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults, there is still one good quality about this age: Simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, one can become free from material bondage and be promoted to the transcendental kingdom.” — *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 12.3.51

From the purport:

After mentioning the innumerable faults of this Age of Kali, Śukadeva Gosvāmī now mentions its one brilliant aspect. Just as one powerful king can kill innumerable thieves, one brilliant spiritual quality can destroy all the contamination of this age. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, especially in this fallen age.

Building on this knowledge, we learn from Śrīla Prabhupāda’s translations to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.6.8–10, and his purport to text 10, how to transform an adverse situation into a spiritual opportunity:

[Nārada Muni said:] When I was a mere child of five years, I lived in a *brāhmaṇa* school. I was dependent on my mother’s affection and had no experience of different lands. Once upon a time, my poor mother, when going out one night to milk a cow, was bitten on the leg by a serpent, influenced by supreme time. I took this as the special mercy of the Lord, who always desires benediction for His devotees, and so thinking, I started for the north.

[From the purport to text 10:] Confidential devotees of the Lord see in every step a benedictory direction of the Lord. What is considered to be an odd or difficult moment

in the mundane sense is accepted as special mercy of the Lord. Mundane prosperity is a kind of material fever, and by the grace of the Lord the temperature of this material fever is gradually diminished, and spiritual health is obtained step by step. Mundane people misunderstand it.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda was almost seventy years old, he left India to execute the order of his spiritual master, which was to preach to the people in the Western countries in the English language. Obedience to that order was certainly a major motivating factor in his going. If we go beneath the surface, though, we can understand that the deeper reason Śrīla Prabhupāda executed that mission, and the reason he was given it by his spiritual master, was to shower compassion on those who were ignorant of Krishna Consciousness.

I realized recently that this is the best and most important reason for doing anything. It's said that people don't care how much you know; they want to know how much you care. Yesterday I was reflecting on something Śrīla Prabhupāda said while walking with some disciples:

Therefore, this one practice—chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and hearing—that is very nice. And praying to Kṛṣṇa, “Please give me strength.” Hare, “O energy of Kṛṣṇa, O Kṛṣṇa, I am fallen, I have no strength. Please accept me.” That's all. “I have no qualification. I am frail. I am trying, but I am failing.” All these appeals should be made.

And Kṛṣṇa is all-powerful; He can do anything. Even [if] we do not perform, trying our best, if we fail, Kṛṣṇa will help us. Just like a child tries his best, but he falls down. The mother takes up and, “All right. Come on. Walk.” Like that. [Morning Walk, 23 March 1968, San Francisco]

I was trying to understand why I felt so drawn to and inspired by those words. I concluded that it was because they were telling me exactly what I wanted to hear—that is, that there is someone who is capable of helping me and, more importantly, that this person is inclined to help me. And receiving that person's help is more dependent on His merciful nature than on my efforts. “Even if we do not perform, trying our best, if we fail, Kṛṣṇa will help us.” Taking that to be a fact, what I understood from those few words has helped me more than anything else to feel inspired to continue in Krishna

Consciousness. Somebody loved me: Kṛṣṇa. And that love was unconditional. Even though I am unable to perform to the proper standard, still, that love is there—like a mother’s love for her child, and so she helps him learn how to walk. I felt encouraged to know that it is Kṛṣṇa’s nature to love us like this, and I simultaneously felt confident that Śrīla Prabhupāda’s nature is no different. Like father, like son. Being Kṛṣṇa’s perfect representative, Śrīla Prabhupāda had the same nature as Kṛṣṇa’s. That’s the reason why so many people came forward to follow him—because they could feel he loved them, and they loved *him* for that. Aside from Kṛṣṇa and Śrīla Prabhupāda, the two most important people in my life were my parents. My attraction for them was not because they were charismatic celebrities but because I knew they genuinely loved me.

I put Śrīla Prabhupāda in the same category in that I believe he genuinely loved people and wanted to help them. In the most important way—arguably the only truly important way: spiritually. Whatever Śrīla Prabhupāda did, he did out of a spirit of transcendental love and compassion for us, not expecting anything in return. The benefits of the love offered by Śrīla Prabhupāda, unlike mundane love, are eternal. Parents may be able to help their children in one lifetime, but the love and compassion offered by Śrīla Prabhupāda to everyone in the form of the holy name, his books, his temples, and his genuine followers is an eternal blessing. There’s no greater gift than the opportunity to engage in devotional service, and that’s exactly what Śrīla Prabhupāda gave to countless millions of people.

I would like to extend my heartfelt sympathies to everyone who has been affected by the tragic disaster of the coronavirus. These understandings have been presented with no intention to disregard the gravity of this catastrophe. After everything is done to put an end to this horror story, which will hopefully end soon, many theists might search for reasons why something like this could happen. How could God allow so much suffering and death to be inflicted on human society? Does it have something to do with the way we’ve been living, and if so, how are we supposed to live? What exactly are we supposed to learn from this, and how are we supposed to proceed? This message is a humble attempt to provide some light by the brief answers that we’ve given to those questions above. Much more needs to be said in order for one to have a clear understanding. That additional information can be best found in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, his most significant contribution, which are highly respected

by the academic community for their authoritativeness, depth, and clarity. They are used as standard textbooks in numerous colleges, and have been translated into over fifty languages.

Your servant,

Bhrgupati Dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I have no right to consider myself any servant of yours, but it was you who personally told me to think of you as my father and to love and serve you in that way because you said that you accepted me as your son.

I am eternally grateful for the opportunity you gave me to serve you, otherwise my life would have been nothing but a complete waste of time as all my previous lives have been without you.

Any words I may utter in this instance are insufficient, but I pray that anything I may have performed in your service will somehow speak to how much I want to increasingly accept you as my father and my life and soul for all eternity.

Your most worthless servant,

Gauracandra Dasa

Therefore he is as good as Kṛṣṇa

Today we celebrate the birth anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda, the living *Bhāgavatam* and the Supreme Personality of Servitor Godhead. The worship of Śrīla Prabhupāda is more important than the worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa. As His Divine Grace said in Hawaii on May 3, 1976:

The other day I have explained why guru is accepted as good as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Arcye viṣṇau śilā-dhīr guruṣu nara-matir ... nārakī*: If anyone thinks *arca-vigraha*, the Deities, as made of stone, made of earth, or made of something material, and guru, the spiritual master, is an ordinary man, these are forbidden. So why guru is to be considered – *sākṣād dharitvena samasta-śāstraiḥ* – exactly the Supreme Personality of Godhead? That reason is given there. The reason is that he is giving the Kṛṣṇa knowledge, therefore he is as good as Kṛṣṇa.

Prabhupāda demonstrated this principle several times in August 1976 in Hyderabad and New Delhi. Prabhupāda had presided over the opening of the Hyderabad temple on Janmāṣṭamī Day, Aug. 17, and celebrated his Vyāsa-pūjā the following day. The devotees had worked hard to have everything ready and a group of prominent S. Indian *brāhmaṇas* led by Śrī Sampath Kumar Bhattacharya did the installation *pūjās*. Prabhupāda was very happy with them. They were equally appreciative of ISKCON and held great reverence for Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda was happy with his men led by Mahāmsa Swami and encouraged them. At the same time, he observed some discrepancies in their service and at the appropriate time he brought these to the temple leaders' attention.

August 17, 1976 - Hyderabad

Śrīla Prabhupāda's quarters are on the first floor at the back of the building. Despite the fact that work is still going on, and that cement, dirt and dust are everywhere and the noise of construction is all-pervasive, Prabhupāda moved right in. The room was so dirty I had to sweep it out while Prabhupāda sat and watched. Somehow the local devotees could not arrange to have it cleaned before he arrived. But Prabhupāda does not seem to mind. His main concern

is that they organize a successful opening of the temple. I, however, had no excuses when he saw my own negligence in cleaning his room. In the early morning Prabhupāda rang for me. Although I had supposedly cleaned his rooms he noticed that his silver *loṭa* was tarnished and the balcony was covered in a thick layer of dust, so he mildly reminded me that it was my service to attend to these things. He said that if I didn't do them, then he had to see to them himself. I sheepishly concurred: I had neglected the polishing of the *loṭa* because it was a task normally taken care of by the cleaning crew supplied by the host temple, and I had thus paid it scant attention. And although I had swept the floor of the room I had neglected the balcony, thinking it would not be used. I am getting a little dull, but Śrīla Prabhupāda is as sharp in his observance as ever.

Lack of cleanliness wasn't the only thing he noticed. He took his massage early, at 8:45 a.m. and called for Mahāmsa and Gopāla Kṛṣṇa. He asked them why the temple was not being decorated with garlands of flowers, strings of mango leaves, and banana trees for the opening. He pointed out that although today was such an important occasion, the temple room was bare.

Mahāmsa's excuse was that he had been busy with all the other arrangements. Prabhupāda, obviously agitated at the lack of proper organization, also mildly chastised Mahāmsa for the dirty and unfinished condition of his quarters. When he moved in, cement dust had been everywhere and the bathroom barely worked. Śrīla Prabhupāda lightly thumped the bolsters flanking his *āsana* and complained that they were so hard that they were no better than stones. "The rooms of the spiritual master," he said, "should be ready even before the Deity rooms. This is the higher form of worship."

On August 23 the S. Indian *brāhmaṇas* traveled back to their temples but not without first seeing Prabhupāda in his room and taking their leave. Śrīla Prabhupāda urged them to sustain this spirit of cooperation and help spread Krishna Consciousness to the world. He happily posed for a photograph with them and he accepted a gift of a *śālagrāma-śilā* from Sampath Kumar before they left.

As he sat with the *śilā* on his desk Prabhupāda said he would give it to the Bombay temple which was well on the way to completion. But after everyone left, Prabhupāda turned to Pradyumna prabhu. He asked him if he would like to personally worship the *śālagrāma-śilā*.

Pradyumna was readily agreeable and so Prabhupāda gave him some simple instructions. "So we can carry, and every morning

just put in a *śimhāsana* and Tulasī and water and flower and little fruit. That's all." Then turning to the rest of us he said, "He has got tendency to worship."

"He is *brāhmaṇa*, *paṇḍita*," Gargamuni added.

"Paṇḍitjī," Prabhupāda smiled, calling Pradyumna by his popular sobriquet.

Prabhupāda finalized Pradyumna's new duty with him. He told him to buy a small *śimhāsana*, a *pañca-pātra* waterpot, and some fine linen from which he should make a small *dhotī* and *chadar* for the Lord. He was to worship Him with flowers, Tulasī and *gopī-candana*. He referred him to the painting in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi-līlā*, wherein Śrī Advaitācārya was depicted worshipping the *śālagrāma-śilā*, and told him to follow that example. He instructed Pradyumna, "First thing is that when you take *śālagrāma-sevā*, wherever you stay, this worship must go on daily. That you cannot stop. One day, if you are sick, your wife will do that. But that half an hour *pūjā* must continue. That you must decide. So both of you are initiated. In case you are little sick, your wife will do. In that platform you have to do it. *Sevā* shall not be stopped.

Gradually as your son grows, he will also do it."

So although Prabhupāda sometimes complained about Pradyumna's *smārta-brāhmaṇa* tendencies (he once said that he had saved Pradyumna from becoming a *smārta*) still he recognises his good brahminical qualifications and learning and is always encouraging him to develop them.

After the Hyderabad opening Prabhupāda flew north to Delhi to celebrate Rādhāṣṭamī.

On August 27 he took his regular morning walk, after which he entered the temple. Devotees pressed in from all sides. He greeted Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Pārtha-sārathi and then mounted the Vyāsāsana for *guru-pūjā* and class. As each devotee came forward to offer a flower and obeisances, Prabhupāda was scanning the room. He noted the absence of Pradyumna and called me over to inquire where he was. I found him in an upstairs room, just about to commence his *śālagrāma-śilā pūjā*. When I informed Prabhupāda that he was doing his *pūjā*, Prabhupāda was not at all happy. Clearly agitated, Prabhupāda leaned in my ear and said, "First of all *guru-pūjā*! Tell the nonsense, 'First of all *guru-pūjā*!'"

Realization is enhanced by service and service is our eternal asset. By this combination, Prabhupāda gave us entrance to the

spiritual realm, a privilege that can never be matched nor superseded. Prabhupāda lives on and by worshipping him through *vāṇī* and *sevā* we stand unassailable.

Your servant,
Hari-sauri Dasa

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

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa on this earth, having taken shelter 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 Caitanya deva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

Forty-nine years have passed since we were introduced. You were just written words and a picture. It was a black and white profile. You held your finger up as if making a point. You said, “Godhead is light; nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead, there is no nescience.” Nescience was not in my vocabulary. Much later, I discovered that it meant lack of knowledge, ignorance; agnosticism. I looked up from the magazine cover to see a bus passing. It had an advertisement on the side promoting some product: “In your head, you know it’s right.” Hmmm. I glanced back down at the magazine. Kṛṣṇa in his Śyāmasundara form was on the cover. I’d never seen anything like it. He was indescribably beautiful. I didn’t know then that you had personally coached the artist. Every detail was under your direction. Nor had I ever heard the word, “Godhead.” What was that? God, yes, but what was with this “head” thing. Yet, inexplicably, the entire presentation of words and picture seemed very familiar. I must have read the magazine, but I have no memory of anything except the cover. Little did I know that you were the wizard behind all these “invitations” being distributed on streets in some major cities of the world. By the time I received it in 1971, you had already planted seeds in numerous countries. Devotees were ubiquitous in city centers. The chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa was becoming quite famous. I moved into a “temple” (really, a dingy apartment) within three days of being handed that magazine. I didn’t need to meet you in the flesh to have been inspired to follow your orders. In literature, a character

is created by five different types of descriptions: 1) appearance (you were mysterious and regal, confident and other worldly); 2) what other people say about him (wise, kind, pure); 3) what he does (goes everywhere to talk about Kṛṣṇa, writes about Kṛṣṇa); 4) what he thinks (how to serve Kṛṣṇa, how Kṛṣṇa is doing everything); 5) with whom he associates (devotees). For many months, I never met you in person, but I began to know you. When I finally saw you, I was overwhelmed with gratitude. Tears of gratefulness flowed from my eyes for hours. *Vāṇī* and/or *vapuḥ* – the effect is the same. Though I didn't have much personal time with you in the ensuing years, I felt ever closer. Whether working at Tiffany Press to print your books, hearing your lectures, or offering you *prasādam*, my affection for you continues to grow. I see it in others who have come to ISKCON long after your departure in 1977. You are living art in sound. Your mercy keeps flowing. Every magazine or book is an ocean of your personal love. No wonder the younger generations venerate you. You live on – just as you told us. In fact, the younger generations often know you better! One devotee in India memorized all your pastimes recounted in the *Līlāmṛta* and the *Memories* series. He had a story for every question and occasion. The importance in hearing the descriptions of the Personality of Godhead for making advancement in Krishna Consciousness cannot be overestimated; similarly, the value in hearing the words and actions of a pure devotee are even more exalted. You have told us that there is no difference between chanting the name of Kṛṣṇa or that of His pure devotee. Therefore, we sing, “Jaya, Prabhupāda! Jaya, Prabhupāda!” in *kīrtana* and *bhajan*. Anyone who simply sees your picture or words from your books is purified.

The gateway to the temple in ancient Jerusalem was known as that “eye of the needle.” It was very narrow, and worshippers entered one at a time. Similarly, entrances to the old Indian temples have gopurams and spare passageways leading to the deity. You, on the other hand, open your arms wide to all aspiring *bhaktas*. You embrace all the *mlecchas*, *yavanas*, and lowborn. You give *gāyatrī mantra* to women. Your heart is big enough to accommodate the entire world. In this mood, the Foundational Statement of your position in ISKCON was crafted and ratified by the GBC in 2013. “You are living art in sound.” All the present and future Iskconites recognize, or should, that through your mercy, all of the sincere devotees can go home, back to Godhead.

You said that the *ācāryas* simply stay in the material world appearing in one planet after another to relieve the suffering of the conditioned souls. Certainly, there are mysteries that my tiny and confused intellect will never unravel. Your destination is surely one of them. I know that wherever you have gone, your grace continues to light up this world and lives to inspire the *jīvas* in order to wake up to their birthright of unalloyed devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, that Blessed Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. You liked that term, “Blessed Lord.” You authorized its use not only in the *Gītā*, but used it in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta* without any reference to its other uses. As an adjective, “blessed” means worthy of adoration and/or sacred. How perfect to describe Śrī Kṛṣṇa. How appropriate to describe you, the manifestation of the Lord’s blessings.

Every Vyāsa-pūjā, I am reminded of how much service that I haven’t done for Your Divine Grace. Yet, you continue to engage me in working on Kṛṣṇa conscious movies, chairing the SABHA, chanting 16 rounds daily (only by your mercy), and giving me the best gift anyone could get – *sādhu-saiṅga*. Health, happiness, wealth, fame – everything pales in the glow of the gift of good devotee association. That is how I see you – living, guiding, counseling, commiserating :) through your followers. Whether they and I have differences of opinions, by your divine mercy, I love each and every one of them. Please continue to shower those blessings on me and all of the souls fortunate enough to know about you.

I beg to remain,

Your fallen and useless servant,

Nrsimhananda Dasa
Producer, Uplifting Cinema Pvt. Ltd.
Director, ISKCON Television, Inc.
Chairman, SABHA (Spiritual Advisor Bhagavat Assembly)

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

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

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Koṭi daṇḍavats at your lotus feet. You have saved the entire planet from falling into the deepest darkness of ignorance. When there was no light, Your Divine Grace brought light. You brought book *Bhāgavata* and person *Bhāgavata*. You illuminated the Path for those who choose to follow you. Even in your personal absence, your books live on to provide perfect shelter and guidance. They speak directly to the soul. No other modern day literature can create a revolution in the minds and hearts of the people like your carefully crafted books on Krishna Consciousness.

Anyone has the opportunity to read your books, and by your grace, they can understand who is God, what is God, who am I and what is the purpose of life. Everyone is looking for the meaning of life, but unless they come to your lotus feet, they will never know. By your order, we faithfully and lovingly served your extraordinary book *kīrtana*. We assisted you in printing, typesetting, editing, painting, publishing and distributing so many books on the Supreme Lord. Your divine presence was like a tsunami wave of book creation and book distribution. How fortunate for us to be born with an opportunity to serve your mission. We are certain to see you again one day. We have kept you deep in our hearts and followed your order to chant daily the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. You are the love of our life. Certainly we will again have the opportunity to serve your lotus feet. Until then, we pray incessantly to Lord Kṛṣṇa for strength and devotion.

May the whole world come to your lotus feet and joyfully chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*!

Jay Śrīla Prabhupāda !

Your duly initiated disciple,

Mahashakti Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my unlimited obeisances.

Somehow or other I have the good fortune to be accepted by you and to feel the cooling rays of your lotus feet. Although I am unworthy, you have given me a place of refuge there. I pray that you will never kick me away, but allow me to shelter there eternally.

This is the year of the pandemic, which turns out to be a blessing in many ways as it has caused your devotees to come together and raise their voices up in *sañkīrtana*. A huge purification for the entire planet, and greatly needed during this time in Kali-yuga. I have been awed by the outpouring of devotion in the Festival of the Holy Name. It is a true tribute to what you have done in spreading the name of Kṛṣṇa to every town and village. It has been so inspiring to see and hear devotees from all over the world chanting their hearts out from their own homes, with their own families. So intimate and touching. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is alive and well all over this planet because of you. You have done what no-one before you was able to do: you have cracked open the treasure chest of *bhakti* and freely distributed it outside of India. The magnitude of what you have done and how many people you have touched is incredible.

It took your physical presence here to bring me to Kṛṣṇa, but so many of these devotees are younger and never had the good fortune to be physically present before you. Yet they have taken to this path because of the deep pure strength of your message. And it's not just ISKCON devotees who participated in this Festival, but also others from various groups. Here is the cooperation you wanted, as we are all on the branches of Lord Caitanya's tree. I think you must be pleased to see how we are working together in glorifying the holy name. You truly did build a house in which the whole world could live.

Thank you for all you have given, and please bless me so that I may be of some small service.

Aspiring for a drop of your mercy,

Your daughter,

Rupa Manjari Devi Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances,

All glories unto you!

Back in 1973 was the first time I came to the International Māyāpur festival – my first time in India. I remember when our bus drove round the last bend that I saw this huge white flag with the ISKCON logo that you yourself had designed, flapping in the wind. I was thrilled to the max at that moment, and my heart jumped in great joy. Indeed I became so proud of your ISKCON, that I resolved right then and there that I wanted to be part of this Movement...that I would help you spread your mission.

I heard that before you came to America, in your room in the Rādhā Damodara temple you had high fever and were lying down on a thin straw mattress, on the cold floor. It was in the middle of winter, when Vṛndāvana gets really cold. I cannot even imagine the austerities you endured for the benefit of your future disciples, indeed, for the benefit of all humanity on planet Earth.

Two of your godbrothers came to see you in this condition and said: “You must get a bed. Unless you buy a bed you might die.” You retorted: “I will not buy a bed. I want to spend every rupee on book distribution.”

Similarly, in the blistering heat of the summer you were distributing your *Back to Godhead* magazine in Delhi. These are just two examples of the austerities you performed even before coming to the West. Austerities unimaginable to pampered Western boys and girls – simply to please Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Sometime back I read in *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* what you said on a morning walk in Boston:

We must not be disappointed that no one
is hearing Krishna Consciousness.

We will say it to the moon and stars and all directions.

We will cry in the wilderness, because Kṛṣṇa is everywhere.

We want to have a certificate from Kṛṣṇa that
‘This man has done something for Me.’

Not popularity.

If a pack of asses says you are good, what is that?

We have to please Kṛṣṇa's senses with purified senses.

To please Kṛṣṇa, that indeed has been the only mission of your life.

I am in awe at how strong your preaching was, how strong your determination to preach against all odds so that Kṛṣṇa will be pleased, that, "This man has done something for Me."

Indeed, as time passed we all witnessed how you performed truckloads of devotional service, often under the most difficult circumstances.

You are truly the personification of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's prayer, glorifying the spiritual master:

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

"...By the mercy of the spiritual master one receives the benediction of Kṛṣṇa. Without the grace of the spiritual master, one cannot make any advancement.

Indeed, it has been your aspiration your entire life to satisfy your divine spiritual master Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wrote around the turn of the century:

O, for that day when the fortunate English, French, Russian, German, and American people will take up banners, *mṛdaṅgas*, and *karatālas* and raise *kīrtana* through their streets and towns. When will that day come?

Indeed it is easy to see that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura transferred a huge amount of mercy to you, simply since you did your best to fulfill his desires.

Indeed, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura repeated a prediction made by the 16th century saint Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Lochana dasa Ṭhākura in his *Sajjana-toṣaṇī*:

Very soon the chanting of '*harināma sankīrtana* will be spread all over the world. Oh, when will that day come when people from America, England, France, Germany, Russia will take up *karatālas* and *mṛdaṅgas*

and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa in their towns? When will that day come when the fair-skinned foreigners will come to Śrī Māyāpur-dhāma and join with the Bengali Vaiṣṇavas to chant, *Jaya Śacīnandana, Jaya Śacīnandana*.

When will that day be?

Indeed, “Very soon a personality will appear who will travel all over the world to spread the teachings of Lord Caitanya.”

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu predicted: *pṛthivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma, sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*: “In every town and village of the world, My name will be heard.” Indeed, the 16th century Saint Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura recorded a prediction of Lord Caitanya: “Taking the sharp sword of the congregational chanting, I will root out and destroy the demoniac mentality in the hearts of all the conditioned souls. If some sinful people escape and giving up religious principles go to far off countries, then – *mora senāpati-bhakta yaibe tathāya*, my *senāpati*, my general, will come and spread Krishna Consciousness all over the world.”

That *senāpati* was you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who was to fulfill all of these predictions.

Indeed, furthermore Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu Himself predicted that a beautiful temple, an ‘*Adbhuta Mandir*’ would appear in Śrīdhām Māyāpur that will cause the whole world to come and worship Lord Caitanya.

By your mercy that prediction also has come to pass.

Indeed, in Spring this year, when visiting Śrīdhām Māyāpur I saw with my own eyes the fulfillment of all these predictions: When on Gaura Pūrṇimā countless people were coming and going all day, to see that humongous temple raised by your loving servants in the paddy fields of Māyāpur, take *darśana* of Śrī Pañca-tattva and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava – a stream of people without end, worshipping Kṛṣṇa, singing and dancing in great happiness together with their ISKCON brothers and sisters, just as predicted by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura about 120 years ago.

Indeed: *mora senāpati-bhakta yaibe tathāya*, my *senāpati*, my general will come and spread Krishna Consciousness all over the world.

That prediction has been fulfilled by Your Divine Grace. All this is simply your mercy.

How Śrī Kṛṣṇa so extremely empowered you to make all these things happen that were predicted by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu and our *ācāryas*!

guru-mukha-padma-vākya, cittete kariyā aikya...

“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 *prema* 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.”

Back in August 28th 1970 you sent a letter:

My dear son, (Pṛthu Dāsa),

Please accept my blessings.

Upon the recommendation of Śivānanda I have gladly consented to accept you as my duly initiated disciple. Your beads have been duly chanted by me and they are sent by separate post. I have given you the spiritual name of Pṛthu dāsa Brahmācārī. King Pṛthu was the ideal ruler of the citizens, so you should also set the example of ideal person and spread this ideal very widely to all the citizens of your country.

Unfortunately, I am far from fulfilling your expectations, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Please forgive me for my millions of shortcomings.

Kindly forgive my foolish posture.

Please bless me to fulfill your order.

Your servant,

Prithu Dāsa

Note: After your discussion with the world famous Zen Buddhist Professor Karlfried Graf Dürckheim I was thrilled that he would pay

his *daṇḍavat* to you.

This man had class. He was super intelligent, meek and humble – a real gentleman, from a huge line of aristocratic descent.

Indeed he told me on the way to the Frankfurt Railway station: “Prithu Dasa, I have met over so many years of my life so many famous gurus, *sādhus*, *mahants*, saints and highly placed religious personalities, in India and all over the world. But I have never met a personality like your spiritual master. “Er ist durch” “He is on the other side,” he said.

“This is the most fortunate day in my life.”

It was mine too.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

I often hear of second or third generation devotees talk about how they wish they could have had your personal association, as though they had missed out on something so important and inspiring. It is true that your association was wonderful and inspiring. However, to be honest, when I had your personal association I was simply worried about saying something foolish, doing something foolish, or even creating an offense by being foolish.

I was much more inspired and directed by hearing you, by studying your books, listening to your lectures, and rendering some service. We talk about having an intimate association with you, but what does that mean? It means acting according to your orders, following your instructions, and dedicating our life and soul to your mission. Intimacy is found in your service. Some devotees feel that physical proximity is intimacy. Many persons who had much physical proximity to you are now neglecting your order and your mission. That is not intimacy. That is the intimacy of the bug sitting on the lap of the king. You state:

So far personal association with the guru is concerned, I was only with my Guru Mahārāja four or five times, but I have never left his association, not even for a moment. Because I am following his instructions, I have never felt any separation. There are some of my godbrothers here in India who had constant personal association with Guru Mahārāja, but who are neglecting his orders. This is just like the bug who is sitting on the lap of the king. He may be very puffed up by his position, but all he can succeed in doing is biting the king. Personal association is not so important as association through service.

(Letter to Śatadhanya on February 20, 1972)

Therefore, if I want an intimate relationship with you, then I must follow your order and fulfill your desires. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have stated clearly: "Personal association is not so important as association through service." Everyone has a chance to have intimate

association with Śrīla Prabhupāda, the eternal *śikṣā-guru* of this Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement. Let us take that opportunity! Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Your servant,

Rūpa-vilāsa Dāsa

Bhavatarini Devi Dasi

To my beloved spiritual master, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda for the occasion of his appearance day 2020.

1. All glories to this day in Calcutta that you did appear
To join Gaurāṅga's dancing party, to serve your master dear
2. Cooling like rays of the soothing benediction moon, you came
To fulfill Gaurāṅga's prophecy and to spread the holy name
3. To every town and village this message you have boldly told
You are not this mundane body, Oh, you are pure spirit soul
4. Part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, a spark of the Divine
Sat cit ānanda, eternal knowledge, bliss and love sublime
5. All glories to your *bhakti* mission, all glories to your fame
All glories to this chance you give to us for Kṛṣṇa *prema*
6. We are lost and torn and crying in this dark Age of Quarrel
But this holy name of Kṛṣṇa has come to save us all
7. Flooding the gates of India, inundating everyone
But, still the West lay sleeping like an indolent, foolish son
8. Then your guru gave the order: Take this message to the West
So on his order, in your old age, you came and saved the rest

HARE KṚṢṆA HARE KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA HARE HARE
HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE

Your eternal servant,

Bhavatarini Devi Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

All glories to your lotus feet, may I never forget their mercy.

I was wandering dazed and confused during the hippy era, having listened to *My Sweet Lord* and received a *BTG* magazine and *prasādam*. It seemed that I was seeking the unknown...at least that's what my acquaintances would tell me as we pondered life's mysteries floating in and out of our LSD inspired psycho haze. I was chanting the *mahā-mantra* in the famous Stanley Park, Vancouver, after receiving the limited wisdom of Baba Ram Dass in his *Be Here Now* journal. That book got me chanting even before I visited your temple.

In a matter of weeks I found myself at the Hare Kṛṣṇa "love feast" and then your world, the world of Kṛṣṇa opened up to me in all its glories. I am eternally indebted to you, my Great Master for I had no qualifications except to be an eligible candidate for Lord Caitanya's mercy as a most fallen wretch. Lord Caitanya sent you to the most degraded place in the world where hedonism and narcissism was at its highest pitch...how merciful of you. You are the mercy manifestation of Lord Nityānanda "*Nitāi pada-kamala, koṭī-candra suśītala*." You are that manifestation of millions of moons for this Kali-yuga, for each word of your divine purports is worth a million moons. "If they read one word from my books their lives will become perfect".

Who can imagine the power and depths of potency of your writings? As an iceberg only exposes a small fraction of its real size, so your books have the undiscovered potency to destroy the titanic forces that we are now experiencing in this Kali-yuga. It is destined to happen, that is, the retreat of Kali and his soldiers. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have been marked as the *senāpati* of Lord Caitanya, and by His grace your army will prevail and the many drowning souls will be caught in your mercy net of pure devotional service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa.

"*Mandāḥ sumanda-matayo, manda-bhāgyā hy upadrutāḥ*." They are so lost in illusion and always disturbed how will they understand this great movement? Only by your mercy. In the mood of Prahlād, you ventured fearlessly across the vast ocean at the age of 69 carrying your spiritual master's desire for a worldwide *saṅkīrtana* movement. "*Śoce tato vimukha-cetasa indriyārtha*". You are full of

compassion and concern for the sense gratifiers burning in the fire of darkness and sin. “*Māyā-sukhāya bharam udvahato vimūḍhān*”. They are trying so hard to enjoy this modern life of *bhoga* and *aiśvarya* only to meet with defeat and misery. Your compassion, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is unfathomable.

The 5th Canto has clearly described their destiny: *Mahāraurava Sūcīmukha*, *Andhatāmisra*, *Kṛmibhojana* and so on. Haridāsa Ṭhākura has stated to Lord Caitanya that one who does not receive His mercy in this Kali-yuga is destined to hellish existence for millions of *kalpas*!!!

Oh master the great urgency of your mission cannot be stressed enough.

May you bless me that I may die on the battlefield distributing a few of your books.

Your insignificant servant,

Kripanidhi Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my humble obeisances, all glories to your most divine Grace.

As the years are passing our awareness has become more and more acute of the immensity of what you have come to offer to anyone and everyone, and what you are trying to save us from.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you always stressed and warned us that in this material world, there is danger at every step. We sometimes allowed ourselves to be distracted, and not fully see the urgency of your message.

There is a situation in the world at the present moment, where everything you warned us has come to manifest, and we cannot ever adequately repay or expressed our gratitude to have given us the shelter of your temples as you call them oasis, the holy name, the *saṅkīrtana* movement, and only you Śrīla Prabhupāda can enable us in this planet, in this body, in this age, render direct service to Kṛṣṇa, the service should we go back to Kṛṣṇa that will be the same as the one performed here.

You have put the *dhāmas* of Vraja and Māyāpur on the map where thousands now flock, written, translated and published innumerable books, guided us on how to become Vaiṣṇavas with inexhaustible patience, and by writing thousands of letters of instructions.

You have introduced Ratha-yātrā in every major city in the world. And all of this without ever compromising the purity and integrity of your commitment to your spiritual master in Lord Chaitanya's mission. Always giving credit to your spiritual master His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, saying that the secret of your successful accomplishments was that you never changed a word from His teachings and instructions.

I take the opportunity on this most auspicious of days to ask forgiveness for my offences at your Lotus feet, to the deities, the *dhāmas*, and the Vaiṣṇavas, so I may be allowed to remain so engaged for the eternal life of my soul.

Your eternal spiritual daughter and disciple,

Vishvadevi dasi

WONDERFUL PRABHUPĀDA

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā, your spiritual sons and daughters delight in the opportunity to glorify you with equal praise and exaltation usually reserved for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. We are very eager to present a most transcendental comparison of Wonderful Kṛṣṇa, and you, Wonderful Prabhupāda!

You gave the world *Kṛṣṇa Book* depicting the pastimes of Wonderful Kṛṣṇa, and there it is stated, “Without understanding the intricacies of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and without knowing His uncommon spiritual opulences, the innocent cowherd boys and men of Vṛndāvana began to discuss the wonderful activities of Kṛṣṇa which surpass the activities of all men.” Likened to the cowherd boys and men, who without understanding the intricacies and opulences of the Lord, can discuss His pastimes; we your spiritual sons and daughters although devoid of transcendental understanding, by your grace alone can fathom your munificent personality and discover you, Wonderful Prabhupāda!

For anyone who has the fortune to bask in the sunshine of your transcendental presence by studying your books, hearing your lectures, watching your videos, reading your letters, listening to your *bhajans*, and following your instructions, they become fit candidates eligible to understand your mystical personality. Only by the power you bestowed upon us, have we gained the ability to voice a lofty and eloquent tribute to duly describe you as, Wonderful Prabhupāda!

It is conveyed in *Kṛṣṇa Book* that the cowherd boys marveled at the extraordinary activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa, “It is really not possible. Just imagine! He is now only seven-years-old! How was it possible for Him to lift Govardhana Hill in one hand and hold it up just

like the king of elephants holds a lotus flower?" Similarly, we are astonished at your monumental achievements and numerous accolades, befitting only you, Wonderful Prabhupāda!

You left India at an advanced age to fulfill the order of your spiritual master when the average man is ordinarily contemplating retirement. Moreover, you founded the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in a short span of only twelve years. Another colossal feat performed by you, Wonderful Prabhupāda!

Above all, the crown jewel and highlight of your most significant accomplishment, is the unadulterated translation of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta*, and a host of other important Vedic scriptures. These ancient scriptures were translated by Your Divine Grace from the intricate Sanskrit language into lucid and comprehensible English. Humanity at large can now understand and derive spiritual benefit from these translated works, which are considered by many erudite scholars, philosophers, renowned intellectuals, academicians, etc., to be an indispensable contribution of paramount importance for the salvation of humankind...

The whole world should know that all these triumphs were made possible by your performance of severe austerities, such as sleeping hardly two hours at night in order to translate the revealed scriptures. Your indefatigable sacrifice and relentless dedication know no bounds in your attempt to serve suffering humanity. Indubitably, you are Wonderful Prabhupāda!

It is further stated in the *Kṛṣṇa book*, "Thereafter, Kṛṣṇa saved His friends and cows from the severe forest fire, and He chastised the Kāliya serpent in the lake of Yamunā and forced him to leave the vicinity of the Yamunā River; He thereby made the water of the Yamunā poisonless." Similarly, you saved us from the forest fire of material existence and extracted the poison of our wanton living and sense gratification with the antidote of your sublime instructions. Our savior, Wonderful Prabhupāda!

Additional insight is given by Gargamuni Ācārya as told by Nanda Mahārāja to the cowherd men, "Even though we will be put into various kinds of difficulties, by the grace of this boy we will be very easily freed from them. He also said that formerly this boy saved the world from an unregulated condition, and He saved all honest men from the hands of the dishonest. He also said that any fortunate man who becomes attached to this boy, Kṛṣṇa, is never vanquished or defeated by his enemy."

Invariably living in the material world is fraught with trials and tribulations, and those who become attached to Your Divine Grace will easily be freed from them. You have saved us from the plight of unbridled sense gratification and protected us from the clutches of the cheaters and the cheated. Any fortunate conditioned soul who takes shelter of you will surmount the onslaught of gambling, meat eating, intoxication, and illicit sex, the foes who threaten to vanquish our Krishna Consciousness. Thank you, wonderful Prabhupāda!

In further praise, the cowherd men said, "Let Kṛṣṇa, who is so kind, beautiful and merciful, protect us. When angry Indra sent torrents of rain, accompanied by showers of ice blocks and high wind, He immediately took compassion upon us and saved us and our families, cows and valuable possessions by picking up the Govardhana Hill, just as a child picks up a mushroom. He saved us so wonderfully. May He continue to mercifully glance over us and our cows. May we live peacefully under the protection of Wonderful Kṛṣṇa."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are benevolent, attractive, and compassionate, we therefore implore you to kindly protect us from the illusory energy of *māyā*, who is casting a deluge of phantasmagoric rain, escorted by ice blocks of allurements and the high wind of profit, adoration, and distinction. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you took compassion upon us and rescued us, just as Kṛṣṇa rescued the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana by lifting Govardhana Hill. May we live peacefully under the protection of Wonderful Prabhupāda!

On the order of your spiritual master, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, you came to the West to benedict the fallen conditioned souls with the doctrine of Krishna Consciousness. It is imperative that your disciples, grand disciples, and sincere followers emulate your example and continue your mission as promulgated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, namely, to spread the chanting of *Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare*.

On this auspicious day of your divine appearance, Vyāsa-pūjā, let us all bow down with heartfelt feelings at your lotus feet, and realize that only by the causeless mercy of Wonderful Kṛṣṇa, we have received the mercy of Wonderful Prabhupāda!

Your fallen and aspiring disciple,

Vaisnavananda Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

As I am writing these few words for your pleasure, Spring just arrived. Our gardens are full of blooming and colorful flowers, the grass is bright green, and fresh new leaves are decorating the branches of the trees. Unfortunately, nature is showing also another face, ugly and frightening, because I am writing from the epicentre of a world pandemic disease. People around me die by the thousands like flies, and the atmosphere is pregnant of sadness, anguish, fear, suffering and lamentation. In the middle of this hard struggle and survival of the fittest, I realize more and more the urgency of dedicating every moment in the service of your mission. Not a second should go in vain.

Every breath I take will be for you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Every move I make will be for serving you.

Every bond I break will be for approaching you.

Every single day I will remember you.

Every word I say will be to glorify you.

Every night I will dream of you.

Every smile will be for the joy you are giving me.

Every cry will be for the feeling of emptiness in your absence.

Every prayer will be for your mercy.

Every claim I stake will be for shelter under the umbrella of your teachings.

I feel I belong to you.

My poor heart yearns for you.

I look around, and I see none like you.

You are the greatest, you are my life and soul.

I long for your transcendental embrace.

Jay Prabhupāda! My master and saviour!

Your daughter, praying and struggling to keep her promises

Ali Krishna Devi Dasi

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,
Gadadhara, Śrīvās ādi gaura bhakta vṛnda.*

*Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare.*

Śrīla Prabhupāda has explained that loving service is the basis of selfless devotion and how that loving devotion is expressed.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: “Love is reciprocal, voluntary, good exchange of feeling. Then there is love. Not by force. Kṛṣṇa does not want to become a lover like that, ‘You love me, otherwise I shall kill you!’ (July 8, 1976)

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains in *Nectar of Devotion* that just like the sun cannot be separated from the sun rays, similarly Kṛṣṇa is meaningless without the association of His loving devotees.

That relationship between Kṛṣṇa and the *jīva-tattva* (soul) is NEVER one-sided, never forced, never impersonal, it is ALWAYS reciprocal, nurturing, personal and voluntary, in a mood of good exchanges and feelings, ONLY then can there be REAL love.

And in *Kṛṣṇa Book* Prabhupāda further explains:

Śrīla Prabhupāda: “As the sun disc and the sunshine cannot be separated, Kṛṣṇa and His bodily rays, the *brahmajyoti*, cannot be separated.”—*Kṛṣṇa Book*, 89.

Śrīla Prabhupāda explained to us many years ago, “If you love me, then I will love you” as an example that there must always be loving cooperation and responding in kindness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda taught us that everything material will NEVER last in this temporary universe of impermanence, decay and death.

And that all material things, like one’s home and body they

are in, eventually fade away over the movement of time because all material things, like our bodily vessels, are in a constant state of decay, decline, breakdown and eventually death.

Sadly, foolish people see this going on all around them, but still make plans as if they are going to live forever.

So wake up! The fact is, this material world is always in a state of disrepair, decomposition and decay, it is NOT our real 'eternal' home! We shouldn't even be here!

Prabhupāda has told us many times, it was a mistake we chose to come here in the first place from God's eternal Kingdom of Vaikuṅṭha.

We can never find permanent satisfaction and happiness in this alien decaying environment called the mundane material universes.

Only a fool will try to find comfort in these temporary material bodily vessels that will eventually grow diseased and old, and end up being food for earthworms and maggots.

Therefore, the goal of this rare human life is to GET OUT OF THIS MUNDANE MATERIAL WORLD, and not try and make ourselves comfortable here.

That is not possible in this temporary decomposing material world where everything is in a constant state of decay.

Our only desire should be to go back home, back to Godhead, back to serving Lord Nārāyaṇa or Lord Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual worlds of Vaikuṅṭha and Goloka Vṛndāvana.

We should NOT waste our time desiring to go to other higher material heavenly planets in this universe either, or attempt to take birth in a pious wealthy aristocrat family on this Earth planet.

We should be learning, from a very young age, we are the individual anti-material *jīva* soul (life force) within these material bodily containers, and all material endeavours for happiness will NOT solve the problems of birth, disease, old age and death.

The purpose of this very rare human form of life, is to get out of this material world and NOT try and build the kingdom of God without God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: "The human society, at the present moment, is not in the darkness of oblivion. It has made rapid progress in the field of material comforts of life, education and economic development of the entire world. But it suffers a pin-prick somewhere in the social body at large and therefore there is large scale quarrel even on less important issues. Therefore there is the want of the clue as to how they can become one in peace, friendship and prosperity by the

common cause. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* will fill this gap by ontological aspects of human education. It is therefore a cultural presentation for re-spiritualisation of the entire human society.”— *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Preface.

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your fallen, yet determined servant (now 68 years old) who will never give up the path of devotional service, no matter how difficult the journey may be.

Gauragopala Dasa

*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,

Although I deeply feel your continuous presence in my life, I feel so very unworthy to offer you any suitable homage. But I can only try to somehow reciprocate with your inconceivable kindness and mercy upon me.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for being such a perfect pure devotee, always a perfect gentleman *suhṛdam sarva-bhūtānām*. As a pure devotee of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, you share in His perfection. By the Lord's infinite kindness, He has allowed us all to be witnesses to your own spiritual opulence: you are the effulgent embodiment of divine love and compassion. By serving you, we are all blessed with deep realizations into the glorious mystery of divine love which sustains your every word and action. And you are empowered with the rare potency to enter into the hearts of your sincere followers to inspire, guide and enthuse us all towards Kṛṣṇa. By your association through service we are given access to that transcendental realm of God's loving servants. What mercy! What inconceivable good fortune we share as your grateful servants.

You often told us that there is no such thing as mystical or unexplained in the science of *bhakti*: everything on the *bhakti mārga* is based on perfect truth (*tattva*) under divine authorities. No need to reinvent the wheel. Everything has already been perfectly revealed. Yet you also showed us how to internalize all these truths: by attracting the Lord's reciprocation through our single-minded dedication to helping you in spreading His Saṅkīrtana Movement. So that is Lord Caitanya's unlimited mercy which you so miraculously shared with the whole world: how to actually experience God's loving presence and illuminating mercy through the vicarious connection of *mahat-sevā*. By serving the lovers of God, we can also somehow miraculously experience that divine flow inundate our own consciousness. And such is the glorious purpose of your own presence in this world of miseries: to open the gates towards that

paravyom, that eternal festival of love, revealed through the mercy of Karuṇāvatār and His empowered servants such as you.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for being such a perfect embodiment of those matchless divine gifts.

Your unworthy and eager servant,

Gokulananda Dasa
ISKCON Montreal

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!

In a lecture, published in *The Harmonist* 1936 on the advent day of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī, you said: “The *ācāryadeva* to whom we have assembled tonight to offer our humble homage is not a guru of a sectarian institution or one out of many differing exponents of the truth. On the contrary, he is the *jagad guru*, or the guru of us all; the only difference is that some obey him wholeheartedly while others do not obey him directly.”

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, You as the true representative of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu, You, as *jagad guru* opened the transcendental treasurehouse to all and everybody without discrimination. Kṛṣṇa’s mercy flows right through you and touches everybody.

Because of your unlimited dedication and humility you attract Kṛṣṇa. Negativity attracts the positive. There is no resistance to the divine current in you. Because of resistance copper wire gets hot. I heard that ceramic cooled down to minus 350 degrees achieves a state of superconductivity of current, this means, there is zero resistance. In the same way, the absolute negativity, pure devotion, attracts the positive, Kṛṣṇa. You gave yourself wholly to the order of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. There was zero resistance.

It was a historical moment in the history of the world when you came to the Western countries. Never has it been seen before that somebody distributed the highest transcendental message of which is nothing higher to the least qualified. You alone did that. In the spirit of Mahāprabhu, you distributed it to the ones who have completely separated themselves from the source, from Kṛṣṇa. Since everybody needs energy for survival, we steal it if we don’t get it from the source, and we exploit one another. Deep deep in the darkness of this rotten atmosphere of Kali-yuga, where is there hope?

In the 60s, many dropped out of the present society. I travelled around Europe, then to the Middle East, and finally with a friend of mine, to India. On our way in Iran in the middle of a desert, something came over us. We stood there and from the depth of our being we shouted “HELP!” There was no immediate danger, but it was a call from deep within us...a desperate and existential scream. Around one year later, while studying in Vienna, you sent your dear

disciple Śivānanda Dāsa to rescue me.

It's a mystery to me that I was allowed to be in direct association of Your Grace. I keep these moments deep in my heart and treasure them. Moments like when you came to Vṛndāvana, the temple was still under construction, and I fell flat at your lotus feet right in the mud. Your dear godbrother Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī came to visit you. I listened outside your room hearing you laughing. Often, Yamunā Devī sat beside your house with her harmonium singing “*Gopīnāth, mama nivedana śuno...*”. These are eternal memories I often recall to my heart. Despite all this mercy I'm still finding myself attached to worthless things this world offers – and you are not pushing me aside.

I want to end with the final words from your lecture I mentioned above. I embrace them and address them back to you:

“Sitting at the feet of the *Ācāryadeva* let us try to understand from this transcendental source of knowledge what we are, what is the universe, what is God and what is our relationship with Him. Let me with all my earnestness pray at the lotus feet of my divine master to allow me to suffer the lot for which I am destined due to my past misdoings, but to let me have this power of recollection, that I am nothing but a tiny servant of the Almighty Absolute Godhead, realized through the unflinching mercy of my divine master.

Your servant,

Janmanalaya Dasa

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*

Right now the world is experiencing a pandemic. People are falling ill and many are dying. I had been thinking about doctors and thought perhaps this would make an appropriate analogy through which I could express myself. I decided to look up the meaning of ‘doctor’ and these are some of the things I found:

1. Doctors are specially trained and licensed medical professionals, and their job is to make a diagnosis (find what’s making you ill) and then treat you so that you can get better. There are many different types of doctors, like specialists, emergency room doctors, surgeons, and laboratory physicians.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your capabilities which led you to become the world-famous spiritual physician were endorsed by the *paramparā* system coming from Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. Before traveling overseas to come to the most materially diseased place on earth – America – you had already made the diagnosis: You saw that we had the fever of sense gratification, that we had the disease of false identification with this body and mind, and that our lives were deficient in God consciousness. You saw that we were plagued by continuous birth, death, old age and disease. You therefore brought and gave the treatment: Simply chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. As a focused surgeon, you cut the knots of our material attachments with your scalpel, which was sharpened by knowledge of the Absolute Truth. And how much did you charge for the treatment? Nothing. You gave the holy name freely to whoever would take it. How exemplary!

2. The primary duty of all doctors is for the care and safety of patients. Whatever their role, doctors must do the following. ... Contribute to teaching and training doctors and

other healthcare professionals, including by acting as a positive role model. Use resources efficiently for the benefit of patients and the public.

This you certainly did. Your care, your love and compassion for all living entities was beyond compare. You first of all gave us the knowledge with which we could become well: who we were and what our responsibility in this human form of life was. You taught us how to cleanse the mind from all material misgivings and you trained us to also become doctors and help save suffering humanity. You taught how to break the fever of materialism once and for all and like an excellent doctor who gives the proper medicine, you did that but unfortunately not all the patients thought they were sick and so they refused to take the medicine. As a result, they continue to suffer from the disease. You were always ready to train anyone who was willing to learn. You were the perfect role model in everything you said and did. And a perfect gentleman. "Whatever a great man does, common men will follow." And did you use resources efficiently for the benefit of the patients and public? Yes, you used everything in Kṛṣṇa's service and taught others how to do so to perfect their lives, to become disease free and happy forever.

3. Physicians should be personable, great listeners, and empathetic to the concerns of their patients. They should not be condescending or arrogant. They should treat others as they want to be treated.

You were so personal; you made everyone feel at ease and cared for. You taught everyone that God – Kṛṣṇa – is a person, the Supreme Person, and that we have a loving yet forgotten relationship with Him. You listened to our insignificant ideas and thoughts and taught us that Kṛṣṇa also listens to His sincere devotee's prayers. You were the emblem of humility, always thinking yourself lower than everyone. When we were in Stockholm with you that Fall in 1974, you were speaking about the four classes of men. In the end, someone challenged that you were putting yourself forward as a first-class man. Your answer: "I am fifth class man. I am servant of them all." Anyone else would have been offended that someone would not consider them the best person, but, no, with all humility, you saw yourself as "*dāsānudāsānudās.*" You stunned us all. You

taught us Lord Caitanya's message of treating others as we want to be treated. That included the animals – all life forms – and that we should not cause harm to any living entity. You showed us this principle by making sure even a tiny bug got something to eat.

4. Being a medical doctor is really great. It's stimulating and interesting. Medical doctors have a significant degree of autonomy over their schedules and time. Medical doctors know that they get to help people solve problems every single day.

We are reading here that being a doctor is stimulating and interesting. Who could deny this? Your enthusiasm increased our enthusiasm, which increased your enthusiasm, which increased our enthusiasm. We traveled, we met persons from all walks of life, we had festivals, did dramas, we distributed your books, we had jumping-to-the-ceiling kirtans, we taught the children, worshiped the Deities, cooked incredible *prasādam* – we did so many fascinating things for you and for Kṛṣṇa! Adventures, taking risks, doing every and anything for you at the drop of a pin. You were certainly the busiest doctor; your schedule was tighter than anyone could imagine – we couldn't even write down your daily schedule because it seemed that you had more than 24 hours in your day with everything you did. Yet you were always available for everyone.

5. A physician (American English), medical practitioner (Commonwealth English), medical doctor, or simply doctor, is a professional who practices medicine, which is concerned with promoting, maintaining, or restoring health through the study, diagnosis, prognosis and treatment of disease, injury, and other physical and mental impairments.

You taught us how to follow in your footsteps: how to study and diagnose the disease through the study of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta*; give the prognosis – if you chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, your life will be sublime and if not, then back through the cycle of repeated birth and death; and how to treat the patient – you were unlimitedly kind to everyone and you gave that medicine with love. You are better than the best doctor for you knew and taught us how

to free ourselves and others from all material disease and go back to be with you and Kṛṣṇa.

6. Both the role of the physician and the meaning of the word itself vary around the world. Degrees and other qualifications vary widely, but there are some common elements, such as medical ethics requiring that physicians show consideration, compassion, and benevolence for their patients.

You were considerate of everyone for you knew how to deal with them according to where they were at. Compassion? You came alone, with hardly a penny, suffered two heart attacks at sea just to come and be our doctor – and you knew none of us! You loved everyone – every living entity! You gave us the highest knowledge so we could become cured of this deadly disease, this high fever, which was constantly being increased through the modes of material nature.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, Kṛṣṇa has designated you as the Supreme Spiritual Doctor. You gave the medicine to us free of charge and out of love. I thank you from the bottom of my heart, which I hope, when it stops beating, that I can think of you and be with you once again. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! There is no one like you.

Your eternal servant and patient,

MadanMohanMohini Dasi

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

“By the mercy of the spiritual master one receives the benediction of Kṛṣṇa...”

According to our surrender to your lotus feet, we appreciate your divine position, but even one so unsundered as myself can begin to appreciate your glories. I cannot imagine the appreciation of those of your followers who have surrendered to you and your mission. There are some great souls among your followers, Śrīla Prabhupāda, indeed they are all great souls, and I understand that you have said that some are associates of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

I thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving me the opportunity to get out of this horrible material world, and I beg your forgiveness for my shortcomings and foolishness. It is my fervent prayer that one day I will realize my position as your eternal servant.

Your eternal servant,

Janakaraġa Dasa

Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Please accept my obeisances.

I reflect on how much you have enriched my life. Before I met you, I looked for answers to many of life's most important questions in all the regular places but was never satisfied. By some unseen good fortune, I read one of your books. I knew this was true and have dedicated my life to the study and sharing of this information. Who could know that we are eternal but born into illusion. You changed the outlook of my life and what is important. Without Kṛṣṇa and your mercy there is no value to living, just a seemingly endless struggle. You explained, so charmingly how I am spirit soul, part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, and my position is to exchange pure loving devotion to Him. Seeing everyone as the same, part and parcel so to respect all. By following your guiding principles I now have confidence my life is successful.

Thank you, Hare Kṛṣṇa.

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

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

MERCYFLOW

To fulfil your guru's order
You embarked upon a quest.
With holy name and *Bhāgavatam*
You travelled to the West.
No heart attack or ocean storm
Could compromise your vision
To spread the sacred *yuga-dharm'*
Of Lord Caitanya's mission.

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

You arrived in Boston Harbour
(Seven dollars to your name)
With *karatālas* and a trunk of books
To broadcast Kṛṣṇa's fame.
A cooker to prepare your meals
Amidst the carnivores –
A far cry from Vṛndāvana
And Yamunā's sandy shores.

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

You braved the Bowery's winter wind
That chilled you to the bone.
Your typewriter was stolen
Yet you struggled on alone.
Unperturbed, you carried on,
For nothing could impede
The order of your guru
That you preach the *bhakti* creed.

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

You wrote, inviting godbrothers
To help you in your task,
But no money or encouragement
Emerged from Gaudiya Math.
A couple gave you shelter
Then the word soon got around
That things were hip at Matchless Gifts:
"The Swāmi's here in town!"

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

In the belly of America
(Land of the Brave and Free)
You cooked and served *chapatis*,
Rice and deep philosophy.
With chanting, dancing, feasting
And your storefront *Gītā* classes,
You transformed the lives of those
Who'd followed camels, dogs and asses.

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

Beneath a tree in Tompkins Square
You sang and played the drum.
The hippies danced – the Hare
Kṛṣṇa Movement had begun.
You cut the 'Happening' album
And it quickly made the rounds –
As eager ears around the world
Heard transcendental sound.

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

And while the world was sound asleep,
Beside your makeshift desk,
Surrounded by the *ācāryas'* words
You prayed the world be blessed.
In dead of night before the dawn
– An icon of persistence –
You shared your deepest ecstasies –
The essence of existence.

Word by word and page by page
You laboured to impart
The mercy of your precious books,
Dictated from your heart.
You drew a core of eager souls
Who searched for higher truth
That God was still alive and well.
You offered them the proof.

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

And from that tiny storefront
On New York's Lower East Side
You began your worldwide mission
With Lord Kṛṣṇa by your side.
You formed the International Society
For Krishna Consciousness
And as you registered your ISKCON
Seven Purposes you stressed.

They would be your mission statement
For the next ten thousand years –
The guidelines and objectives
That would make your purpose clear;
A blueprint of your strategy
Established at the start,
Chalking out a revolution
Meant to purify the heart.

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

You saw your Movement swiftly grow
And spread across the ocean –
Sustained by your unflinching faith
And unalloyed devotion
To the order and instruction
Of your Guru Mahārāja –
Whose heart's desire you manifest
To save the world at large.

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

O Prabhupāda! We glorify
Your birth this sacred day!
Our transcendental debt to you
Can never be repaid.
Your appearance to redeem the world
Was foretold long ago –
Now the *devas* queue to take their birth
And serve your mercyflow.

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

There'll come a day when all the world
Will thank you, Prabhupāda!
The saints who serve your legacy
Will make the nations glad.
The seeds they sow on your behalf
Are sure to sprout and grow
When watered by the holy name
That you yourself bestow.

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

Obeisances of love
We offer you, this sacred day.
We take shelter at your lotus feet.
In gratitude we pray.
For us, you gave your everything,
Our wayward souls to reach.
You are the dearest servitor
At Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

Obeisances again and
Yet again, this sacred day!
Taking shelter at your lotus feet
With humbled heart we pray
To amplify your pastimes
So the world will know your fame
As the *śaktyāveśa-avatār*
Who spreads the holy name.

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

Begging for your mercy and the shelter of your lotus feet,

Your wayward servant,

Sakshi Gopal Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to your divine instructions, and your perfect example.

Forty-five years ago on His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda's Appearance day in Atlanta, you spoke about *vāñī* and *vapuḥ*.

Vāñī means words and *vapuḥ* means physical body. So *vāñī* is more important than *vapuḥ*. *Vapuḥ* will be finished. This is material body. It will be finished. That is nature. But if we keep to the *vāñī*, the words of the spiritual master, then we remain very fixed up.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you taught this principle of *vāñī* and *vapuḥ* not just by speaking, but by living this principle of service in separation from the physical body of your guru mahārāja and serving his instructions. Hour-by-hour, day-by-day, weeks turn to months, to years, gradually leading to the fulfillment of your spiritual master's instructions.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you said, "I do not know how the people will accept this Movement? They are differently educated, and as soon as I will say, 'so my dear sir, you have to give up meat eating and illicit sex and no intoxication and gambling,' they will say please go home. It is impossible, but let me try it anyway." After all you told us impossible is a word in a fool's dictionary. All throughout the 1950s you worked on your *Back to Godhead* articles, going around personally selling them. Then you began translating the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Typing on a manual typewriter, with no white out and a scarcity of paper and no real support, just the words of your Guru Mahārāja. Word-by-word, page-by-page, and with every rising and setting of the sun bringing you closer to us. Meanwhile, in America we were enjoying the "Fabulous Fifties" and chasing the American Dream.

Next you have to arrange for printing, typesetting, a very laborious and painstaking effort. Making sure each letter is put in correctly, not backwards or upside down. Making sure the books are bound properly, printed on good quality paper, and all this in obscurity, with no financial backing.

Now how to get to America? The Jaladuta, a freighter, the most humble and difficult way to cross the Atlantic ocean, but you, with

the help of Guru and Kṛṣṇa were able to overcome all of the obstacles.

You arrive in America, an old man with no money, from a poor country, and no support. What you did have is the first three volumes of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and as you said “as long as I was following my spiritual master’s order, he was always in my heart, I never felt alone.” America was now in the swinging sixties. Free love and new kinds of drugs. America was dystopian. You gave light to the night, color to the black and white. You were reality and all around you shades of gray, shades of illusion melting away. So we stayed and you taught us how to pray *Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare / Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare*. You taught us how to desire to put out this forest fire. You gave us the higher taste, you cooked the lunch, cleaned the pots, the dishes, the floor and most of all you cleaned our hearts. You did everything, and you accepted everyone without considering our backgrounds or motives, or our lack of good qualities and bad habits.

By your example of service we learned that service is our real *dharma*, our true nature.

Reflecting on how you served your spiritual master in separation is the impetus for us to continue to follow your “*vāṇī*”, your instructions, hour-by-hour, day-by-day, weeks lead to months, months to years, and with every rising and setting of the sun we can serve you and assist you in serving your spiritual master’s mission.

With gratitude and appreciation, your insignificant, rank and file disciple,

Gokularanjana Dasa

Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I am laying my head at your gracious lotus feet and beg you to kindly accept my life in your service eternally.

Your unlimited sacrifice and mercy are a shining example for me. This past year, dear spiritual father, has been full of scary plot twists, and I don't know what's in store for me.

Gurudeva, you have given so much to me and the world. You have given a way to reconnect with our eternal source, given the vision of real peaceful and loving life, and given us all your eternal compassionate guidance.

All I really know is that because of you, I am begging for the mercy of Lord Nityānanda to know Kṛṣṇa, to trust Kṛṣṇa and to be an instrument of Kṛṣṇa's compassionate, loving grace wherever I am and wherever I go. You have advised us to follow Śrī Kṛṣṇa's instructions, to take shelter of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and to chant the holy names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa always. And you showed by your unequivocal example how to do this despite innumerable setbacks and obstacles. So I pray to follow in your footsteps and in the footsteps of the previous *ācāryas* in all circumstances.

Kindly forgive me for the offenses I have committed and help me to be a better devotee, minute-by-minute. So I can appreciate all the sincere servants of our sweet Kṛṣṇa and cooperate with them to share Kṛṣṇa *prema* everywhere while carrying out your instruction and show folks all over the globe how to have real, happy Kṛṣṇa conscious families and communities.

With aspirations of spontaneous love and affection,

Your eternal spiritual daughter,

Krsnanandini Devi Dasi

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you! All glories to the unlimited mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and to all of the Vaiṣṇava ācāryas. All glories to the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

On this occasion of your appearance day I wish to express my gratitude for all the gifts you have given to me, and to the world, too. Your service and mercy is all that I aspire for.

When I think of how ill prepared humanity is, especially during the current times of trial and calamity, I feel so grateful for the gifts you have rained down on the world, with no consideration of who is fit or not fit to receive them. That is your magnanimity. Actually, whether living entities accept or don't accept, the holy names, *hari kathā*, *prasādam*, your books once touched, and your association, act, regardless. Of course the effect is more immediate when a willing and eager heart accepts your mercy and follows in your footsteps.

Not knowing any better, out of ignorance or envy, the lives of so many people are based on serving the demands of their senses — thinking I am the enjoyer — everything is meant for my pleasure; identification with the body as the self — thinking I am my body and everything associated with it is mine; thinking I am the doer and the controller entitled to the results of my activities; and thinking that matter is the basis of all existence — life comes from matter.

You have taught us otherwise. We have come to understand that spirit is the basis of matter. Life comes from life. We are the soul, not the body. Serving the senses of Kṛṣṇa is our ultimate joy and Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Controller. You have also taught us that desire is not bad when in relationship to the service of the Lord and His pure devotees. Even material things are not “bad” when used in devotional service. What is our real nature? It is eternal — not temporary, full of bliss — not suffering, and full of knowledge — not ignorance. How are we bound in this world? By the chains of the

modes of material nature — goodness, passion, and ignorance — we are forced to act according to the mode of nature that we have acquired due to our past activities and desires. But, as we progress in pure *bhakti*, Māyādevī and the modes of nature loosen their grip on our hearts. It is pretty black and white — we are either serving Kṛṣṇa and his pure devotees and Vaiṣṇavas or we are serving *māyā* and her agents. We are all servants of the Lord, regardless of the materialists’ desire to think otherwise.

Material attachment is like a disease, a horrible virus, that we “catch” due to our association with matter and people attached to matter. You are like the doctor who has the cure for that infection — we just have to associate with your dear devotees and hear your message and enthusiastically take the medicine.

Like with any medicine, we need to take it according to the doctor’s prescription — not our mental concoction/speculation. That requires our humility. We have to admit that we are in ignorance of our actual position and surrender our desire to control. We need to realize that what happens to us, in our conditioned state, is subject to the modes of nature and the results of our past karma. To the extent we wholeheartedly accept your prescription our suffering will be minimized. We see our present suffering as the Lord’s mercy, to be tolerated and to be learned from.

You made surrender and loving you so easy, especially when we had the good fortune to serve you personally. It is a matter of love, and loving reciprocation. We love you, and we want to please you. The test has been when we couldn’t see and hear you face-to-face or write to you for clarification of a question. You taught us what separation feels like with that pastime. Although, I have been finding that if I really pray to you and ask for your guidance, it still comes — often immediately. You haven’t gone anywhere, really. We are the ones who sometimes get sidetracked by the Lord’s material energy, and turn away from you — just like we have done with the Lord Himself by choosing to come to this material world in the first place, to enjoy His external material energy.

You are giving us the knowledge to understand all these things. My gratitude is eternally offered to you.

What is your prescription — that will cure our material disease? Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and be happy. Practice simple living and high thinking. Always remember Kṛṣṇa, in a favorable way, and never forget Him. If I may add, be grateful that He is the Supreme

Controller and not us. The goal is Kṛṣṇa *prema* — love of Kṛṣṇa. All the instructions you have given are meant to serve these goals.

How to achieve this?

You gave us the regulative principles and the nine processes of devotional service. To the extent we are always engaged in at least one process of devotional service and that we always follow the regulative principles we are inoculated against the disease of *māyā* — of taking something temporary or illusory as true or eternal. You gave us your service and service to the deities of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and Lord Jagannātha, Lord Balarāma and Śrīmatī Subhadrā. You gave us service to the Vaiṣṇavas as well.

Our eternal identity/nature is to serve the Supreme Person, and there are so many unique wonderful relationships that you have revealed to us. Our relationship to Kṛṣṇa is unique to each *jīva* soul. Attachment to the results of our activity (work) binds us to the material world, so why not do everything for your pleasure and Kṛṣṇa's? Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Enjoyer, not us. We aren't the doer, and we aren't the proprietor of anything. What revolutionary thoughts? The entire world from our birth to our death, without your mercy, is telling us the opposite.

You gave us the principle of offering everything first to you and then we assist you in offering it to Kṛṣṇa. Everything is meant to be used in the service of the Lord. The holy name and the Lord's *prasādam* are your secret weapons. You taught us how to transfer matter into spirit — transcendental alchemy.

You also gave us the six do's of what is favorable for the execution of *bhakti* and the six don'ts of what is unfavorable for *bhakti* as found in the *Upadeśāmṛta* (*Nectar of Instruction*). They are the lifestyle changes and personal choices that make us healthy and an unfit home for the infection of materialistic life. If followed there is no place for Kali to enter into our lives.

In addition, you gave us so many scriptures, transcendental books of knowledge, beginning with *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and moving on to *Kṛṣṇa Book*, *Bhakti Rasāmṛta Sindhu* (*Nectar of Devotion*), and *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta*. The glorious instructions of the Lord Himself in *Bhagavad-gītā*, and His nectarian pastimes in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Kṛṣṇa Book*, and *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta*, that attract and absorb our minds in unlimited bliss and thoughts of how wonderful the Lord is, awaken and nurture our desire to want to serve Him.

To the extent that we take shelter of matter, identifying with the body and thinking it to be the self, we suffer. If we chant and stay absorbed in thoughts of your service, service to the Deity, service to the devotees, or of how we can help spread your message, we can actually be happy in any condition of life. How wonderful! As you once said, paraphrased, devotional service is very simple. Please make my heart pure so I can understand, act on, and exemplify this principle.

Begging for your eternal mercy.

Your servant,

Karlapati Devi Dasi

Oh, Śrīla Prabhupāda...you came!

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

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

Oh, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you came!

Lord Kṛṣṇa asked you to, but you told Him, “No...I don’t want to go to such a horrible place!” Lord Kṛṣṇa said, “You just go down and write your books and I will provide everything, which you could possibly need.”

So...you came! Firmly fixed in steel-like determination, with pure and total faith in Guru, Kṛṣṇa and the holy names, you came to save the world!

You once admitted to us that you were in fact, the Messiah.

What if you never came? Unspeakable horrors, unimaginable! At best, an eternity of ‘death like’ life in a steel cage surrounded by fire, which you described as forced association with ‘karmīs’, working for their ugra-karmic cities and host society. We will be eternally thanking Śrī Kṛṣṇa you came!

In your pure, sweet loving faith in Śrī Guru and Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya’s Sāṅkīrtana Movement you came. Against all difficulties, obstacles and setbacks, you came to illuminate the darkness of *māyā*’s Kali-yuga with the golden light of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya’s causeless love and mercy.

Against the storm of all of Durgā’s Legions’ efforts to sabotage, compress, depress and suppress, leaving your path heavily strewn with a veritable gamut of thorns, losses, sacrifices and most severe tests. Still, with unflagging love and determination to please Guru and Kṛṣṇa, and your compassion for all living entities born in this Kali-yuga, most mercifully, you came!

Accompanying the golden illumination of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s Śrīmad *Bhagavad-gītā* and His *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, you brought warmth and love to counter the cold and heartlessness of Kali’s Death Party and invited one and all to come in from the cruel cold and to come back

home, back to Godhead.

You came with the teachings of the Six Gosvāmī's, Śrī Kṛṣṇadasa Kavirāja Gosvāmī's *Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta*, the writings of Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, Śrīla Śrīdhara Swami, Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, Śyāmānanda Paṇḍit, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Śrī Mādhavendra Purī, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Veda Vyāsadev, quoting from *Vedānta-sūtra*, *Śrī Mahābhārata*, *Śrī Rāmāyāṇa*, all the *Purāṇas*, *Upaniṣads*, *Itihāsas*, *Manu Smṛti*, and many more. After which you blessed them all with your pure and transcendental, thoroughly drenched in Kṛṣṇa *prema*, windows into the Spiritual Sky purports. You taught both the *bhāgavata-mārga* and the *pāñcarātrika-mārga* for our guaranteed purification and eventual, inevitable success in achieving our goal of *bhakti-yoga*, pure love to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, a guaranteed formula for our ultimate spiritual success.

Those peerless transcendental perspectives began to work their magic. Thank GOD, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, you came!

The so-called human beings, that were actually only two-legged animals, began to transform into actual human beings with the whole spectrum of desirable, qualitative changes. Where before had been, even in the best of the best, only a dark, foul and odious pool of demoniac qualities, miraculously, mysteriously and suddenly began to transform into a beautiful, colorful, heavenly, fragrant garden of good and godly qualities... only because you came!

We saw in the faithless, Godly faith spring forth and bloom like wildflowers after gentle spring showers. From brutes to aspiring Vaiṣṇavas burst forth like a storm, exploding forth in colorful blooms basking in the purificatory sunshine of our loving service to you and of Krishna Consciousness. You told us repeatedly that Kṛṣṇa and your guru mahārāja had sent many to assist you, some previous Gauḍīya Math devotees, some demigods, some great yogis and extremely pious souls, as well as to participate in the glory and success. You told us that "...the demigods are lining up to their birth in this Movement!"

You called your transcendental book distributors our 'Su-Durlabhā Mahātmas' and you referred to your disciples as pure devotees, in as much as a postman is pure in his service by delivering the mail without any addition or subtraction. So also you said, a great many of them truly were pure devotees in every sense of the

word! All of this and more came about by your love and mercy...and because you came, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

I must beg forgiveness for any deviations or drifting from your path. I can only swear that any deviations or faults will be documented and recorded for the historical posterity of your divine mission, ISKCON. All possible efforts and instructions to reverse the deviations and get it back on the rails as you yourself established, will be corrected and rectified up to my very last heartbeat and very last breath!

Your Divine Grace's extraordinary, causeless mercy, love, tolerance, your patience, your pure teachings and the holy names dragged us from the muck and slime of Kali-yuga and transformed us.

From confusion, illusion, nihilism and voidism to soul and God realization. From apathy to compassion, from a sense of meaninglessness to purpose, from sociopathy to empathy, from self-centered, uncaring to conscientiousness, from heartless cruelty to compassion and mercy, from callousness to sympathy, from envy to humility, from hopelessness to faith and hopefulness. From loneliness to fraternity, from aloneness to community, from impersonalism to personalism, from our sleepwalking in a death-like trance to human consciousness, conscientiousness and finally to Krishna Consciousness!

You ask me why this miraculous change has come about? All and only because of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Only because you came! All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Begging to remain your eternal servant, aspiring for usefulness, always remembering you in loving gratitude, and always praying to be sheltered in the cooling shade of your lotus feet,...because you came!

Sevananda Dasa

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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.

As I sat down to write this year’s offering, innumerable questions flooded deep in my heart. I thought “What should I write? What is there in this world that you don’t know? You are the one who made us capable of thinking and writing. It would be like showing the lantern to the Sun.

I am one of the sailors on the ISKCON ship you have created to take us all across the material ocean. I know you have given me the visa to the Kingdom of God in spite of being aware of my ineligibilities. You are the commander, the *Senāpati Bhakta* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s army who traversed this planet just to deliver conditioned souls like me.

I was serving in the army, and you gave me the chance to serve in Kṛṣṇa’s army. I was serving for the government, and you gave me the opportunity to serve in Kṛṣṇa’s government. This is something which only you could have done. I always thought that I am unworthy of doing this. You explained in this context that one simply has to become as serious and sincere as Dhruva Mahārāja; then it is quite possible to attain Vaikuṅṭha Loka and go back home, back to Godhead, in one life. Your kind words like this are a source of my energy and enthusiasm.

Out of compassion you worked hard to make us understand that we are lost conditioned souls and that we need a pure devotee to bring us back on track. Although you started with no means, to fulfill your mission you showed your compassion and love for the first devotees by cooking for them, by serving them, and by cleaning up after them. But as soon as they were able to understand, you explained to them the basics of Krishna Consciousness. These

teachings give me the encouragement to do things which initially seem impossible to do at this age.

You are my life and my soul and my saviour from the forest fire of this material world. I still have fresh memories of the auspicious day of Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī in Vṛndāvana, when you asked me to go bathe in the Yamunā and then accepted me as your disciple. It is your most compassionate nature that saved me and engaged me in the pure devotional service of Śrī Gaura Hari. May life after life of this insignificant servant be eternally dedicated in serving your lotus feet.

I am so blessed by your mercy to get the wonderful association of your disciples and granddisciples who have dedicated their lives for your divine pleasure. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have, in the truest sense, created a house which can accommodate the whole world. Without your divine plan it would have been impossible to remember and glorify Kṛṣṇa. I personally desire to get the service of your lotus feet life after life. That is my only desire. *Cakhu-dān dilo jei, janme janme prabhu sei divya-jñān hrde prokāṣito.*

My material body is deteriorating fast, which is absolutely normal, but it's only the spiritual power you have bestowed in your disciples and followers that keeps us going.

**O devotee of the Lord, to see you is the perfection
of the eyes, to touch your body is the perfection
of bodily activities, and to glorify your qualities
is the perfection of the tongue, for it is very
rare to find a pure devotee like you.**

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am feeling so fortunate that I was able to do all this. I feel I am the luckiest that I took birth again in this material world. I feel lucky that I was going around in the 84,00,000 species. Because if I wouldn't be roaming in different species, how would I have taken birth at this time of this *yuga* and found you as my spiritual master. Meeting you and taking your shelter has definitely shown me the way back. I am eternally indebted to you.

May my head remain bowed at your lotus feet, may my heart beat only for you.

Your insignificant servant,

Sridham Dasa
ISKCON Delhi

Makhana-taskara Dasa

*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*

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you, my eternal spiritual master.

You spent your entire life in preparation to come to the West to deliver us fallen souls. I spent the first 21 years of my life in darkness. But thanks to you my eyes were opened when I came in contact with those devotees who were chanting and preaching under your divine empowerment. My real life began and my spiritual journey was given meaning in 1972 when you accepted me as your disciple. At that time all of my doubts about the meaning of life and all of my questions were answered and my distressed condition was relieved.

You are the sole guardian of devotion, the only means to achieve the blessings of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and the eternal guide. Despite my shortcomings and insincerity and being full of faults, I pray for your causeless mercy to be able to try and preach the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu throughout the world life-after-life.

Your unworthy disciple,
Makhana-taskara Dasa

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*

We are reminded of your causeless mercy, especially in this year of the virus pandemic and consequent social lockdown (when even the traditional Rathayātrā festival in Purī might be cancelled for the first time in 284 years). You always told us that Krishna Consciousness is prophylactic and antiseptic—the only panacea for *saṁsāra* (the repeated cycle of birth, old age, disease, and death).

We beg that we might be allowed to absorb (and to take full advantage of) the *śabda-brahma* (transcendental sound vibration) coming through the Brahma Madhva Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava disciplic succession from the Supreme Lord Himself via the agency of our many predecessor teachers and exemplars (such as Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the six Goswamis of Vṛndāvana, etc.)

What good will it do us if even though we are allowed to run along the road of life screaming in pain and tearing our hair, if we are bereft of even a faint glimmer of hope that someday we might be allowed to take our place as a speck of dust at the lotus feet of your sincere followers?

This is our humble supplication, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Surrendered souls are always to be protected, and fully surrendered souls are allowed entrance into the eternal Kingdom of God. We are not at all interested in merging into the white light (impersonal Brahman realization). It is nothing more than a drop of water in the desert, as you have always told us.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

The fallen servant of your servants,

Vaninatha dasa Brahmachary

*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 wander through skin-suits
making non-committal dips
of the toes in ponds of
shallow water.

Glitter, bangles and spangles
flash by on the *Phenomenal Express*.

Above floats noumenal knowledge-
both keys to Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet:

"Only one who can learn the process
of nescience and that of transcendental
knowledge side by side can transcend
the influence of repeated birth and death
and enjoy the full blessings of immortality."

I, a flopping fish
on the sands of time and space,
am most grateful to serve you
Śrīla Prabhupāda. You are the decoder of
the treasures of truth and my ever well wisher.
May I always walk before you,
cleansing your path.
May I always walk behind you,
marking carefully your footsteps.

Your insignificant servant,

Adideva Dasa

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you on this auspicious day in celebration of your appearance in this world.

On this day and every day, I must thank you for your unlimited mercy and kindness. It is only by your determined efforts and your enormous loving heart that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the process of *bhakti-yoga* has been made available to so many thousands of unlikely candidates, making it possible for all of us to be engaged in joyful service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Recently I was watching a documentary about extreme faiths and cults in America and was very relieved that your ISKCON movement was not featured on that negative show. There were a few similarities between some of the featured faiths and ours, but there were also some very distinguishing factors of your ISKCON not present in any of these other faiths and cults. Almost every one of the featured cults had documented the founder of the cult to have engaged in illicit and abusive acts with women and/or children. It was also obvious that these charismatic leaders were motivated by material gain and sense gratification when instructing others to follow them. And it was shocking to see how most of these faiths did not rely much on scripture, if at all.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, it is your spotless character, pure heart, and the check and balance you have given us through guru, *sādhu* and *śāstra* that sets your International Movement for Krishna Consciousness apart from the many short-lived scandalous cults of the past. Thank you for presenting us with something so authentic and beneficial for humanity and never polluting it with selfish desires. Thank you for your tireless efforts to give transcendental knowledge to everyone, free of charge.

I did not have the fortune of having your personal association and

therefore no such exchanges to recall in memory of you. However, as of late, my daily morning reading sessions seem more and more like a personal morning *darśana* with you. It truly feels like a mystical connection where time and again you provide me with answers to questions, solace about concerns, and of course much nectar about the Lord and His pastimes. Whatever little bits I can remember from these *darśanas* become the treasures of my soul, maintaining both my spiritual and material well-being.

I am not one to research the database to find information on a specific topic. Yet somehow or other, when reading your books in a methodical manner I am again and again stunned by how you speak to me through the pages of your books.

One day when working in the garden, I was aware that my mind was being extra loud with nonsense thoughts, but I could not seem to control its rantings. All of a sudden a snake slithered out from the flower bed I was weeding. I screamed a bit as I jumped away, even though it was just a harmless garden snake. The next morning as I was reading your purport to *Madhya-līlā* 11.10 you warned how one must always be careful in dealing with the mind, just as one is careful in dealing with a snake. It seemed like you were speaking of my little garden snake and were using this analogy to help me see how to avoid my own mind as I had instinctively avoided that snake.

Another time you came to my rescue when I became absorbed in the very polarizing issue of the day...whether women can become gurus in ISKCON. One argument from the opposition was that women might be allowed to be gurus only if they have come to the stage of *nitya-siddha*. I found this disturbing as my immediate thought was, who would be deemed qualified to decide one's *nitya-siddha* status. Within a week of agonizing over that point of view, I happened upon the verse *Madhya-līlā* 11.89. It just so happens that Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has already addressed the issue of who should be considered a *nitya-siddha*. You quote Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura in this purport as saying that "anyone who acts on behalf of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by spreading the glories of the holy name is a *nitya-siddha*." You go on to elaborate by saying that we should respect the devotees that are preaching as *nitya-siddha* and not consider them conditioned souls. Your words were both soothing and confirming as you and Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura answered my question in such a broad-minded and accepting way, not excluding the many female members of ISKCON who are dedicated to

spreading the glories of the holy name.

One of many examples where you have helped me make a decision through your books was last summer when I was feeling my hobby of taking care of three large Tulasī plants and my flower garden were taking up too much of my time. Just as I was getting attached to the idea of renouncing my gardening indulgence to simplify my life, I came upon your purport in *Bhagavad-gītā* 11.55. In this purport, you state that it is possible for anyone to be engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service just by caring for Tulasī and growing flowers to offer to Kṛṣṇa. With these words, you validated this calming outdoor activity as so much more than a hobby, but an actual means to serve and please Kṛṣṇa.

One example where your common sense approach to life brought much relief to my mind was in regards to when marriage is presented in a negative way, with the intention to influence young men to remain *brahmacārīs* forever. This would not be an issue except for the fact that this negative point of view is often done when it no longer seems to be in the best interest of young, sincere men. Once, when upset over such a situation, I came upon your purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.5 where you explain that marriage is meant to regulate the human mind to become peaceful for spiritual advancement. You explain that for most men this *vivāha-yajña* should be encouraged **even by persons in the renounced order**. I pray our *sanmyāsīs* and leaders also come upon this purport when dealing with sincere young devotees who are struggling and suffering due to misconceptions about marriage in Krishna Consciousness. They are often led to think marriage is something that will destroy their spiritual lives, when perhaps, if presented as in your purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.5, marriage could be the very thing that saves them from a spiritual fall down.

Being an introvert and one who is overly attached to peaceful atmospheres, the thought had crossed my mind that a Buddhist lifestyle would have suited me better. Though I was just thinking this in humor, you seemed to want to convince me not to become a Buddhist as I came upon your purport to CC Madhya 9.49. There you list the nine principles of Buddhism and by the end of the purport you defeat every principle based on the philosophy of *bhakti-yoga*, convincing me I never want to be a Buddhist.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for having worked so painstakingly on translating and providing purports to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*,

Caitanya-Caritāmrta and *Bhagavad-gītā*. It truly is the best gift you could have left us. It makes it possible for everyone, for generations to come, to be blessed with your wisdom through reading *darśana*. You will magically speak to each of us through your books, if we just take the time to read them.

Your servant and loving daughter,

Jitamitra Devi Dasi

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda;

I offer my humble obeisances to you. All glories to your lotus feet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you for being my spiritual master, for saving me from the fearful ocean of death. You gave me this gift many years ago, but I did not appreciate it, being young and complacent. I left your service for a long time, although I felt you calling me many times. In recent years, I took up some service to you again, but I could not be whole-hearted. Material attachments grip me fiercely.

Recently I have seen several friends and godbrothers leave their bodies, face-to-face.

Then, just a few weeks ago, I had an illness that brought me close to death. And I saw that I was not ready. Anguish and grief overwhelmed me, because I have not served you. I prayed to you for shelter.

I thought “Śrīla Prabhupāda, I have not been a proper devotee, and I feel Kṛṣṇa will now punish me severely, as I might need it. So I am full of regret. I am hearing and chanting with desperation, But what can I give to you now, when I used my best years selfishly, and only now turn to you at the end, because of suffering, and with only the meager last few days to offer? I am sorry I didn’t love you. How can I ask for your protection sincerely, when I didn’t reciprocate your love by giving you my life, as you gave yours to us?”

Now it seems that I will recover at least some of my health. But even if I recover fully, I am left with a terrible sense of the shortness of time left, of the urgent importance of your gift to me. I am begging you to give me strength to humbly serve you, to remember your love for us, and to follow your example of always hearing Kṛṣṇa-kathā, to always think of other devotees favorably, to always see the good in others, to remember you. You are the source of our good qualities. I have none of my own. You are the source of our devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Alone, I am not devoted. You set the astonishing example

of friendship to all and love for Kṛṣṇa. I beg you to help me use this second chance to serve you. I don't feel strong at all. *Māyā* is very strong.

I take shelter at your lotus feet, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Please save me.

Your hopeful servant,

Laksmivan Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

This has been a very weird time in the world. Right now we are in the middle of the biggest pandemic in our lifetimes. At such a time like this, I am feeling great separation from your calm, reassuring instructions and wish you were here among us to guide us through this very dark time. One realization I keep having is that everything you have ever told us is true. Your instructions ARE there. When you were lying in your Vṛndāvana bed, performing your final pastimes you said to the devotees there: “Don’t think this won’t happen to you”. You also wrote in your books and letters that the devotees must prepare for the future by investing and building many rural communities where we could grow our own food and protect cows. I feel this is the direction you were taking us in.

Furthermore, you had said that in the future, people would line up and flock to our farms as there would be a shortage of food and we should be totally prepared for this. I am afraid that we still have much to do in this department, and yet it is proving essential to our future. We also need urban centers for preaching, but the two must work hand-in-hand.

We also need facility to care for the sick and elderly. We also need housing, and a lot of it, so devotees can live in communities, instead of miles away.

As I see myself entering the final stages of life, which will come at the time Kṛṣṇa ordains...I feel remorse for time wasted in this lifetime. You had provided a system by which second by second, there could be full absorption in devotional service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is still there and always will be.

I pray, with what time I have left, that you will give me your guidance and mercy so that I can prepare myself for my next life. As undeserving as I am, I am begging for your causeless mercy. Kṛṣṇa promises that if we surrender he will preserve what we have and carry what we lack. That is my fervent prayer to you.

Your unworthy disciple,

Bhumi Devi Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I am not able to thank you, for everything is happening by Your Divine Grace. Since the beginning, it is you. You kindly engaged me in your service, and I am appreciating more and more your love. That is the only reason to continue service...for your pleasure, feeling indebted every day of my life.

All glories to your divine mercy, divine lotus feet, and divine Kṛṣṇa-kathā, and especially your treasure contribution to the whole world and universe – the BBT and the topmost gift, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. All glories endlessly, *param vijayate śrī kṛṣṇa saṅkīrtanam*.

Falling at your sweet, divine and transcendental lotus feet.

Learning to become your instrument in distributing BBT books, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam amala purāṇa, purāṇārka*, brilliant like the sun.

I am very very thankful.

Your humble and insignificant, dāsa anudāsa 100 times,

Durgama Dasa

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Another year has come and gone. My life's journey is most likely coming to a close. What would it have been like without meeting Your Divine Grace? I cannot begin to imagine.

You are the light of my life, Śrīla Prabhupāda. It's been almost 50 years since I first met you and, by your mercy, my heart still feels like an ember lighting up the darkness all around me. Yes, Your Divine Grace is alive and well living inside of me and hundreds of thousands of others all over the world! We are receiving so much unmerited grace by your divine mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda. How powerful and enduring your mercy is.

How far this love of Godhead can be developed and felt is contained in this Vaiṣṇava theology that Your Divine Grace has blessed this dark world with! You have mentioned that it is the most unique and highest development of love of God, kindly given to us by Lord Caitanya, Kṛṣṇa Himself. You're my faith, You're my hope, You're my everything, eternally dear holy father.

I'm seeing after all these years that *bhakti* is not limited to an activity, but includes another component: that of appreciating others' services, seeing their blessings abound and wishing them more and more abundant grace! Therefore, I'm attempting to appreciate everyone's humble service to you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your mercy is stronger than dynamite, and it obliterates the walls of misconception and false ego! *Māyā* trembles in its wake. This explosive transcendental mercy helps me to appreciate more and more, brighter and brighter, deeper and deeper, clearer and clearer, Your actual, spiritual position.

Myself now being almost 70 years old, makes it even more incomprehensible, inconceivable, and unbelievable, Śrīla Prabhupāda, how you boarded that Jaladuta with an impossible mission at this same age. I just cannot imagine the incomprehensibility of this selfless undertaking. But you were empowered with overwhelming grace from Guru and Gaurāṅga! You crossed the Atlantic Ocean with only seven dollars, a bag of oats, the *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* and a few boxes of the sacred *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Your sacred loving heart went through waves of agony and ecstasy.

Upon arriving in the USA, You were not even sure whether to turn left or right exiting the Jaladuta! But implicit faith in the order of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta and the blessings of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī were more than sufficient to let you cross over and save the whole world, my dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda. What astounding grace you were blessed with and showered upon us all.

I was blessed to witness first hand your divine smiles, love and tears being exhibited here and there. That profound transcendental mercy manifesting from another place. Yes, divine grace! These spiritual mysteries are inconceivable! You are changing the world incomprehensibly, Śrīla Prabhupāda! You have brought us out of the illusion in which everyone desires comfort for their body and tries to make a suitable situation for selfish pleasures. Forgetting that the body is meant to be eaten by dogs, jackals or moths and thus turned into useless stool, ashes or earth, the living entity wastes his time in a futile attempt to gain material possessions for the comfort of the body life after life. A most complicated, inconceivable network of action and reaction thus saith Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Your love and purity is like a giant magnet that keeps pulling us back to your lotus feet no matter how far away we roam and stray from them. I personally have experienced this numerous times! It's just impossible to live without your divine love. Your *prema* has come and found us hiding in darkness and filth, drowning in ignorance. We no longer had any place to run and hide! Yeah, mercy drowned us and cleansed us. This love is stronger than the universe. I pray that it can never be reversed. Safe am I in the glow of your love, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

As you know, this past year the Bhakti Center in Manhattan, around the corner from your first Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Temple at 26 Second avenue, was finally paid in full! Now, once again, you are on the map and own a building in Manhattan, Śrīla Prabhupāda! When I do your *guru-pūjā* every morning at the Bhakti Center I see your smile of satisfaction.

Over the last few years your Bhakti Center has been the 'place to be' in NYC for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, classes on *bhakti*, *prasādam* distribution, yoga classes, community groups discussing the Kṛṣṇa conscious lifestyle, and a full morning program worshipping Śrī Śrī Rādhā Murlīdhara, Śrī Gaura Chandra, Lord Nṛsimhadeva and your lotus feet. Our Thursday night *kīrtana* program is quite famous, along with our Tuesday evening spiritual sound program. Many

devotees also visit and give *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* classes and other special programs and discussions. We also have a very unique Sunday morning program called *Bhāgavata Śravaṇa* with special guest speakers, a sweet *kīrtana* and a delicious feast served afterwards. You must surely be so pleased that hundreds and hundreds of Westerners are coming weekly for chanting and eating *prasādam*. Your books are also being displayed at Bhakti Center and being read, discussed and sold on the streets along with *harināma*.

I thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for having created so many nice services for us to engage in through your ISKCON mission. Please bless me if you like that I can mature more and more in selfless devotional service unto your lotus feet. I stand once again to be inspected, corrected and directed. May I not be neglected.

Your aspiring disciple,

Arjuna Dasa

My dear eternal master, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my heartfelt *daṇḍavats* in the dust of your lotus feet.

It was sometime in the autumn of 1972 that I happened to walk into a friend's living room, where the nightly news was on the television. It was a broadcast of your arrival at the airport in New York City. I had no idea what I was seeing, but I can still picture you in my mind's eye, as I saw you for the first time.

Surrounded by young men and women dressed in robes, and beaming, you strode like a majestic lion through the terminal. I don't remember what the newscaster was saying, or if I could hear the chanting, I only remember being mesmerized by you.

Though I was a cynical New York teenager at the time, I somehow knew, "here is a genuinely holy man." In fact, it appeared to me that your feet weren't touching the ground as you walked.

Fast forward four months and I found myself living at your New Dwarka Temple in Los Angeles.

You came to Los Angeles in April of 1973 and stayed for a month or so, giving *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class each morning. You lectured on Queen Kuntī's prayers, which I've coincidentally been listening to recently, while fondly remembering those days.

During your lectures you spoke of the dangers and hardships that the Pāṇḍavas endured, even though they were Kṛṣṇa's dear devotees, friends, and family members.

After describing the perils they endured, you said:

This is the instruction, that because Kṛṣṇa is protecting you, you cannot expect that you'll be out of danger. Danger you must meet, because then you'll know that this material existence is full of dangers. *Padarṇi padarṇi yad vipadāṇi* This we always remember. We should not be so fool that "I am living very now comfortably." No, sir. You are in danger. That is said by Kṛṣṇa. *Duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam*. Do not take this material existence as comfortable at any moment. Then you'll not be able to make progress in spiritual life. As soon as you think that 'I am very comfortable here,' then you are spiritually fall down. That is *māyā*.

At different times in my life, I've profoundly resonated with what you said in those lectures, and do so especially now that the world

is in the throes of a pandemic. You said, “Do not take this material existence as comfortable at any moment”; but it has struck me lately, that I had indeed begun to think that my life, with my *sādhana*, *sevā*, and good health, was peaceful and nice. I’m afraid that I have settled into a cozy life, heedless of your warning.

As I now approach the age that you were when you left Vṛndāvana to preach in the West, I shudder to think where I would be now if you had settled for a cozy life. Lucky for me that you instead took to a life of apparent inconvenience to fulfill the order of your spiritual master.

Dearest Gurudeva, everything I am is due to your magnanimity. You have saved me not only from settling for the so-called comfort of material life, but also from the illusion that this material world is my home. I admit that I am so ignorant that I am unaware of all that you have saved me from. My debt to you, therefore, is as fathomless as my gratitude for all that you’ve done for me.

On this day of your divine appearance, I again offer myself – body and soul – in your service. My heartfelt longing is to cleanse my blackened heart so that it may become a fit place to hold your lotus feet. Please continue to shower your blessings upon me; and though I am unworthy, please allow me to humbly serve you for all of eternity.

Kindly keep me safe in the shade of your lotus feet.

Your grateful daughter,

Nirākulā 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*

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

Well, it is that time of the year when we remember our spiritual master's Appearance day formally as Vyāsa-pūjā day. Śrīla Prabhupāda is the 32nd *ācārya* in line from Śrīla Veda Vyāsa/Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana who compiled the Vedas and who is a direct disciple of Śrī Nārada Muni in the Brahma-Nārada Sampradāya.

Of course, it is not that we only think of our spiritual master on this day alone! No, there is never a single day that we are not remembering His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and how he so mercifully accepted us as his disciples.

"He reasons ill who tell that Vaiṣṇavas die, When thou are living still in sound! The Vaiṣṇavas die to live, and living try to spread the holy name around!"

This stanza is from Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's writing about the *samādhi* of *nāmācārya* Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, and helps us to understand that Śrīla Prabhupāda has left His spiritualized "material" body in *samādhi* but He is not DEAD!

No, the spiritual master in the line of *ācāryas* from Veda Vyāsa lives eternally in his books, lectures, talks and instructions.

So, every day I make an effort to hear the transcendental words of Śrīla Prabhupāda, read his books, listen to his tapes and in this way keep the connection alive.

Trying to estimate the value of what our spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda has given us is nigh impossible!

**Even a moment's association with a pure devotee
cannot be compared to being transferred to**

**heavenly planets or even merging into the
Brahman effulgence in complete liberation.**

**For living entities who are destined to give
up the body and die, association with pure
devotees is the highest benediction.**

PURPORT

The great saint Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, a devotee of Lord Caitanya, has stated: *kaivalyam narakāyate tridaśa-pūr ākāśa-puṣpāyate*. For a pure devotee, *kaivalya*, merging into the existence of Brahman, the Brahman effulgence, is no better than living in hell. Similarly, he considers promotion to heavenly planets (*tridaśa-pūr*) just another kind of phantasmagoria. In other words, a pure devotee does not place much value in the destination of the *karmīs* (the heavenly planets) or in the destination of the *jñānīs* (merging into the Brahman effulgence). A pure devotee considers a moment's association with another pure devotee to be far superior to residing in a heavenly planet or merging in the Brahman effulgence. The topmost benediction for those who are living in this material world and are subjected to the repetition of birth and death (transmigration) is association with pure devotees. One should search out such pure devotees and remain with them. That will make one completely happy, even though living within the material world. This Krishna Consciousness movement is started for that purpose. A person who is overly affected materially may take advantage of this movement and become intimately associated with it. In this way the confused and frustrated inhabitants of this material world may find the highest happiness in association with devotees.

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.30.34, Translation and Purport)

I wish to humbly express my eternal gratitude and my commitment to serve His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda in whatever capacity I have for the rest of my life and to beg His forgiveness for all my mistakes and *anarthas* which keep me bound to this material world

and pray for his mercy that he will give me the strength to overcome all obstacles on the path He has provided for us to go back home, back to Godhead.

When I received initiation from you personally in your new room at Bhaktivedanta Manor which we had just received from Śrīmān George Harrison Dāsa, I was a young man of 21-years-old and did not completely understand the true import of that wonderful day! Of course, the initiation is a formality, as you have said, and the true initiation is in following the orders of the spiritual master.

I have failed to completely follow your divine instructions as you would have expected. Though I have never given up the fight! Lord Kṛṣṇa directs the wanderings of the living entities, and He has directed me to many countries and places where I have no association, still, I always tell those I meet of this wonderful sublime Krishna Consciousness which you have given us. I find that without your physical presence, it is extremely difficult for me to be secure in my devotional service. When I had your personal association everything seemed so easy, one just had to bathe in your divine effulgence and all doubts and shadows disappeared. When you departed, it was a terrible day for me. I understand *vāñī* is more important than *vapuḥ* and this is true, however, your physical presence was so powerful and your presence was the life and soul of the movement. Now alas, you have departed us. May I one day be blessed to meet you again!

I sincerely and humbly pray that you may direct me in the future to those places where I may have the association of sincere devotees of the Lord as this will help me greatly in my *sādhana*.

I pray for your mercy and forgiveness and for you to continue to guide me and instruct me so that I may achieve the final destination.

All glories, all glories, all glories, all glories, all glories, all glories, all glories, all glories, all glories!

To the divine lotus feet of my spiritual master His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda!

*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*

Jai Prabhupāda! Jai Prabhupāda! Jai Prabhupāda! Jai Prabhupāda!
Your mercy is unfathomable.

That you would leave everything to come to this U.S.A. in your last years on this Earth.

That you would come under the shelter of the Supreme Lord through your spiritual master's order.

That you have full faith and surrender to that order.

That you opened the eyes and hearts of so many people who previously thought life was about consuming pleasure by the unbridled senses.

That you gave shelter and purpose through the knowledge of the words spoken by God Himself.

Not only did you give us His words, you gave us His example and His requirements for our return to His abode.

That you taught us free will is there for us to use as we decide.

That you left the door open as we gradually looked inside to see what our lives meant.

And we came, because of you.

Jai Śrīla Prabhupāda! Jai Śrīla Prabhupāda! Jai Śrīla Prabhupāda! Jai Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your mercy is unfathomable.

That you trained us and allowed us to serve The Supreme Personality of Godhead.

That you engaged us in our eternal *dharma* as servants of the Lord.

That you enabled us to feel we are spirit soul and not this body.

That you gave us responsibilities you knew we were not prepared for, but your faith that Kṛṣṇa will provide as long as we kept on the path you set for us, gave us the power to do so.

That you left us as we were just learning to stand but are still

with us in your books, words and our memories.

That you warned us of the cliffs and sinkholes to avoid and taught us how to redirect our energy for our spiritual lives by helping others do the same.

That you gave us a society to take shelter where our devotional creepers would be nurtured and appreciated as we started again our eternal lives.

Although we came from impersonal, material, atheist, *māyāvāda* backgrounds in this life, we stepped out into the Light of the Bhāgavat.

We remember you saying, "Darkness is nescience, Godhead is light. Where there is Godhead, there can be no nescience!" "Simple for the simple, but difficult for the crooked!" "We fly our own ship!" "Kṛṣṇa carries what we have and supplies what we lack!" "You simply follow these regulative principles, chant sixteen rounds, read and apply these books and go Back to Godhead!"

"Books are the basis, preaching is the essence, utility is the principle and purity is the force!"

"Surrender everything except your intelligence!"

"Do not try to imitate, but follow in the footsteps of the *ācāryas*!"

"Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and be happy!" "Guru, *śāstra* and *sādhu*!"

You spread your mercy all over the world and those who are serious are taking advantage of your love. You who gave us *Bhagavad-gītā* As It Is so clearly we could see the nectar in the glass filling up as we chant His holy names. *Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare...*

Jai jagad guru Śrīla Prabhupāda! Jai jagad guru Śrīla Prabhupāda! Jai jagad guru Śrīla Prabhupāda! Jai jagad guru Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

How is it remotely possible for such a fallen soul as me to write anything in praise of such an exalted spiritual master?

Had you not come where would I be?

A life without you
Impossible to conceive
There would be no *kīrtanas*
No blissful *harināmas*
No temples, spiritual refuges
No Kṛṣṇa conscious farms
There'd be no beautiful Deities
No offerings, Sanskrit prayers
No otherworldly *bhajans*
No *prasāda* to share
How would I fill my time
With no offerings to cook
No peaceful *japa, gāyatrī*
None of your wonderful books
No Janmāṣṭamī, no fire *yajñas*
No beautiful Dāmodara
No Sanskrit *ślokas, Brahma-Saṁhitā*
Halavā hill of Govardhana
Beautiful Rādhā-Londonīśvara
Would surely not be here
No Kṛṣṇa magic anywhere
Only a world of fear
How flat and stale my life would be,
The world of fearful place
Had you not come and brought to us
Your miraculous Divine Grace

Your aspiring servant,

Ramya Devi Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

The world is now in the grip of a massive shutdown due the influence of a virus. Numerous points of view prevail as to the nature and origin of the so-called contagion. There seems to be many agendas at play in this worldwide lockdown from medical and political, to economic and even diabolical. Whatever the reality truly is, it is certain that the world population is faced with the inevitable result of its collective *karma*. Whether the delivering mechanism is in the form of an organic or engineered biological agent, a medical mishap, a contaminated wet market or a political weapon, the whole of humanity is suffering under its spell.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, because of your illuminating presence on this earth we have an understanding of these things from a higher perspective.

There is a hierarchy of power structure in this material realm. At the top of the food chain behind the scenes, beyond the veil of government is demonic rule. Powerful elite families reign as the puppet masters by pulling the strings of their deputed leaders of society. You referenced this numerous times in your conversations and writings.

At the present, especially on this planet Earth, the influence of Lord Brahmā has decreased considerably, and the representatives of Hiranyakashipu—the *rākṣasas* (man-eaters) and demons—have taken charge. Therefore there is no protection of brahminical culture and cows, which are the basic prerequisites for all kinds of good fortune. This Age is very dangerous because society is being managed by demons and *rākṣasas*.

— SB 7.3.13

As a result of their rule the populace becomes victimized by an atheistic agenda. They become implicated. They follow in the footsteps of their masters who govern the general public.

People in general are not very advanced in knowledge by which to discriminate between religion and irreligion. The innocent, unenlightened citizen is like an ignorant

animal sleeping in peace with its head on the lap of its master, faithfully believing in the master's protection.

— SB 6.2.6

As a result, there are great disturbances and calamities in society at large – whether by social conflict, natural disasters, disease or war. Much of this is intentionally generated to gain power/control of the populace through the hidden hands of *karma*, irreligious influence and the modes of nature are always operating in background.

What is the cause of these upheavals in the world at the present time? In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.13.3–15, it describes how natural calamities, spiritual and social breakdown are signs of the prevalence of *asuras* taking birth on the Earth.

When there are natural disturbances like blowing cyclones, too much heat or snowfall, and uprooting of trees by hurricanes, it is to be understood that the demoniac population is increasing and so the natural disturbance is also taking place. There are many countries on the globe, even at the present moment, where all these disturbances are current. This is true all over the world. There is insufficient sunshine, and there are always clouds in the sky, snowfall, and severe cold. These assure that such places are inhabited by demoniac people who are accustomed to all kinds of forbidden, sinful activity.

— SB 3.17.5, purport

Thus, we are your faithful followers Śrīla Prabhupāda, should have a clear understanding of how the world is being operated and by whom.

David Lawrence: A very great deal of what one could call demonology if you like. Now, I confess this raises problems for me. When a book like that...

Prabhupāda: *Bhāgavata* was written five thousand years ago.

David Lawrence: Yes, very, very ancient. Is it to be taken, the references say to Pūtanā, is this to be taken...

Prabhupāda: It is also fact.

David Lawrence: ...physically or spiritually as a

demonic power or what?

Prabhupāda: No, no, which one?

David Lawrence: Where, is it the demoness Pūtanā takes Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa sucks her breast?

Syamasundara: Should it be taken literally or allegorically?

Prabhupāda: No, literally, literally.

David Lawrence: Yeah, literally as a physical fact.

Prabhupāda: Oh yes, oh yes.

David Lawrence: Now, having said that then, if one goes on logically...

Prabhupāda: You'll find so many demons like Pūtanā even at the present moment.

— Morning Walk, August 30 1973

What then is the hope for a world run by the agents of Kali?

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you clearly recognized the dangers of not only the overtly demonic rule but their philosophies as well. You were an ardent denouncer of both atheistic communism and materialistic capitalism – all forms of governance devoid of genuine God consciousness. Your only intention was to bring to Kṛṣṇa to the center. Then everything could ultimately be solved. And your weapons that destroys the ignorance of the people and bring about this revolution of consciousness as Śrī Caitanya's *Senāpati bhakta* General, were the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and transcendental literature in the form of your Bhaktivedanta purports.

Prabhupāda: ... *vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām*.

Dr. Patel: *Dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya*. He must again become. *Sambhāvami yuge yuge*. We must see that He comes. We are all praying sincerely that "Let God come now. Enough of this time!"

Prabhupāda: He has come already.

Dr. Patel: That is why some people say that...

Prabhupāda: Yes.

Dr. Patel: ...Kalki-*avatāra* is born with...

Prabhupāda: Not Kalki-*avatāra*. This *Harināma avatāra*. Yes. *Nāma-rūpe kali-kale kṛṣṇa avatāra*. Kṛṣṇa, in this Age, He has descended in the form of Hare Kṛṣṇa. *Nāma-rūpe kali-kale kṛṣṇa avatāra*. The name is already there. It is being propounded all over the world.

— Morning Walk, February 25, 1974, Bombay

And:

Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement is also *astra* [weapon] of Kṛṣṇa for killing the demons, but it is not like a... Like a sword, it is not active. But it is *astra*. It is killing the demons but in a different way. The demonic habits are being killed, demonic habits. Everyone, we can understand it, how our demonic activities are being killed by this Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. This is *astra*. This is *astra*, but it is being used in a different way, because in this Age they are so fallen. So... *Manda manda-bhāgyā*. This real *astra* weapon cannot be used upon them. It is already dead. So, therefore, another type of *astra* to awaken them to life, that is Hare Kṛṣṇa, *mahā-mantra astra*. Otherwise they are already dead. A dead horse... 'Beating the dead horse.' A horse is dead; what you will get by beating with whips? It is already dead. So there are big, big demons. Hiraṇyakaśipu, he was required to be killed by the nails of the Lord. He appeared as a ferocious lion. But here, the tiny demons, there is no need of nails or any sword. They are to be awakened simply by Krishna Consciousness, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

— Class on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.9.47, April 2, 1976, Vṛndāvana

And:

These books and magazine are our most important propaganda weapons to defeat the ignorance of *māyā*'s army, and the more we produce such literature and sell them profusely all over the world, the more we shall deliver the world from the suicide course.

— Letter to Jayādvaita Swami 11/18/72

Our job as your servants is to strain our brains to find effective ways and means to inject the populace with this potent transcendental medicine.

It may take many external forms to attract their attention or pique their interest. But the mission remains the same: somehow or another flood the people with the nectar of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and the concise liberating wisdom of the Bhaktivedanta purports.

Every devotee and corresponding project has its own special genius in this regard. As individuals we all have our unique God-given personality and style. That should always be appreciated, respected and honored in all devotees without the tendency to judge or criticize. United in Diversity. Prabhupāda celebrated that. United we stand, divided we fall...or fail.

The people of the world are looking for substantial solutions to the problems and dangers they face, be it a real or engineered pandemic, economic disaster, war and ultimately death. Many wise men and women today are giving aspects of higher knowledge. But rarely one of them have never seen God, walked and talked with God or have the connecting link to the pure disciplic line from the Personality of Godhead. But you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the pure devotee, teach us the essence of the all revealed scriptures – that the only safe haven for the living entities is taking shelter at the lotus feet of the Lord.

By taking shelter at the lotus feet of Vāsudeva, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one can get released from all kinds of material tribulations, such kind of immunization is not possible by practising yoga, *tapasya*, *jñāna*. This is the statement in the *Srimad-Bhāgavatam*.

— Class on *The Nectar of Devotion*, November 7, 1972, Vṛndāvana

This may be a troubling era, yet it is great practice for the time of death when all we have known is stripped away. May we truly take it as such.

You have taught us well – you have given us everything. Our job is to apply it with patience and determination always seeking your guidance whilst being confident that your mercy will surely be there to shelter us.

There is a monumental battle being fought behind the scenes – a war for the soul of the planet. There is great need for luminous warriors who walk in the light of the *Bhāgavat* to stand in the frontlines of this battle or act as wise counsel for those that do. When this knowledge that you have given to the world is properly understood by sane and sound men and women, there will be a revolution of love and devotion. It will change the world. It has been written. And it has begun.

This has been made possible only as a result the immense

sacrifice, compassion and immeasurable glory of Your Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda.

May we keep your mood, your mission and your instructions
always in the center of all our activities at all times. That will be
the cause of the greatest good for ourselves, our loved ones and the
world at large. A new era will be born from the ashes and the golden
age of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu will be realized in due course. By
your grace, all this is not only possible, it is unfolding before our
eyes. All we need to do is roll up our sleeves and jump in the fight.

Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya!*

Your lowly aspiring servant,

Badarayana Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace, and to your compassion. You kindly came to this terrible world, and at an advanced age took the added trouble to come West, on the divine order of your beloved spiritual father, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Finally, after my billions of lives, someone came to fish me out of the material world. Or should I say, finally I heard the call?

Recently listening to your talk from Balboa Park, San Diego (1972), I heard you almost shout something like: “Do not make the mistake as in your English dictionary, where Kṛṣṇa is described as a Hindu god...Kṛṣṇa is God.”

No-one before you or since could identify God, give us His name, address and telephone number. Over and above that, as your days were spent tirelessly preaching and lovingly organising your growing Society, so were your nights spent translating spotless books of transcendental information on your Kṛṣṇa and how to know Him.

Who could have guessed that child Kṛṣṇa carries his father’s wooden slippers to him, on His head? Or that He drags a wooden sitting place to His mother, on her request? Or that when His parents ask Him to bring something too heavy (and what could be too heavy for God?), He simply stands and moves His arms?

Your Kṛṣṇa, when He’s grown up, often prefaces His sweet words with a gentle, encouraging smile to His associates. When a challenger insults Him, He’s not offended, but He does riposte by saying that great fighters generally don’t waste time talking. When there’s a so-called dilemma for Him, He asks His advisor Śrī Uddhava for help, as if there could be anything unknown or difficult for Him. All these, you explain, are to increase loving exchanges.

Kṛṣṇa’s devotees are in a fix, trying to stop their tears so as not to cause inauspiciousness on His departure from Hastināpura. Going up to the roofs of the palaces, they shower flowers on Him, and as they share their wonder at the fortune of Kṛṣṇa’s wives, their words are more pleasing than the Vedic hymns, because they cut to the chase – meaning that to attain that state of love for the Lord, for His devotees and for the relationships they share, is the very point of the voluminous Vedas.

As Kṛṣṇa enters His own town, all run to Him, asking how they

could exist without His presence. The ladies get onto the rooftop terraces and gaze down at their worshipful object of love – and that is the greatest festival. How eloquently you have translated the phrase ‘*pāna-pātram mukhaṁ dṛśām*’: ‘His face is the drinking vessel for eyes which hanker after all that is beautiful’. With that phrase you have captured my soul. (And by the way, I ask ‘Where is the need to go elsewhere?’ Everything is in your books.)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, could it be that it’s not too late for me to join your transcendental party? Your own Gokulānanda told me there was still time. I remember His installation, when you led all the assembled devotees round and round His altar. That was the day when the boundary between the material and spiritual worlds vanished, by your kindness, potency and by the sheer strength of your determination to give your all to get your spiritual master’s order fulfilled, and the prediction of Lord Caitanya.

So, so much could be said about your glories, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Your personality glitters from a million facets. Like the time you were asked to launch a book in Jagannāth Puri, and instead you gave a telling-off to the town authorities, for their not knowing the meaning of the name Jagannāth, ie. that He’s Lord of the whole universe. Thus you made the point that your Western disciples should be allowed into the temple. Ever the champion of your children, you yourself did not go for *darśana*. And to crown all that, you off-handedly picked up the book, said ‘This book is launched’, and put it down again!

In connection with your being the embodiment of mercy and right judgement, these few lines came to me:

Spotless servant of Sarasvatī Gosvāmī -
Enormous, the impact you’ve had on the world.
That will be felt, but even now,
No-one dares say a word against you

A shy girl who became an old woman
Is watching DVD 8 of *Following You*.
Sees you patiently sitting, the pundits intoning
And posturing, your cupped hands and eyes cast down.

That's you, by the strength of your faith in the name,
By the *kīrtan* you ordered, asking Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma
To inhabit Their temple at Ramaṇa Reti.
Jaya, Śrīla Prabhupāda! I'll never stop saying it.

This offering is longer than usual, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I am sorry for any inconvenience that might cause you. These words have come from the heart of this conditioned soul, on Ekādaśī, Saturday 4th April 2020, in anticipation of the glorious day of your appearance. If it please you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I beg the blessing of being able to chant *harināma* in public, alone or with one or two others, in this North of England, where devotees are rare.

Your fallen servant,

Govardhana Dasi

As I sat there, completely unsure of what I would write to my dear spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda for this Vyāsa-pūjā offering, I thought to myself “I need inspiration!” So, I go to my bookshelf, pick up one of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s original *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatams* and open it up to a random page. “Perfect!” I say to myself. “This verse could not be better!”

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,
Canto 2, Chapter 3, Text 23:

English Translation

The person who has not at any time received the dust of the Lord’s pure devotee upon his head is certainly a dead body. And the person who has never experienced the aroma of the *tulasī* leaves from the lotus feet of the Lord is also a dead body, although breathing.

This verse describes everything that I should be grateful for; what we should all be grateful for, as we are nothing but corpses without the protection and guidance of our beloved spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda. I thank you dearest Prabhupāda, and pray I always remember this verse.

Your humble servant and loving disciple,

Rukmini Priya Devi Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

Please accept my humble obeisances.

About 15 years ago I was experiencing some deeply troubling personal issues.

I wrote a poem based on the myriad teachings you have given me, that enabled me to overcome the emotional issues. The following is that poem which is but a fraction of the comfort and shelter you have given us to understand who I am and why am I here.

SOAR THE HEIGHTS IN HARMONY

Give up the ghost of memories past
They open the future
Are not meant to last
The basis of 'we want and seek'
Lies in our hearts, so nurture and keep
Our natural desire for love and affection
Inherent in our expectation
But not to be forced into another's maze
They have their own cycles and phase

When we hear the phrase 'letting go'
It means a root buried deep in our false ego
We see no boundaries twixt us and them
We really cheat others to fill our whim
We struggle to clarify our wants and our needs
Discover truth lies not in the weeds
Of avoiding our lack of corrected sight
And using another to climb to the light

For see, we are whole and complete
A spiritual being not meant to deplete
Through selfish enjoyment others we meet
Else karmic debts of pain we'll reap
The pain we feel is our attractions
For false relief from chain reactions
Our lack of love and lack of grace
Leaves us lost, enchained, alone, misplaced

In truth any pleasure that is our fate
Comes on its own, so patiently wait
Surrendering to the tides and waves
Comprised of any love we gave
Each day so fresh, a sparkling slate
What lies before us through time's gate
Is meant to share and give and love
The best we can of God above

For this alone will set us free
To soar the heights of harmony
When we truly come to give and not take
A full and pleasing life we'll make
We are all joined in incremental ties
Of ropes made up of truth and lies
But what is more important still
Is how we use our own free will

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your mercy is unlimited.

Your worthless disciple,
Jagaddhatri Devi Dasi

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

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

My dear master and my dear father, years are passing by, and the more they pass by, the more my appreciation for you increases. The more my spiritual maturity develops, the more my love and gratitude for Your Divine Grace becomes manifest.

I never get tired of hearing about your wonderful life, and my ears become greedy of listening to your transcendental pastimes.

There will never be enough words to thank you as you actually deserve, neither enough actions able to repay a little of what you have given to us.

Thanks Śrīla Prabhupāda, thanks for having accepted us as your servants and for having given us the most valuable wealth: the holy name.

The most insignificant of your sons,

Mahacandra Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my humble obeisances unto your lotus feet again and again. Once again I am feeling your presence here at Rūpānuga Vedic College in Kansas City, Missouri. Here devotees take pleasure in studying your divine words, and singing the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, accompanied by sweet *mṛdaṅga* and *karatālas*, exactly as taught by Lord Caitanya, both in the temple and streets of Kansas City. It is enlivening to see young midwesterners being trained in the transcendental loving service of your worshipable Deities, Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi.

I know you have thousands of prominent disciples, including His Holiness Danavir Gosvāmī Mahārāja, but please do not forget me. You are my eternal father. I am weak and helpless. If you do not protect and maintain me, I shall surely perish.

Forever yours,

Your son,

Krsnasravana Dasa

Our service is to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

We are part of his *saṅkīrtana movement* helping to carry his message ahead into the future. We are on the cutting edge of a new beginning. Listen to the voice within. Be part of the positive not the gloom and doom of soothsayers and conspiracy theorists.

I come from a long line of pioneers. My ancestors were among the first arriving from the British Isles to settle in the unknown new wilderness of America. Some of these early pilgrims later came West as the early settlers. Both my grandmothers' (appeared to be the last of these pioneer women) lines trace back to those Massachusetts Bay Colonists in the early 1600s. All four sets of my great-grandparents were settlers here in the West with my maternal grandfather's grandpa being a 49er at Auburn, California among the earliest.

Prabhupāda was a Pilgrim who all on his own brought his message to the West. We owe it to him to carry his message into the future. We are all in unique situations according to time, place and circumstance, just as Kṛṣṇa plans. Each of us is affecting those around us.

O venerable spiritual master! You are the expression of *bhakti*. With every breath you take, you exhale ecstatic love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. You are just like the touchstone that can convert an unlimited quantity of iron into gold. Association with you automatically turns one into a *bhakta* of the Lord.

When you were manifesting your transcendental self among us in this temporary manifestation, anyone who was fortunate to see you was blessed to start or continue his journey back home, back to Godhead.

Now that you have joined your beloved Lord Kṛṣṇa in His eternal *līlā*, we are still sanctified by your spoken words. That sound vibration is not different from you. It is as if you are still here. I have humbly made those words available to all on the Prabhupadavani.org website, and I am constantly amazed to see so many people who come daily to hear your lectures, conversations and *bhajans*.

All of us who have been fortunate to come in contact with you understand that we have become a product of your unfathomable love for Kṛṣṇa. Having been touched by the pure words emanating from your heart, we have become eligible to experience the ecstatic feelings of the inhabitants of Vaikuṅṭha, who live on the ultimate platform of happiness.

I pray to the Lord to let me become an empowered representative of Your Divine Grace so that I may attract more wandering souls at your lotus feet in order for them to also get the same opportunity.

Prostrated at your feet, I offer you my humble obeisance.

Your lowly servant,

Praghosa Dasa
Montreal

*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 humble obeisances in great appreciation of what you have given to the whole world, including my humble self.

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are surely the modern representative of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, for you have re-presented and elaborately explained Vyāsa's magnus opus, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Now the whole world can understand that which was previously inaccessible by most, even in India, and can apply the spiritual science to their life. Now that economies and governments are dissolving, your books will surely become recognized as the beacons which can reorganize society and illuminate the ultimate goal of human life.

You have convinced the less intelligent residents of Kali-yuga that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the supreme person, how all else – material energy and living beings – emanate from Him, and how devotional service is the natural life of the living entity by which one can understand all of this and become completely happy. As the *Bhāgavatam* states:

The material miseries of the living entity, which are superfluous to him, can be directly mitigated by the linking process of devotional service. But the mass of people do not know this, and therefore the learned Vyāsadeva compiled this Vedic literature, which is in relation to the Supreme Truth.— *SB 1.7.6*

Without your elaborate explanation, how would we have known that the process of devotional service is the answer to our material miseries?

Simply by giving aural reception to this Vedic literature, the feeling for loving devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, sprouts up at once to extinguish the fire of lamentation, illusion and fearfulness. — *SB 1.7.7*

Without your Bhaktivedanta purports, who would know that just by hearing the *Bhāgavatam* one can become attached to the service of Kṛṣṇa and thus become free from his material disease composed of lamentation, illusion and fearfulness?

O twice-born sages, by serving those devotees who are completely freed from all vice, great service is done. By such service, one gains affinity for hearing the messages of Vāsudeva. — *SB* 1.2.16

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, have solved our problem of having no attraction or affinity for the message of Godhead. You are that devotee who is free from all vice, and by serving you, beginning with hearing from you, mystically we gain an affinity.

Human reason fails to understand how by serving the devotee *Bhāgavata* or the book *Bhāgavata* one gets gradual promotion on the path of devotion. — *SB* 1.2.16, purport

Indeed, by reading your purports people shall gain the eligibility to receive Lord Caitanya's gift of pure love of God.

Because you have, like an expert professor, taught this absorption in hearing and chanting through your own demonstration of it, you have perfectly represented the teachings of Lord Caitanya (*gaura-vāñī-pracāriṇe*). Therefore, we want to offer our respects to you who follow in the footsteps of your Guru Mahārāja as the personified energy of Lord Caitanya's mercy (*śrī-gaura-karuṇā-śakti-vigrahāya namo 'stu te*). You have surely satisfied Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Please continue to shower your compassion on this undeserving soul as I endeavor to follow in your footsteps. You are OUR Vyāsadeva.

Your eternal servant,

Prthusrava Dasa

I offer 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 Chaitanya and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, from the very beginning of this lifetime, at birth, this present body was seriously struggling to survive and in danger of dying. I was totally helpless and at the mercy of my *karma*. One result of such a traumatic entrance into this world was that I have from an early age contemplated death. Thus this world has really held no feeling of security for me – no connection to anything that was real and lasting. As a child I would often wonder why we had to die, what happened after death, and why this world existed at all.

As I continued in life, adrift in a sea of materialism, confronted with the constant changing backdrops of my youth, I found myself at an early age observing and experiencing the fruitless results of the whirlpool of illusory desires this world presents – where the only consequence of one’s passionate struggle to enjoy is one good or bad karmic reaction after another. Over the course of this lifetime this material world appears to have become even more so a place of pain and suffering. Its ever-changing and dangerous landscape continues to provide no secure foothold, nor has it ever offered any lasting fulfillment on any level. For ultimately, if some material success and happiness has been achieved by someone, fear of loss ultimately becomes its companion and any peace is therefore lost.

As I look back on who, in this life’s sojourn, has provided a safe refuge, I find myself bowing at your lotus feet, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Encountering your brilliance this lifetime has been the greatest boon anyone could have received and no mere words can describe how grateful I am for such mercy. You have been the only one who has provided such powerful concise answers and conclusive solutions to the ongoing suffering in this world...the answers to the most important questions one can ask about having taken birth in this material world, why there is no ultimate happiness, and why one is

forced to experience death lifetime-after-lifetime.

Because of your deep love and dedication to following the wishes of your spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement has spread to the four corners of the globe. Through your many books, lectures, and letters, you give the world the real solutions to the threat of the repeated cycle of birth, old age, disease, and death. You have created a spiritual family of all generations the world over who continue to work together as aspiring *vaiṣṇavas*, striving to follow your example and continue to fulfill Lord Caitanya's mission of spreading Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy names to every town and village. Everyone who sincerely attempts to read your books, hear you speak, read your letters, engage in chanting, and listen to the intimate loving memories of those who were fortunate to personally associate with you daily, cannot help but be given a glimpse into your transcendental personality, and the magical world of Krishna Consciousness, resulting in their life's path being miraculously changed forever.

The world is indebted to you, as am I 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 Devi Dasi

My most beloved Spiritual Master Om Viṣṇu-pāda Paramahaṁsa
Parivrājakācārya Aṣṭottara-śata Śrīmad His Divine Grace Śrīla A. C.
Bhaktivedanta Swami,

Please accept my most humble and prostrated obeisances at
your lotus feet!

Śrī Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga Jayataḥ!

It's been 50 or so years since I heard the *mahā-mantra* for the
first time shortly after I joined, thanks to you, the Movement of Śrī
Caitanya Mahāprabhu!

Sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstrair... there is no difference between
you and Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Being most munificent, you gave us the possibility of becoming
Kṛṣṇa conscious, the knowledge that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme
Personality of Godhead and the treasure of Kṛṣṇa *prema*.

My debt to you, I will never be able to repay.

In these times of uncertainty, there is no other shelter than
your lotus feet.

You warned us of times like the present.

I'm not qualified and I'm very fallen, but still hope that you will
engage me in your service life-after-life. There my soul will attain
true happiness, peace and love.

Your most insignificant, aspiring disciple,

Nrhari Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Certainly there are so many words of appreciation on this most holy and great day of your holy appearance day, your glorious Vyāsa-pūjā.

I would just like to thank and appreciate you for everything you have done for us by giving us this Krishna Consciousness Movement and helping us to go back home. back to Godhead, back to Kṛṣṇa.

You instructed us to develop self sufficient farms communities. So many times you wanted to have farms to help the devotees and the people in general.

You said there will be a moment at the time of dark hours when the world would be in great need, and that your ISKCON Movement will help the world in these dark moments of need.

This is the reason that you wanted self-sufficiency...farms all over the world.

At the present moment, the world has a big problem...a virus killing people all over.

The same world you travelled around many times, preaching Krishna Consciousness.

Please, Śrīla. Prabhupāda, help us become more Kṛṣṇa conscious and follow your instructions.

Please guide us to work together and cooperate to maintain this institution together, and to help other during these difficult times. We are supposed to help and preach to people always.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for all your mercy. You are a very powerful *ācārya*.

Please help us to preach more all over the world.

Your lowest, most insignificant servant,

Ramanya Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you on this most auspicious day of your appearance

On behalf of the Vaishnavas C.A.R.E. hospice organization I co-founded 20 years ago (Counseling, Assistance, Resource, and Education for the Terminally Ill and Those in Need), I am writing to thank you for being our continuing inspiration. Since we first presented the concept of end-of-life care (hospice care) to the GBC members at the Māyāpur meeting in 2000 we have steadily, and with determination, continued to teach devotees around the world how to care for their family members, friends, and congregational members when they are ill and facing their final months. We hope we have pleased you by having trained volunteers care for your beloved devotees for the remaining months of their lives. They then provide post-mortem care with the family. We arrange for the Ash Immersion Ceremony in the Yamunā River in Vṛndāvana or the Ganges River in Māyāpur, if desired, and we offer Grief Support for the family and close friends of the deceased devotee. By always remembering your loving and compassionate mood and trying to follow in your footsteps – not only toward your disciples but for all living beings. From a blade of grass to a tiny insect on the ground to the humans throughout the material world, you did not want to see anyone suffer in any way. As our eternal Spiritual Master, you shared with us your transcendental vision so we could also understand why those within this world are meant to endure the threefold miseries.

Your spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, quoted from the *Mahābhārata*:

The Supreme Lord says, 'I have arranged so much misery, pain, trouble, and danger, not to make you suffer, but to teach you that all this misery is unnecessary; so you will search for that happiness which is eternally desirable, the joy that is eternally adorable.'

For those of us who were blessed to have your personal association when you were present on this planet we, by your grace, were able to personally associate with a "Vaikuṅṭha Man" as you used to say. Being in your presence made me understand that you were not of this Earth. Life, as we knew it, suddenly changed on November 14,

1977, when the news arrived from Vṛndāvana that you had departed from this world. For over four decades we have had to endure deep separation from you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Life has never been the same. However, all we can do as your disciples is go on following your instructions and associate with you through your books and by worshipping you in your deity form which is non-different from you. Just as the Lord is non-different than His Deity form on the altar in your temples, you are also non-different from your deity form seated on the Vyāsāsana in every one of your ISKCON temples. Kindly anoint our eyes with your divine mercy so we can have the vision to see you within your deity. Please allow us to hear your voice as we read your words within the pages of your books which you worked so hard to translate for the spiritual benefit of the planet. Please allow us to follow in your footsteps as we continue to serve your devotees and assure that none of them will ever leave their body alone and lonely without the loving care of the devotees chanting the *mahā-mantra* by their bedside.

We pray to continue to care for your devotees and, in this way, we beg to be able to one day please you, our beloved Guru Mahārāja, Your Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda.

On behalf of our many Vaishnavas CARE Volunteers,

Your eternal servant,

Sangita Devi Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances unto your lotus feet.

On this occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā, let your name be glorified by one and all! As a fortunate recipient of your mercy, please allow me to offer some words of deep gratitude, appreciation and love for Your Divine Grace.

Reading the history of your coming to the West and starting the Krishna Consciousness Movement, I noticed some small events that occurred, apparently of trivial nature, often underestimated and forgotten, but have proved to have been crucial in your mission! Of course, we know, everything, from the beginning to the end, has always been Lord Kṛṣṇa's arrangement, but still I think it is interesting to observe how these somehow secondary events had such a decisive impact and allowed the big miracles to happen!

One such event was the persistence of your friend to get you to meet Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta. Had he not insisted that day, what might have been the consequences?

So when I met Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura... It is a long story, how I met him. One of my friends, he dragged me. (laughing) (laughter) I was at that time nationalist and manager in a big chemical factory. My age was about 24 years. So one of my friends, he asked me that "There is a nice *sādhū*, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. He has come in Calcutta. So let us go and see." So I was reluctant. I thought just like so, there are so many *sādhūs*. So I was not very much... Because I had very bad experience, not very good. So I said, "Oh these kind of *sādhūs*, there are many." So anyway, it was Kṛṣṇa's grace. I would not go, but their point of view was that unless I certify that *sādhū*, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, he'll not be accepted. Therefore he dragged me." — His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda's Disappearance Day, Lecture, Los Angeles, December 13, 1973.

Then, the correct answer of Bhaktisiddhānta Gosvāmī to your initial objection about the proper time to be preaching Lord Caitanya's Movement in the West.

Had he not impressed and convinced you with his statement, what would be now of me?

On the very first meeting with His Divine Grace, He asked me to preach the message of Lord Caitanya in the Western world.

At that time, I was a young man and a nationalist, admirer of Mahatma Gandhi and C.R. Dass. So I replied Him at that time, who would care for the message of Lord Caitanya while we are a subject nation? In this way, I had some argument with my spiritual master, and at the end I was defeated. — 1970 correspondence.

Then Gopal's father who took seriously the task to find you a sponsor:

So I did not say anything seriously, but perhaps he took it very seriously, Gopal's father. So he might have written to Gopal that "Swami Bhaktivedanta wants to go to America. If you sponsor, then he can go." So whatever the correspondence was there between the father and son, I did not know. I simply asked him, "Why don't you ask your son Gopal to sponsor so that I can go there? I want to preach there." So after some months, three, four months, the No-Objection Certificate from the Indian embassy in New York, Gopal sent to me, yes, that he had already sponsored my arrival there for one month. So all of a sudden I got the paper, No-Objection Certificate by the Indian embassy. — Conversation LA - June 08, 1976.

Then your determination won over Sumati Morarji:

Then I approached that Sumati Morarji. She once gave me five hundred rupees in exchange of my *Bhāgavata* book, so I approached her, that "Give me one ticket." They have got their shipping company, Scindia Navigation. So she said, "Swāmījī, you are so old, you are taking this so responsibility. Do you think it is right? No, it is all right." (laughs)

Then Mr. Rao, who passed the P-form:

P-form sanctioned by the state government, yes, state

government. So it was applied for. It was . . . No sanction was coming. Then I went to the State Bank of India, the officer Mr. Bhattachari. So he told me: “Swāmījī, you are sponsored by private man, so we can not accept it. If you are invited by some institution, then we could consider, but you are invited by a private man for one month, and, after one month, if you are in difficulty, and there will be so much obstacles and soon.” “Well, I have already prepared everything to go.” I said. “You . . . what you have done?” “No, I have decided not to sanction your P-form.” “No, no, don’t do this. You better send to your superior. It should not be done like that.” So he took my request, and he sent the file to Chief Officer of Foreign Exchange, something like that. Anyway, he is the supreme man in the State Bank of India. So I went to see him. So I asked his secretary “You have got such file? You kindly put to Mr. . . .” his name was Mr. Rao, “I want to see him.” So the secretary agreed, and he put the file and put on my slip that I wanted to see him. I was waiting, So Mr. Rao came personally. He said, “Swāmījī, I have passed your case. Don’t worry.” (laughs)

Then the kind gesture of the captain, who supplied you with an electric stove:

The main thing is that I am alone and I am in my old age. Because of this, crossing twelve thousand miles in a ship, I became very sick. I crossed the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Atlantic Ocean. I passed through Asia, Europe and Africa. I crossed these oceans and seas and became so sick. Due to my request, they served me vegetarian meals on the ship, yet I couldn’t take them. I fasted continuously for eight to ten days. The pitta (fire) increased so much in my body thus I suffered terribly from colic pain. Afterwards, the captain of the ship purchased an electric stove for me in PortSaid. I then cooked for myself and took *prasada*. If they hadn’t managed this stove for me, maybe there would have been no possibility of me reaching America. I could have died on the way, but instead, Kṛṣṇa mercifully brought me here. Why Kṛṣṇa has brought me here, only He knows.

— Letter to Śrīpād Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, 4 October 1965

Your persistence during the struggling initial period:

“I was loitering here and there. So for one year there was no success, you see? And I was going to the shipping company: “When your next ship is coming to return back?” So the manager was telling, “Swāmījī, you are always inquiring, but you never go.” (all laugh) I said: “Yes, when I am too much frustrated, I come to here to ask you. Then again I go back: ‘Let me see two months more.’ It was going like that. Nobody was there with me.”

These circumstances, where it came so very close to almost block your mission, are very relishable because they are amazing demonstrations of Kṛṣṇa’s reciprocation to your ardent desire to serve your spiritual master’s order.

And later, when you had to fight cheaters, adverse politicians, communists, bureaucracy, deprogrammers, legal battles, poor health, criminals, ignorant followers, lack of funds and so many other adversities, it was only your undeterred determination that allowed the successful conclusion of your awesome achievements.

Well, one of the beneficiaries of these sacrifices of yours is now my humble and insignificant self. Knowing all these details of the struggles you had to undergo in order to reach me and save me, how can I not be full of gratitude and feel completely conquered by your love?

I am your eternal happy slave, Śrīla Prabhupāda, please allow me to serve you.

Your aspiring servant,

Citraka Dasa

Mahā Vadānya

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to our Gauḍīya Guru Varga and Śrī Śrī Rādhā Mādhava!

It has been many years since we have offered you our *puṣpāñjali* in Śrīla Prabhupāda Tributes book. We are thankful for the opportunity.

Some disciples choose to remember their past opportunities of your association and for me, there have been many. I was your room guard, running your *darśanas* in Vṛndāvana and Māyāpur, morning walks, private blessings you gave me in San Francisco, New York and Atlanta, being your instrument in the distribution of your books to universities and libraries, and hearing numerous lectures sitting at your lotus feet. But, I choose to focus on your *kṛpā* (mercy) that you have shown me and your continued presence felt in my life. As you commanded me and made me promise you in 1976 to daily chant “*Teṣāṁ satata yuktānām...*”—Bg. 10.10, I have done so for the past 44 years. In so doing you have made me realize that you are not only present in your *vāñī*, but you commune with your disciples via the heart if they have the *adhikāra* to do so with you. As you have always done, you give advice to your disciples who, from the core of their hearts ask for your guidance and want to remain *anugata*. So, we can always feel your presence and guidance if we surrender ourselves to your lotus feet. Your guidance can come in many forms and through many persons, if we open ourselves up to listening for it.

We felt your mercy when we were able to glorify you all over the USA in having millions of visitors hear your glories, take a *Tribute* magazine, and see your *mūrti* at Prabhupāda’s Palace of Gold in New Vrindaban, along with hundreds of news articles and TV shows broadcasting your glories. But later, during the 80s and 90s much there was much conflict in your movement. But, by your mercy I was kept aloof from many of these things, living as a *gṛhastha* somewhat independent of temple politics. But unsatisfied with what my intelligence saw was going on and feeling deprived of real *sādhu saṅgha*, I begged for your mercy to instruct me what you wanted me to do. And by your mercy, I also received *śikṣā* from your friend and senior Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava to deepen my *bhakti* understanding of knowing what is the *sādhya* of our *sādhana*, the

deep meanings of Śrīla Rupa Gosvāmī's "*anyābhilaṣitā śūnyam*", the chance to read many of the works of our Gauḍīya Guru Varga and the Gosvāmī's literatures under *anugata* and ultimately deepen my aspiration for Rādhā Dāsam as per Lord Caitanya's command. All by your continued blessings and *kṛpā*.

You are very active in your devotee's lives for those who want your association and have not turned their back to you for the propagation of their own *pratiṣṭhā*. So it is this active relationship that you connect with your disciples that is most sought after and desired and gives us encouragement to go forward in our *bhakti bhajan* and speak the truth.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the lion among preachers and a fearless preacher of the truth and in these times of global tyranny and darkness, we take refuge in your fearless preaching. In this mood, I came across a quote from your *sannyāsa* guru, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja that I felt that greatly applied to your glories. So I will share it:

You must swear to always preach the Truth. Bhagavān personally aids those who have the courage to speak the truth. We will not be slaves to a world veering down the path of falsehood. We were not born to indulge in sinful proclivities and falsehood. We will not encourage in the slightest the demonic education offered in the universities. We must stop the world's demise resulting from the forces of Kali. People who want what is truly auspicious for the world need to solemnly vow to do so. Those with such spirit earn the name "Mahā-Vadānya", 'great benefactors'. What they do is true altruism (*jīva doya*). Speak the truth fearlessly. For the sake of preaching the truth, Nityānanda Prabhu, Haridāsa Ṭhākura and other Vaiṣṇavas were assaulted by the inimical. Many great personalities have even had to give up their lives for the sake of truth. As such it will not become us to be fearful. Mahāprabhu's policy is to have mercy on all living beings and to preach, becoming humbler than a blade of grass and more tolerant than a tree. Preaching the glories of the Lord is true altruism.

The true purport of *ṭṛṇād-api-sunīcena* – feeling oneself

lower than a blade of grass, is *tabe lathi mara tara śire upare*, 'Kick them in the head.' These words are found in the writings of Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura. If you remember Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's words *krodha bhakta-dveśi jane*, may my anger be channelled toward those inimical to the devotees.

You are that *Mahā-Vadanya* of this world and the fearless lion of preachers!

Please grant us the intelligence to always remember your glories and instructions, to be an instrument in your hands to preach the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and to make progress in our insignificant attempt for *vraja-bhakti* and Rādhā Dāsam.

Your insignificant servant,

Mahabuddhi Dasa

O' Śrīla Prabhupāda,
In this world, devotion to the Supreme Lord is very rare.
To receive the fellowship of Vaiṣṇavas
Cannot even be imagined in dreams.
To honor *prasād*, which makes one mad after God,
Is simply unfathomable for most.
The sublime pleasure of living and serving in the holy *dhāma*
Is something the faithful only hope to achieve.
The nectar and intoxication of the holy names
Is an experience that has only been attainable by a select few.
And above all, to receive the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa
From the lips of a pure devotee
Is certainly the rarest and most glorious experience in this world.

O' Śrīla Prabhupāda
Your causeless compassion cannot be properly understood.
How is that in your old age you left your precious Vṛndāvana
And that single-handedly you flooded the world
With the rare gems of the *Bhāgavat Purāṇa*,
Spreading them far and wide, making them accessible to all?
O' Prabhupāda, your mercy and kindness are immeasurable.

O' Śrīla Prabhupāda
By your desire, New Vrindaban has entered into its sixtieth decade.
Most of the thousands of alternative communities
Which began in the 60's and 70's have fallen by the wayside.
But your devotees, who have endured so much,
Continue to remain steady and move forward.
And now, in this season of Covid-19,
In this time of economic upheaval and uncertainty
Your instructions for New Vrindaban,
And for the devotees worldwide, are more important than ever.

O' Śrīla Prabhupāda

You are the eternal guide and well-wisher of your devotees.

I beg that I may honor the Vaiṣṇavas properly,

And continue to have their association,

And that I may continue to serve you and please you

By serving the pilgrims who visit here,

And by always remaining at the lotus feet

of Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vṛndāvanacandra.

Please allow me to chant the holy names with great attention.

Kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā

In the nearness of you

Very dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my loving obeisances to your delicate lotus feet.
All glories to your precious self.

Here I am in spinning my head, trying to put together some sincere words of appreciation and gratitude that would convey my love for you.

How extraordinary is your story, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and how good it is to know that your disciples have endeavored to ensure that every syllable that came out of your mouth is now recorded and protected for posterity. So many things you have said and so many things you have done in just the few years you were with us. It's not easy to do true justice with the legacy you left; dozens of books, hundreds of temples, thousands of disciples and a map to restore the world through the *varṇāśrama* system. Only a spiritual giant can do this. It really is a challenge to begin to understand the dimension of your person. Among your many celebrated phrases, one in particular always moves me profoundly. You said: "If millions of distributed books, if hundreds of temples and thousands of devotees generate one single pure devotee, then I can consider my mission a success."

How fortunate a few of your disciples are to have met you personally. To watch your aristocratic manners, your face and your ancestral gaze; to be able to appreciate your raw and deep voice. Who could have understood who was in there? Who can today? By observing you, the person *Bhāgavatam*, the way you conducted yourself, we were able to have a hint of the character of the great personalities we read in the book *Bhāgavatam*.

The Western hemisphere has been influenced by Greece, Rome, and the religious traditions that arose from the geography of the Middle East. But the Vedic tradition, as old as life and as complete as Kṛṣṇa was introduced by Your Divine Grace only 50 years ago. So, there is hope. It is time to regenerate humanity and build a new civilization. This is now possible, thanks to the goodness of heart of Your Divine Grace. The glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme father, son, friend, and lover, as well as the emblem of pure devotional service, centered in your person, one day soon will be recognized

and revered massively.

Ebe jaśa ghuṣuk tribhuvana. Your fame is spread all over the three worlds.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I know how much I lack in this purification process you gave us. When the time comes for me to leave this world, wherever I may go, I implore to be allowed to serve in the nearness of you.

Your fallen servant,

Havi Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisance at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace and the great souls in the *paramparā*, whom you so devotedly and masterfully represent.

I remember the first *darśana* I was blessed to receive from you. We were greeting you at the airport in San Francisco in 1973. The devotees were wildly ecstatic as you emerged with utmost humility and were ceremonially garlanded.

Later that week you granted me *dīkṣā*, mercifully prompting me, “Loudly” as I gasped through my vows. Then you told me “Bhadra is a name for Kṛṣṇa meaning ‘the most gentle’ – and you are the maidservant of Kṛṣṇa – Jaya Bhadra!” You extended your golden hand holding my beads – it was all I could dare look at or even see through my tears, and I felt amazed that you were present within me also. Like Sukadeva Gosvāmī, you can enter into the heart of everyone.

With the ever-increasing flood of mercy you continually bestow upon me, it is most amazing that I am not a completely purified soul. This is testimony to the pivotal role of free will in the matter of bondage and emancipation. You often mention that Kṛṣṇa ‘does not touch on your tiny independence’. Something so tiny poses such a huge obstacle for those who do not use it for their own or anyone else’s benefit. You give every facility to make me love you and Kṛṣṇa. I am grateful yet ever lagging behind. I pray that you may never forsake me.

Your irresolute, yet hopeful daughter,

Jaya Bhadra Devi Dasi

The *Brāhmaṇas*' Wives

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

As Kṛṣṇa once dispatched his friends to beg from *smārta* priests, when you sailed West and needed help, you naturally turned East and asked some *paṇḍit* friends for men and funds to be released. Yet all of them ignored you and did not help in the least.

As Kṛṣṇa told his friends that beggars sometimes are rebuffed, you knew the Lord would send you help, and help came soon enough.

It came from low-class people who were fallen, blind and rough, and not from high-class *smārta*-types whose egos were too puffed.

As *brāhmaṇa* wives and not their husbands brought Lord Kṛṣṇa food, it was these fallen souls who caught your missionary mood. While *paṇḍits* criticized your flock as *muchis*, foul and crude, you knew the Pañca-tattva did not favor or exclude.

As all the *brāhmaṇas*' wives received much more than what they gave, so grateful were the youthful boys and girls that you had saved, they took your flood of love of God to Delhi and Bombay. And when your countrymen took note, they too drowned in its waves.

As all the *brāhmaṇas*' wives then chose to stay right where they were, for Kṛṣṇa, not their husbands, was the man that they preferred, we wanted you to stay with us, your youthful amateurs, for how could we survive without your form and just your words?

As Kṛṣṇa told the *brāhmaṇas*' wives to go back on their own to handle household duties in their haughty husbands' homes, you told us all to carry on the way you'd always shown. With Supersoul and guru in the heart, we're not alone.

As all the *brāhmaṇas*' wives agreed to do what Kṛṣṇa asked, returning to their homes, fulfilling ordinary tasks, like you, we move ahead despite the *smārtas* who, in fact, do nothing to assist, though they may claim to have our backs.

As all the *smārta brāhmaṇas* finally started to lament for disrespecting Him for whom their sacrifice was meant, dear Prabhupāda, you showed how spiritual intelligence surpasses smug and superficial *smārta* sentiments.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

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

I am feeling a great vacancy in your physical absence although your *vāṇī* is relieving me as I struggle in this burning existence.

To the degree one follows and applies the instructions of guru and Kṛṣṇa, to that degree one overcomes the miseries of material existence. Certainly, these times are very difficult for all, including the forgotten animals, though this is no surprise, as it is foretold in the Vedic literatures.

Kaler doṣa nidhe rājan, which you have so kindly presented to this dark world.

Had you not taken the risk of coming here we can hardly imagine the chaos that would be around us. Certainly, darker days are ahead as the Age progresses, and Mother Nature reacts to the grossly sinful and cheating activities she is burdened with.

However, you showed by example how serving Lord Kṛṣṇa is the remedy for all crisis, no matter it be social, economic, political or identity.

You proved that by serving Kṛṣṇa, wealth will come. "It's waiting to be used properly".

You proved that simple living sufficiently provides the basic necessities and protection for the citizenry which includes the animals.

You proved that a leader can be truthful and compassionate

You proved to all that we can only be truly happy as Kṛṣṇa's servants.

Certainly, only the empowered representative of Kṛṣṇa could have acted as you did.

As you are empowered by Lord Kṛṣṇa, your instructions have become empowered by the Lord, so that one who follows these instructions can be likewise empowered.

Your mission is quite clear. In the footsteps of the previous *ācāryas*, you are distributing this message to everyone with no condition. As you stated in the purport *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.28.50 that, "...the duty of the disciple is to take charge of the mission of the spiritual master and execute it properly."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please allow me to assist you in this mission which is serving Lord Caitanya's desire of liberating all the suffering

conditioned souls. I've wasted so much time surrendering to the material energy with nothing to show but misery, and then again you have proven by example.

Only by complete surrender to guru and Kṛṣṇa were you able to battle thru the multitude of challenges and give the world the perfect answer of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness, for it, to be a better place or at least an oasis in this time.

My prayer is that you please give me the shelter of your instructions as I know they will give me the power of remembrance that I am simply a servant of the servant of Guru and Kṛṣṇa.

*Aspiring to do something to please you,
Your servant,*

Naikatma Dasa

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

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

On this most auspicious occasion of your Appearance Day, please accept my humble obeisances!

Just a few months ago I was visiting Śrī Dhām Māyāpur for the Gaura Pūrṇimā festival, and I was overcome with emotion in seeing the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium. I was also struck by how sincere and dedicated the devotees are in glorifying and fulfilling your desires in spreading this Movement around the world. The mood was surcharged with happiness in chanting the holy names, dancing together and ecstatic feelings of love for Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *saṅkīrtana* movement!

When I visited your Samādhi I felt a sense of joy and fulfillment that inspired within me the desire to become more immersed in your mission. So I am now reading your books more than I used to and it has opened my eyes even more to your purity, your perfect knowledge and your total surrender to the mission of your Spiritual Master Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Mahārāja.

Who can understand the wonderful characteristics of a pure devotee? When we think of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are simply amazed and our hearts fill with respect and great affection for you! In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa proclaims who His most confidential servant is (18.68–69):

For one who explains this supreme secret to the devotees, pure devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me.

There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear.

On so many occasions you have told us that if we can educate people to surrender unto Kṛṣṇa that is the best service to Kṛṣṇa! You would quote Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu:

yāre dekha tāre kaha kṛṣṇa-upadeśa

You would encourage us to simply request everyone to chant the *mahā-mantra* and preach the message of *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. That one should also give up all nonsense engagements and surrender to Kṛṣṇa, that is the best service! Kṛṣṇa wants that all these bewildered living entities who have come here to enjoy material happiness be given information that this is not a good plan.

Therefore all the *śāstras*, Vedic literatures and great saintly persons like you Śrīla Prabhupāda, simply come to give us a hint how we can make spiritual advancement in life. They don't come to teach us how to become materially comfortable!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you also taught us that real progress means to make progress in religious concepts of life. You would say that our material comforts according to our bodies are already settled up and we cannot improve it, but we can improve our spiritual advancement in this life!

Śrīla Prabhupāda you are a real *mahātmā* because you are broad-minded and a great soul under the control of *daiva-prakṛti*. *Daivīm prakṛtim āśritāḥ*. You had no other motive but to render service to Kṛṣṇa. It was not about an exchange, or some gain, simply to serve Kṛṣṇa! This was exhibited by your tireless efforts and today the chanting of the holy names resounds throughout the whole world. Millions of your books have been distributed worldwide, and thousands are joining the Krishna Consciousness Movement through your transcendental purports, and many more will come in the future!

*bhavad-vidhā bhāgavatās
tīrtha-bhūtāḥ svayam vibho
tīrthī-kurvanti tīrthāni
svāntaḥ-sthena gadābhṛtā*

“My Lord, devotees like your good self are verily holy places personified because you carry the Personality of Godhead within your heart you turn all places into places of pilgrimage.” (SB 1.13.10)

On this auspicious day I pray for your causeless mercy on this fallen soul so that I may fix my mind, body, and soul on your instructions in serving your mission.

Your eternal servant,

Svavasa Dasa

Parividha Dasa

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

My greatest well-wisher Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Every year your fame is spread more and more on this planet.
Every year more and more souls, due to the reading your books have
started
to visit a temple, started chanting *japa*, and offering their food to the Lord.

A few days ago, a song from the early sixties popped up in my mind,
and the lyrics evolved into an offering to you.
If my attraction, affection and gratitude were as strong in the seventies,
as it is these days, I could have written it on the 15th of November in '77.

Why does the sun go on shining?
Why does the sea rush to shore?
Don't they know it's the end of the world?
Cause you're not here anymore

Why do the birds go on singing?
Why do the stars light the sky?
Don't they know it's the end of the world?
For why don't they fall from the sky?

I woke up this morning and wondered
Will I feel this sad evermore?
I can't understand, no, I can't understand
How life goes on as before

Why does my heart go on beating?
Why are there tears on my face?
The reason I cry: It's the end of the world
As we have lost Your Divine Grace

Your grateful disciple,

Parividha Dasa

The Gift of Love

This material life has been but a bleep in time, lost spirit soul don't you recognize me?

Free fear spirit soul from withstanding facing the light, your back to the sun is darkness!!!

Speak to us of friendship,

You are our needs answered

You are our field which we sow with love and reap the benefits with gratitude

I come to you with spiritual hunger, and I seek for the Absolute Truth

For self is a sea boundless and measureless.

I have found the truth

I have met the soul walking upon my path

The soul unfolds itself, like a lotus of countless petals

The teacher walks in the temple among his followers,

Giving us wisdom, faith and his lovingness.

Teaching us how to understand our own mind.

My mind tells me false ideas about myself, But none of it is truth, except for the mercy of your unconditional self.

Your purity is difficult to understand for this fallen soul, but by your kind grace you take me along, come on spirit soul!

When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find Śrīla Prabhupāda, it is only that which has given you sorrow that he is giving you joy.

My feet dance upon this earth to offer it all to you, understanding the process is that which is joyfully performed.

You can loosen the strings of a sitar, but who shall command the peacock not to sing?

And when you are silent my heart ceases.

You see all my thoughts, all desires, and the joy that is unclaimed.

For what I love in you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is clearer in your absence,

as the mountain to the climber is clearer from the plain.

You are my spiritual master, so I want to give you my best.
I seek you always with hours to live, remembering the sweetness of
our friendship your laughter and tears.
For in the dew of little things, the heart finds its morning and is
refreshed.

And the buds of your tomorrow shall blossom in my heart
And your fragrance shall be my breath,
And together we shall rejoice in the holy name to take us home.
And let there be in the song a remembrance of your lotus feet.
How we sang and danced together in unison to the beat.

My heart swells with love and it overflows with thoughts of you.
And with a blink of an eye my heart fills dry, like a desert sky
Both push me on my journey to be with you.
Waiting again for the morning dew.

The deeper that separation carves into your being, the more joy you
can contain.

Joy and separation are inseparable.
Together they come when you sit alone.
You are suspended like scales between joy and separation.
When you feel separation look again in your heart, and you shall
see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your
delight.

Only then shall you know that the elite and the fallen, are but one
man standing in twilight between the night of his fallen-self and
the day of his blissful, eternal self.
And that the cornerstone of the temple, is not higher than the
lowest stone in its foundation.

Let today embrace the past with remembrance, and the future with
longing to serve your lotus feet.

*Your mercy flows through me
Your servant and daughter,*

Ujjala Devi Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Your Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda!

Once again, I have the good fortune to offer some glorification and expression of gratitude to you on this most auspicious day of the anniversary of your appearance in this material world. I am feeling unqualified to properly perform this service, so like Dhruva Mahārāja who needed the touch of Lord Viṣṇu's conch shell or Kholāvecā Śrīdhara, who needed the blessings of Lord Caitanya to offer prayers of glorification, I need your mercy to say anything of value you might be pleased with. I pray for your mercy and permission to try and proceed.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, when we glorify you on your Vyāsa-pūjā day, we focus on you and the unparalleled service to your Guru Mahārāja His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda and Śrī Śrī Gaura Nītāi. With heartfelt gratitude, I also meditate on and try to express how it was you who first approached me through your purports in the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and showed me the path of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Before hearing your devotional ecstasies of glorification of the Lord and the process of *bhakti*, I was a blind ignorant fool simply suffering while trying to enjoy the pleasures of animal life.

Due to my stubborn and causeless unwillingness to fully surrender body, mind and words to your instructions, I am still an ignorant fool, but I am not blind. You have opened my eyes sufficiently for me to realize I have to fully surrender! I am confident this will happen either voluntarily or by force by the arrangement of the Lord to assist you in reclaiming this conditioned soul. By your grace, I am seeing more and more how everything that happens in my life is a manifestation of your desire to give me pure devotional service.

In this regard, on this day, we not only glorify you personally but also glorify Guru Tattva which is the principle that everyone and everything that help us is a manifestation of Ādi Guru, Lord Balarāma and Lord Nityānanda.

Uddhava praises Lord Kṛṣṇa by saying:

Even if endowed with the lifetime of Lord Brahmā,

great sages cannot properly express their gratitude for you, because you appeared both as Caitya-Guru internally and externally as the spiritual master to deliver the conditioned living entities.

I often meditate on and try to realize your guru's words when he said:

If I did not see my spiritual master manifest in everyone and everything, I would feel completely bereft and without shelter in this world.

Coming to understand this more, I offer respects, and I listen to you through so many devotees and so many experiences in my life. You shared with us that you never felt alone, that your spiritual master was always with you in his instructions.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I want to follow in your footsteps and become a surrendered disciple of yours. I want to chant the names of the Lord purely. I want to be an instrument in your hands to share with others your message of hope, the teachings of Lord Caitanya and Lord Kṛṣṇa. I understand the price for such gifts: the abandoning of selfish desires for sense gratification, the desires for profit, distinction and adoration. Such desires are the cause of my suffering and the cause of again taking birth and dying in this material world. I never want to do that again in ignorance.

By your grace, I understand I cannot accomplish this on my own. I need your mercy in the form of your instructions and service. The positive engagement of devotional service is the simple and perfect process for replacing *māyā* with Kṛṣṇa. I have faith and confidence that the impossible can be done if I completely and unreservedly give this life to you and your mission.

I pray and I beg on this day for your blessings, the blessings of Śrīla Akiñcana Kṛṣṇa dāsa Bābājī, whose disappearance anniversary is today, the blessings of the previous *ācāryas*, the blessings of the Pañca-tattva, Prahāda Mahārāja and Lord Nṛsimha, the blessings of Śrī Dhām Māyāpur, the blessings of the holy names, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and Bhakti Devi, the blessings of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Her maidservants, and last but not least the blessings of my godbrothers and godsisters and all the members and friends of your ISKCON movement.

Please hear my prayer and give me the strength to stand firm on this commitment of full surrender in devotional service to you and the Lord. I am patiently waiting and endeavouring to accept whatever mercy you give.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for everything!

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

Your lowly and insignificant disciple,

Rajendranandana Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

It's been a little over 47 years since I decided at last that trying to practice *bhakti-yoga* on my own was hopeless—that I needed the encouragement, shelter, and spiritual strength that only a temple and ashram filled with Lord Kṛṣṇa's devotees could provide. So I gave up my little apartment, job, life savings, and car and joined the legendary Henry St. temple in Brooklyn on March 27, 1973. Nine days later you visited the temple.

I was way too wet behind the ears to appreciate at the time my extraordinary good fortune of getting your *darśana* and hearing you personally give class so soon after joining the temple. But I appreciate it now. I still remember your class on one of Queen Kuntī's prayers (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.8.21):

*kṛṣṇāya vāsudevāya
devakī-nandanāya ca
nanda-gopa-kumārāya
govindāya namo namaḥ*

“Let me therefore offer my respectful obeisances unto the Lord, who has become the son of Vasudeva, the pleasure of Devakī, the boy of Nanda and the other cowherd men of Vṛndāvana, and the enlivener of the cows and the senses.” “*Govindāya namo namaḥ*” we all chanted with you—as Govinda and His consort Rādhā gazed lovingly at you, Their dearest devotee, from the altar.

In the class you said, “[It] is the duty of every *kṛṣṇa-bhakta* to try to enlighten everyone to Krishna Consciousness.” For me, fulfilling this duty came in the form of hours of daily *harināma-saṅkīrtana* in Manhattan and engagement at ISKCON Press (soon renamed the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust) as a proofreader of your books.

After a year or so as a proofreader I became an editor for *BTG* magazine, then came a stint at editing some chapters in the Fifth Canto and the *Antya-līlā* for the famous “17-books-in-two-months marathon” in LA, then more *BTG* work and a year at the BI in Atlanta and Philadelphia, back to *BTG* in New York, down to Miami to help complete your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* project, and since 1989 here in San Diego for varieties of BBT work.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, my heart is filled with gratitude for all you've given me—a lifetime of service worshipping your words and words following yours, an opportunity to associate with many of your sincerest followers, the facility to follow the full morning program in or near a temple practically every day of my devotional life, *prasādam*, pilgrimages to India, and in general all the devotional opulences of ISKCON.

You risked your life to give me and millions of others the absolute truth about the Absolute Truth, and to give us the practical means for transforming our lives from sinful to sinless through the process of *bhakti* taught by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and his followers. There can be no greater sacrifice than what you undertook for our sake, and therefore we owe you an unrepayable debt. Please bless me so that I can dedicate the remainder of this life to your service, as well as all future lives.

O Prabhupāda, on this great day
When you appeared, just like a ray
Of Kṛṣṇa's vast effulgence bright,
To give this blind world back its sight,

We thank you from the bottom of
Our heart, and pray with deepest love
That we may serve your lotus feet
In every circumstance we meet.

As years go by and books go out,
We see what life is all about:
To serve your mission, and our Lord's,
By spreading wide your sacred words.

As well you want us all to strive
To let those words direct our lives.
This safest path will lead us Home,
No more in *māyā's* realm to roam.

Your deeply thankful servant,

Draviḍa 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 humble obeisances,

As a limousine driver, I was given the blessing of driving you when you visited your Paris Isvara and New Māyāpur *dhāmas*. Onboard the Mercedes-Benz limo, you asked Bhagavan Prabhu why such a luxurious car, because you did not want to waste Kṛṣṇa's money. He explained that my boss, the owner of the limo, after hearing Harivilas Prabhu glorifying you, said "for such a servant of the Lord, use the car as long as required and just pay for petrol." Looking in the mirror I heard you saying: "Very good, very good."

Another time in 1977, I received another blessing from your disciples. In your Calcutta ISKCON temple I served as your *chowkidar* (guard). Your personal servant, Bhavananda Prabhu, had gone to the kitchen for he was serving your lunch. I was sitting alone outside, guarding your room, when I heard the sound of your bell requesting service. I thought, 'Here is my chance', and entered the room offering my prostrated obeisances. Sitting on the floor, your elbow resting on a small table, you asked: "Please carry me to the bathroom!" Then I helped your aged body to stand up, and arm-in-arm we walked the few steps to the sink. You rinsed your hand, and before going to pass water, you told me, "Go back to the room and see that they don't take away my plate, because I haven't finished."

Then the servant returned, and to this day I am slowly realising the immense value of a second's association with a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa! Please Śrīla Prabhupāda, I beg your forgiveness for all my offences and misbehavior, and my only hope today is to become the servant of the servant of your devotees.

Once in Māyāpur, India, I joined Acyutananda Swami and went to Asansol, West Bengal, where we distributed books in the street of that industrial city to please Your Divine Grace. After a few weeks, returning to Māyāpur, I joined the devotees to accompany you on your way downstairs, as you did every morning to greet the Deities

of Rādhā-Madhava and Pañca-tattva. Seeing you accompanied by many Vaiṣṇavas chanting your glories, prostrating my self halfway down the staircase I silently thought, “My dear Kṛṣṇa within my heart, and you Śrīla Prabhupāda, to both of you I offer this *saṅkīrtana* performed with my godbrothers.” Your Divine Grace stopped a few seconds till I raised my head, and said “*Jaya*”. The Lord in the heart and you are one. All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Nitāi Gaur Haribol!

Your fallen servant,

Pranesvara Dasa

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnī 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 Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Here are twenty-six reasons why we can't fail you:

We can't fail you because you are most dear to Kṛṣṇa.

We can't fail you because you are Śrīmatī Rādhārāṅī's envoy.

We can't fail you because you are Nitāi-Gaurāṅga's mercy incarnate.

We can't fail you because you are the pride and joy of the previous *ācāryas*.

We can't fail you because you underwent so many tribulations just to save us.

We can't fail you because nobody ever loved us as you did.

We can't fail you because you created the family of ISKCON.

We can't fail you because your instructions are impeccable.

We can't fail you because your adorable disarming smile conquered us.

We can't fail you because you tolerated so much nonsense.

We can't fail you because you turned
us from failures to *sādhakas*.

We can't fail you because you are Prabhupāda.

We can't fail you because you devastated our foolish pride.

We can't fail you because you annihilated
impersonalism and voidism.

We can't fail you because you are the person *bhāgavata*.

We can't fail you because it would be so stupid to do so.

We can't fail you because your deep
affection left us no way out.

We can't fail you because you cried to Kṛṣṇa for us.

We can't fail you because you told us you depended on us.

We can't fail you because if we do, remorse will kill us.

We can't fail you because we want to see you again.

We can't fail you because without you there is only void.

We can't fail you because you are carefully watching us.

We can't fail you because if we do, Lord
Nityānanda will get mad at us.

We can't fail you because it would displease
so many wonderful devotees.

And finally, we can't fail you because by some inconceivable fortune
we have developed love for you.

Your humble servant,
Madhusevita Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances

Forgive my offences

Thank you for rescuing me

As rascal as I am I still participate daily in *sādhana*

Every day I read your books and distribute them

And every single time I do I find guidance and shelter in your
“personal ecstatic” purports

Thank you.

“Forgotten Kṛṣṇa

we fallen souls

Paying most heavy

the illusions toll

Darkness around

all distress

The only hope

Your Divine Grace.

That says it all “The Only Hope”

You wrote in your poetry (*Shower of Divine Compassion*)

Your explicit order for us:

everyone should work together

to enact the preaching mission

while remaining immersed in your instructions.

Those who serve the instructions of the spiritual master
actually worship him.

In serving the spiritual master’s instructions

the disciples are empowered by his transcendental
sound vibration

Our spiritual master has commanded us to go out and preach

All of us should unite in purpose and flood the lands with waves
of Kṛṣṇa conscious preaching

crossing oceans, covering the world

penetrating the universal shell

Oh please, make a pledge this very day

to give up all petty fault finding

Do not protest!

Just join together and preach.”
Thank you
Your words are always there for us we simply have to hear
The disciple has an eternal debt to his spiritual master that can
never be repaid
However a sincere *bhakta* tries every day his level best
Thank you for allowing me to stay on your *sañkīrtana* party
I promise I’ll try and be a better disciple

*sarva-vaiṣṇavera pā’ye kari namaskāra
ithe aparādha kichu nahuka āmāra*

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your rascal servant,

Divyanga Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet.

I came to meet you as a young adult, still very ignorant of the ways of life and in the process of learning about the nature of this world. Even though at that time I had what is called an “advanced education,” the education I received from you has been the greatest and most significant education that anyone could receive. Not only about the practical steps of navigating this world, but an education that has given me a worldview of not just the big picture, but the biggest picture of all! viz., universes emanating from the pores of Mahā-Viṣṇu and the entire material and spiritual worlds – and how it all works in the most wondrous manner by Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s inconceivable energies!

Still, book learning and realization are two different things, and over the course of time my life’s experiences would give further lessons – and many realizations – of the knowledge learned earlier from you.

Many of those realizations came as a result of devotional activity and both selfish and selfless service, while others have come as a result of unpleasant, difficult and sometimes even disgusting experiences. I write this not just for myself, but speaking for many of your sincere followers.

Realizing the very limited extent of what we can do as individual living beings constrained by our *guṇa* and *karma*.

Realizing that if we allow ourselves to be used as instruments in your service that amazing miracles can be accomplished.

Realizing how *māyā* stands at the ready to “serve us” with illusion the instant that we give her an opportunity.

And also realizing that you and Śrī Kṛṣṇa also stand ready to protect us if we will remember your instructions, and immediately seek your shelter from *māyā*.

Realizing that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is indeed present in His *arcā vighraha* and does reciprocate with the devotees who serve Him with love, and that such love is developed by serving Him in that form.

Realizing that a true and advanced devotee is to be recognized by criteria other than dress, position, title or number of followers.

Realizing that advancement in devotional service is not merely a matter of leading a good *kīrtana*, giving a good class, or performing

some devotional service by which we receive recognition and approval of other Vaiṣṇavas.

Realizing that chanting of the *mahā-mantra* indeed raises our consciousness, freeing us from our earlier disgusting habits.

Realizing that vox populi is not the criteria of a bona fide guru.

Realizing that a bona fide guru is servant, not an enjoyer.

Realizing that there are many varieties of people in this world and that everybody is not like us, that projecting our understanding and motivations onto others is a big mistake.

Realizing that there are many cruel, and even demonic people in this world, and even gaining this realization through personal experiences with them.

Realizing by our own lived experiences, not reading about them in some book, that this world is indeed controlled by the demonic.

Realizing, to our horror, that your statements about *rākṣasas* as beings who find pleasure in eating children and drinking their blood are shockingly true! And that such “people” are present, well known, and even adored by some as “entertainers” or “political elite.”

Realizing that the theories we have read over the years, that this world is controlled by demons who think nothing of killing thousand and even millions of people to achieve their aims, are indeed real, and that the depths of their depravity is beyond the comprehension of any normal human being.

Realizing that these demons, are very much like the Hiranyakasipu we have learned about from you, and their goal, like Hiranyakaśipu, is total control over every human being and living thing in this world, and that they will lie, cheat, terrorize and kill the populace, and do anything whatsoever to achieve that control.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, through our life’s experiences your teachings have come to life and given us a perspective from which we have been able to understand what is what, and which is which. And by those realizations we have become firmly established in the truth and realized these statements Śrī Kṛṣṇa has given in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.21–23): “established thus, one never departs from the truth, and upon gaining this he thinks there is no greater gain. Being situated in such a position, one is never shaken, even in the midst of the greatest difficulty. This indeed is actual freedom from all miseries arising from material contact.”

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, we pray that we will have yet more years in this world through which we may have many more wonderful

realizations, especially including the following:

How, by spreading the holy names around,
the entire world will become happy.

How by calling for Kṛṣṇa's shelter in His holy
names we will see how He effortlessly frustrates
and defeats the demonic world controllers.

How everyone in this world will have the opportunity
to read your original, unadulterated books, and by
doing so recognize you as the savior of this world, as
Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *senāpati bhakta*, and worship you as such.

And how it will be written in future chapters of
the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* how Bhaktivedanta Swami
Prabhupāda engaged his army of less-than-human
monkeys, to defeat the powerful demons of Kali-yuga.

Śrīla Prabhupāda I fall at your feet again and again to thank you
for a most wonderful life of learning and realization in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's
devotional service, and I pray that you will bless me with the
opportunity to continue to act as your servant in any manner
possible, life-after-life.

Please be kind and grant me this request.

*Always and everywhere I aspire to be your servant,
and the servant of your true servants,*

Dhanesvara Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

Thank you for accepting me as your disciple. I want to submit a poem I wrote. It is a subjective piece of writing, free writing. It is more an expression of my heart than an expression of my head. Usually I am more within my head than within my heart, but as the heart is the seat of the soul, I think this free writing is a more honest expression of my true intention. I offer my *daṇḍavat praṇāma* to your divine lotus feet, and pray for forgiveness for all the negligence and offences I may have committed to your lotus feet. I offer my humble obeisances first to you, then to your disciples, then to your grand disciples. ISKCON is a wonderful society, I am feeling grateful for being allowed to play an insignificant role in your mission.

Your servant,

Aristaha Dasa

O Prabhupāda, you came to us
To give us spiritual salvation
In the form of love of Kṛṣṇa
Not impersonal liberation

We are already impersonal
In our dealings with the Lord
And also among each other
Forgetting that Kṛṣṇa is our Mother

Seed-giving Father and source of everything
Without Him we cannot exist for a single moment
This is the world where forgetfulness is the essence
Thinking of everything except the Lord's eternal presence

I am grateful, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that you came
The way you did in great humility with grace
Teaching us the Vedic knowledge
A powerful mace

In the hands of someone like you
Completely pure with unadulterated devotion
Reaching down to the most unfortunate
Who are suffering in illusion suffering in confusion

I am a fallen soul
Born in this dark painful Age
But I was praying in a helpless way
And you descended from above a swan-like sage

I tried and failed so many times
But someone (you) picked me up
And placed me in the best association
Of saintly devotees giving me the priceless cup

To drink the transcendent knowledge
Flowing from your heart
Of transcendental sound vibrations
A loving force a faithful promise to never leave depart

From your lotus feet
Pinkish cool and soft and sweet
Creating an umbrella
Under whose shelter all devotees can lovingly meet

I am like a barking dog a restless child
Who needs a good forgiving master just like you
I easily go astray what shall I say?
What shall I do? Your answer is please

Stay in the association of devotees
And try to chant the holy name
Perform your assigned service
And work to increase Kṛṣṇa's fame

It is all your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda
From the beginning to the end
I make unlimited offences
But you are the one selected who the sinful can defend

You are like the moon
A shining star
A light to guide those wayward souls
From near and from far

Who are in illusion confined in confusion
Who have forgotten the Supreme Lord
Please cut their ignorance to pieces
With *Bhagavad-gītā's* illuminating sword

Thank you, dear spiritual master
A thousand times I seek your mercy bowing down
Please forgive my many offences
Your kindness and compassion you have shown

To one who was completely lost
Whose heart was bitten by the atheist frost
Who was born in darkness and in pain
Still devotional service is our undying gain

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, please
Be kind to us who are your servants
We have nobody else like you
Please accept us, please tell us what to do.

My dear Spiritual Master,

I beg the privilege of offering obeisances at your lotus feet, although I am not actually worthy of doing so.

My attraction to you first came in the form of reading your powerful words. By reading only a few chapters of *Kṛṣṇa Book*, I decided to dedicate the rest of my life to you and your mission. Since 1973 I have tried to obey your instructions, although I have failed and fallen too many times to count. However, your books, and your sound vibration through your *bhajans* and *kirtanas*, has kept me somehow or other connected to your great ISKCON Movement. *Kṛṣṇa Book* is still my favorite, and I read and re-read it so many times.

I am asked again and again to visit India, but because of my fragile health condition it is too risky for me to do so. But when I read your *Kṛṣṇa Book* I feel I am in the spiritual world, what to speak of India.

It is better I remain on the battlefield of preaching. I have learned from you that preaching is the best service, and I have realized that steadily since 1994. I once asked you in 1975, "What pleases you the most?" to which you replied, "If you love Kṛṣṇa". I have taken that as your instruction to me as my heart and soul. In my preaching I have tried my best to take your words and explain them in my own way. I have found that if I just stick to your teachings, your books, your message, then I am protected and empowered. I can never repay what you have done for me, as you saved me from going to hell. That is a debt that can never be repaid. But I can attempt to repay by preaching and gradually developing my love for Kṛṣṇa. Somehow or other, by your grace I have some attraction for Kṛṣṇa's name, fame, form and pastimes. I still have a few more years, hopefully, to preach and so I will continue just as I have been doing now for so many years. There is no need to change anything, I just have to repeat your message. I want that one day you will appear to me in a dream and affirm that you are pleased by my menial service. Until then I will never give up learning how to love Kṛṣṇa as taught by you ONLY!

Your insignificant servant,

Nirantara Dasa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Somehow I have been given a small fraction of your limitless mercy and have been allowed to do some service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gokulānanda and Their sincere servants at New Gokul *dham*, Bhaktivedanta Manor. I remain eternally grateful for whatever service you ask of me.

As I write this offering in early May, the world has been turned upside down. People around the world are reflecting on their own mortality as the coronavirus threatens to disrupt the status quo in health, economics, and geopolitical posturing. Potentially this can be beneficial for your ISKCON society and the *saṅkīrtana* movement. Undoubtedly, there will be many changes in the coming year that will challenge people to re-evaluate their philosophical world view. ISKCON properly situated will help educate them to the truth of *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement.

I recently read in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.8.31:

Since the creation of the material world, there have been two kinds of men—the *devas* and the *asuras*. The *devas* are always faithful to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, whereas the *asuras* are always atheists who defy the supremacy of the Lord. At the present moment, throughout the entire world, the atheists are extremely numerous. They are trying to prove that there is no God and that everything takes place due to combinations and permutations of material elements. Thus the material world is becoming more and more godless, and consequently everything is in a disturbed condition. If this continues, the Supreme Personality of Godhead will certainly take action, as He did in the case of Hiranyakaśipu. Within a second, Hiranyakaśipu and his followers were destroyed, and similarly if this godless civilization continues, it will be destroyed in a second, simply by the movement of one finger of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The demons should therefore be careful and curtail their godless civilization. They should take advantage of

the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and become faithful to the Supreme Personality of Godhead; otherwise they are doomed. As Hiraṇyakaśipu was killed in a second, the godless civilization can be destroyed at any moment.

These words have special relevance now as people are challenged with the world pandemic. No one knows how long this situation will continue. Even in our devotional communities devotees are challenging the status quo and re-evaluating how to organize our preaching vision so it will be most effective in these difficult times.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, in your last months with us you expressed some transcendental lamentation. You said that 50% of your mission was complete and 50% was incomplete. Here in London there is great opportunity to establish *Daiva Varṇāśrama* in a practical manner. I foresee how your vision to unite the Sikhs (*kṣatriyas*) with the devotees (*brāhmaṇas*) can be practically applied. There is immense scope for preaching to the followers of Guru Nanak and have them understand you as a continuation of the Guru Granth Sahib. Lord Caitanya and Guru Nanak had mutual love and respect for one another, similar to your loving relationship with Yogi Bhajan in the 1970s. By your mercy, I aspire to assist you in developing this preaching potential. On the auspicious anniversary day of your appearance, I beg for your benediction that the large Sikh community in London can have a more meaningful and symbiotic relationship with ISKCON. My greatest happiness and blessing will be in assisting you to broaden the non-sectarian philosophy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and create an auspicious atmosphere that allows more and more people to appreciate your transcendental genius. With the clarity of 20-20 vision, I pray that this year becomes a turning point so that future generations of devotees will understand how in 2020 important reforms and changes manifested to make your mission 100% complete.

*This sinful and unfortunate disciple
prays for your eternal mercy and guidance,*

Ramanatha sukha Dasa

Beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your all auspicious lotus feet. Despite my obvious lack of qualification, let me try to write some sincere words of appreciation of Your Divine Grace. Bearing the ocean of mercy in your heart overflowing with compassion, you worked tirelessly to save all conditioned souls from the cycle of birth and death in this miserable material world. In spite of having to oversee the development of a fast-expanding worldwide Movement, you had time for everyone, so-called big personalities as well as so-called insignificant ones, and even trees and bugs, we have heard. With so much hard work and facing whatever danger and difficulties which came up, you gave all of mankind the knowledge required to get out of this material world and develop love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Such a huge task accomplished, you gave all the credit to your spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. The whole world is indebted to you. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the embodiment of Lord Nityānanda's mercy.

Your insignificant servant,

Indriya Damana Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances always and in particular on this occasion of your 2020 Vyāsa-pūjā day! All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am a fruitive servant. When I chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and remember the Lord, it is more like a matter of thanksgiving. Many countries, especially the USA, have thanksgiving days. Time and again I find myself in a situation where Lord Kṛṣṇa graces me with unexpected, incredible and even unimaginable benedictions. Thus I feel His hand in my life, remember Him and indeed become ecstatic and chant. It is no wonder that you stated that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the nicest boss. As always, your statement is fully justified!

I also listen to such ecstatic *kīrtanas* such on YouTube such as “*Final day of parikrama*” by your talented disciple H.G. Bada Haridāsa Prabhu. As you have taught us, this is the *saṅkīrtana* sacrifice (*yajña*) in full swing, the specific Kali-yuga *dharma*. You say that *kīrtana* must be melodious. We may say that H.G. Bada Haridāsa Prabhu’s *kīrtanas* are not only melodious but also sweet and pleasing to the heart. We have Beethoven’s “*Ode to Joy*” and anthem of the European Union. But here, especially towards the end, we have the march of liberation and triumph over the fourfold material miseries, birth, death, old age and disease. This is true religion, as opposed to “pretentious religion”, (Cc. Ādi 1.91). All glories to your disciple H.G. Bada Haridāsa Prabhu, among many, many others, a worthy representative of yours!

As far as being your dancing elephants, I feel most like a dancing elephant when bouncing around on a nice wooden floor at the sounds of *kīrtanas* led by the like of H.H. Indradyumna Swami, H.H. B. B. Govinda Mahārāja, H.H. Kadamba Kānana Mahārāja, H.G. Bada Haridāsa Prabhu, H.G. Mādhava Prabhu, H.G. Śrī Prahlāda Prabhu and others. In all fairness, I should also add H.G. Jāhnavī Jivana Devi Dasi to this brief list, who is an excellent, graceful and enthusing singer as well. Additionally, some of these personalities add an excellent, healthy and welcome dose of Kṛṣṇa conscious humour to their performances. Mostly I am referring to the now-famous annual Sacred Sound *kīrtana* retreat at ISKCON New Govardhana, in Murwillumbah, northern New South Wales,

Australia, headed by the expert Ajita Prabhu. This is its fifth year. Unfortunately, due to the coronavirus epidemic, the news of the cancellation of the 2020 edition has just arrived (mid-March 2020). There is a similar annual Sādhu Sanga retreat event in Boone, North Carolina, USA, at an elevation of 1016 metres. This elevation reminds us of Mahāmuni Vyāsadeva and the Himalayas. We know from your trip to St. Moritz, Switzerland in 1973 (elevation 1822 m), the year of my joining your ISKCON for good in Paris, France, that you do not like to visit such cold places. To you, it is St. Hellish. Prabhupāda Lila, Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami SPL 7-9 Zurich and New York.

This dancing – and the entire festival indeed – must be happening under the influence of the internal *hlādinī-śakti*, otherwise why would I feel inclined to dance with my old material body? I have noted this with others as well. The late Mahavishnu Goswami from India used to appear like a frail old man, but as soon as he absorbed himself in *śravaṇam*, *kīrtanam*, *smaraṇam* *viṣṇoḥ*, Mahārāja would become very much alive, and he would glow.

Sometimes of course, Lord Kṛṣṇa just lets me dangle as well. But that is also His kind mercy for my ultimate benefit. I have no doubt about it. I accept it as a form of brainstorming.

With your spiritual genius, you have coined the abundantly used expression “your ever well-wisher” from the Sanskrit word *suhṛdam*.

The Supreme Lord is also described as *suhṛdam* (“ever well-wisher”). The Supreme Lord is always a well-wisher, just like a father or mother. Despite all the offences of a son, the father and mother are always the son’s well-wisher. — SB 4.28.25

Similarly, you have coined the expression “The living entity is part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa.” I still do not understand why you are using the expression “part and parcel” and where it comes from. As you are using two different words, there must be two different meanings and there must be some distinction, even though superficially it may seem that “part” and “parcel” are the same. Or is it simply to be considered an idiom like in many other cases of literature?

By meditating on your smile one actually becomes happy and smiley. This is because Guru’s pictures are not different from Guru himself, and one can almost see the muscles of your friendly transcendental face moving and twitching. You are so kind, Śrīla Prabhupāda! You are an ocean of kindness!

śrī-guru karuṇā-sindhu, adhama janāra bandhu, lokanāth lokera jīvana,

Our spiritual master is the ocean of mercy, the friend of the poor and the Lord and Master of the devotees.—Śrī Guru Vandanā, in the *Prema-bhakti-candrikā* by His Divine Grace Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.4.12 describes your personality very nicely:

Those who are devoted to the cause of the Personality of Godhead live only for the welfare, development and happiness of others. They do not live for any selfish interest. So even though the Emperor [Parīkṣit] was free from all attachment to worldly possessions, how could he give up his mortal body, which was the shelter for others?

It has become more difficult to distinguish reality from illusion and the cheater from the well-wishing and honest person. The distinctions between the two have become hazier. At the least seemingly wrong or unconventional move, friends and relatives clamour “Watch out scam, scam, scam!” There has been, however, an ashram break-in and theft, a tax office impersonator, and an attempt to steal bank account details, to name three crimes only since my last offering. People are becoming paranoid in their relationships with one another. This is a sign of the times. Let us, therefore, follow your advice: Why be satisfied with any less quality of love than the love directed toward the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa?

Because of his development of transcendental attachment for the Supreme Lord, a surrendered soul feels the presence of his beloved everywhere, and all his senses are engaged in the loving service of the Lord. His eyes are engaged in seeing the beautiful couple Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa sitting on a decorated throne beneath a desire tree in the transcendental land of Vṛndāvana. His nose is engaged in smelling the spiritual aroma of the lotus feet of the Lord. Similarly, his ears are engaged in hearing messages from Vaikuṅṭha, and his hands embrace the lotus feet of the Lord and His associates. Thus the Lord is manifested to a pure devotee from within and without. This is one of the mysteries of the devotional relationship in which a devotee and the Lord are bound by a tie of spontaneous love. To achieve this love should be the goal of life for every

living being. — *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Adī-līlā 1.55, purport.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving us the matchless gift, the *yuga* dharma, strictly according to the rules of the *paramparā* system. You have not added or subtracted anything.

What a mighty gift! What a jewel of jewels! What a crown jewel! We only have to pray to develop the desire, perception and ability to appreciate your gift at its proper value and full potential. You have delineated the straight path back home, Back to Godhead for the next 10,000 years of human civilisation on planet earth.

Here is the evidence!

*bhaktyā mām abhijānāti
yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ
tato mām tattvato jñātvā
viśate tad-anantaram*

— *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, 18.55

“One can understand Me as I am, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, only by devotional service. And when one is in full consciousness of Me by such devotion, he can enter into the kingdom of God.”

(BTW we note that this current rendition of BGAI 18.55 seems undoubtedly improved in comparison to the previous version. In the word for word of both versions, we clearly find “*yaḥ ca smi*” or “as I am.” The passage from the third person to the first, nice and personal, is therefore fully justified. One may, however, ask where in the Sanskrit does “only” come from?)

You are not a cheap compromiser! Neither are you a foolish deviator! And most of all are you not a rascal cheater! All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

YOU ARE THE BEST! And you will always reside in the innermost chambers of our hearts. And our hearts will always remain at your holy lotus feet, ready to serve your instructions within our respective capacities.

In addition and in my humble opinion, we would do better to first become completely competent and conversant in the study and realisation of your main three works, that is *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and your presentation of the glorious *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* before moving to non-Prabhupāda books. That task, it seems to me, is the occupation of a lifetime. And just as at the time

of incorporation of ISKCON, you insisted on Krishna Consciousness instead of God consciousness, we, your followers, if only as a marketing ploy, ought to insist on *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* when it comes to *Bhagavad-gītā*. Even though we may hold *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* in our hands, it seems to me that it is protected by some sort of veil, which dissipates under certain circumstances. This principle applies to all aspects of devotional service. This veil robs us of “*ruci*”, the taste of attraction and understanding of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

When one is freed from all unwanted contamination, he advances with firm faith. When firm faith in devotional service awakens, a taste for hearing and chanting also awakens. After taste is awakened, a deep attachment arises, and from that attachment the seed of love for Kṛṣṇa grows in the heart. When that ecstatic emotional stage intensifies, it is called love of Godhead. Such love is life’s ultimate goal and the reservoir of all pleasure. In the beginning there must be faith. Then one becomes interested in associating with pure devotees. Thereafter one is initiated by the spiritual master and executes the regulative principles under his orders. Thus one is freed from all unwanted habits and becomes firmly fixed in devotional service. Thereafter, one develops taste and attachment. This is the way of *sādhana-bhakti*, the execution of devotional service according to the regulative principles. Gradually emotions intensify, and finally there is an awakening of love. This is the gradual development of love of Godhead for the devotee interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. — *CC Madhya* 23. 11-15.

Furthermore, even though it is a unique and unavailable position to be your *dīkṣā* disciples, it ill behoves us to be proud of such a unique position. I am saying this for my own sake. In His dealings with the *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa has sufficiently proven that He does not approve of pride. The initials ACBSP are far more prestigious than any mundane initials such as BA, MA or PhD. Every member of ISKCON is your *śikṣā* disciple, so I could propose the appellation ACBSPgen1, ACBSPgen2, ACBSPgen3 etc....to dispense everyone with this honour in the ISKCON family.

Just like in the old days, when we joined your ISKCON, my current doctor, a 72-year-old remarkably fit Englishman and ex-serviceman,

reminded me in an indirect way, to offer you my *danḍavats* immediately upon rising from sleep. To strengthen the psoas muscles, he recommended a thirty-second exercise which is very much like *danḍavats*, but resting on the forearms and toes, keeping the body ten or twenty centimetres parallel to and above the ground. In thirty seconds, I can utter at least twice very distinctly the Sanskrit part of your two *praṇāma mantras* and I can use them as a rough stop watch as well!

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

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

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

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

Robin, my current doctor, is such a dynamic personality that he gave me on-the-spot, a practical demonstration on the floor of his practice. I was impressed and I subsequently gave him a copy of your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Let us hope he will take full advantage. But as you said, one is benefitted simply by touching the book. But as a preacher, one should not be satisfied with the bare minimum either. My previous doctor was unfortunately unable to heal himself and died before the age of 50. Jai Śrīla Prabhupāda!

This chanting process is so inconceivably simple and sublime! Deceptively simple because “Even a child can take part in the chanting, or even a dog can take part in it.” Sublime because it delivers the highest benefit of human life: redemption from this material world.

O my Lord! Transcendental poets and experts in spiritual science could not fully express their indebtedness to You, even if they were endowed with the prolonged lifetime of Brahmā, for You appear in two features—externally as the *ācārya* and internally as the Supersoul—to deliver the embodied living being by directing him

how to come to You. — *SB* 11.29.6 and *Cc Ādi* 1.48

Here is the ultimate occupation, the ultimate shelter and ultimate medicine for the recalcitrant mind: the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, as well as the scrutinising study, assimilation, realisation and bold preaching of Prabhupāda *vāṇī*. This is the dynamic *samādhi* of Kṛṣṇa conscious activities, as opposed to the meditative *samādhi* of the *aṣṭāṅga yoga* process!

I offer it back to you, my lord and master, as one would offer Ganges water back to Mother Gaṅgā:

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.*

Your humble and immature servant in Krishna Consciousness,

Yadavendra Dasa (ACBSP gen1)

Founder of The Australian Society for Kṛṣṇa Culture

www.krishnaculture.org

Around sunrise, a full moon's reflection on the water at Juhu Beach reminded me of Soma, the moon-god. We heard of him from you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to begin with, and I discussed in a recent class your purport: Soma's dynasty established righteousness, so Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma appeared in it, also to establish *dharma*.

Like you at Juhu Beach early in the morning, we walked, chanting *japa* in uniform—unlike clothes of the Mumbaikars. Those with unfocused spiritual intelligence chill there, not unlike clams with colored shells.

I stepped past a pair of wet blue-jeans, lost or forgotten on the sand. On shores of an ocean of birth and death, all bodies that souls acquire must be abandoned. You compared temporary, material bodies to fragile paper boats on a sea. We embodied souls in the material ocean struggle, tossed by uncontrollable waves, and you advise getting out of the dangerous water by boarding the boat of the transcendental knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

You taught us about the creation's temporary, recurrent nature, Śrīla Prabhupāda. The endless, sounding waves of the ocean create bubbles that appear and disappear like universes, you said.

Staying at Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsavihārī's temple near Juhu Beach, paging through a book of photos with descriptions of places in your earlier life (*Hidden Treasures of Kolkata*), I recalled your early and later life: A Calcutta boy and former householder and pharmacist, you distributed a renowned medicine internationally as a *sannyāsī*: *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, praised by the Tenth Canto as potent medicine for the mind.

India's BBT division at your Juhu "office" now leads the world in printing and distributing books. You learned the importance of book printing from your guru.

Your maiden voyage to America started from Bombay, in mid-1965, when you took a train to Calcutta, where you boarded Mrs. Morarji's *Jaladuta*, "a messenger on the water," with the best message ever.

You turned sixty-nine on the ship. I reached that age in October 2019 and celebrated the birthday outside Mumbai, at Govardhan Eco-Village, where Rādhānāth Swami's followers engineered tranquil replicas of Govardhana Hill, Yamunā River, and the main temples of Vṛndāvana—with no distracting shops, no crowded streets. This was a dream of yours, and they fulfilled it.

You were fifty-four years older than me. On one birthday in America, in the late 1960s, Govinda Dāsī baked a cake and decorated it with burning candles, telling you that if you made a wish and blew them out, your wish would come true. You said, “My only wish is for Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa’s devotional service,” and extinguished them. She congratulated you, and you responded, “Yes, I did good.”

Every few minutes airplanes descend over Juhu Beach for early-morning landings. I never thought that I would fly to India, until I did (midway through my life) in 1986, for the quincentenary of Lord Caitanya’s appearance. Cumulatively, I have served you now for ten years in India itself as a pilgrim, an editor of books, a writer of *Back to Godhead* magazine articles.

I learned literary skills inspired by you, after meeting Satsvarūpa Dāsa Gosvāmī and Jayādvaita in Minneapolis in the autumn of 1973—being the son of an automobile dealer, I drove devotees around Minneapolis in one of my father’s cars. When serving with them for five years (1980–86) on the staff of *Back to Godhead* in Philadelphia, I lived and worked at “the BTG house” on Lincoln Drive.

Almost right after joining ISKCON (on Friday, January 11, 1974) in San Francisco, I saw you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, at the Deity greeting in Los Angeles on January 13 and heard your *Bhāgavatam* class.

Grateful that you were opening centers for young Americans, gladly submitting to you as my spiritual master, I approached you during a short *kīrtana* after the class and stood on your right—and admired you. You were not leading the *kīrtana*. You turned, on the *vyāsāsana*, to look and see me.

You accepted me as a disciple in early July, just before the San Francisco Rathayātrā. At that festival Viśākhā took a famous photo of you onstage wearing a red-rose garland over a white sweater, arms raised in *kīrtana*. And thousands of people raised their arms in response, prompted by the Lord in the heart. You told this crowd in Golden Gate Park that you travel all over the world, and everywhere people want to be like Westerners; so if we Americans chant and dance, then the whole world will follow.

ISKCON has the purpose of “making men of good character.” You wrote in a letter: “Actually we are not a religious institution. We are presenting a cultural program, making men of good character. Therefore it is a cultural institution.” One way to build character is by ungluing our minds from thoughts and remembrances of mundane sense objects. If we don’t, we will be confused and self-deluded

devotees, whose conduct is said to be false (in *Gītā* 3.6). “Do not pretend,” you might have said to me.

You’ve written, “All that exists is a product of Kṛṣṇa’s energy; therefore activities in Kṛṣṇa consciousness are transcendental and have no material effect,” and they fill one with peace, but “one who is entangled” in enjoying the results of action cannot have that peace. Kṛṣṇa says that *yogīs* or devotees who know reality, or know the truth—*tattva-vit*, entrust their actions to the Absolute, giving up attachment, for purity of the self. (*Gītā* 5.8–12 and purports)

Putting my life in Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s care
under your able guidance, I remain.

Your unworthy servant,
Tattvavit Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

We offer our humble obeisances to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who continues to save the entire world from the cycle of birth and death by the distribution of your books.

Unlike you when you declared “Never was there a time when I did not remember Kṛṣṇa”, we do remember a time when we knew nothing about Kṛṣṇa. We were convinced that God exists, but had no idea how to approach Him. We were so fortunate to meet your disciples who were carrying out your instructions to distribute your books and the knowledge in them. By this great fortune we now have the association of thousands of very pure souls who are also distributing your books and carrying out your instructions. When asked about what is so great about being a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee, I respond, “The best thing about being a Hare Kṛṣṇa devotee is that I get to associate with the very best people on the planet.” Your disciples and granddisciples, even some great-granddisciples are the most selfless people on the planet. As you have instructed, they look after themselves, their families and friends, but they also go to great lengths to give people the most valuable gift of transcendental knowledge about Kṛṣṇa.

“For one who explains the supreme secret to the devotees, devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me.”—*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.68.

“There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear.”—*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.69.

Because these devotees are so dear to you and Kṛṣṇa they become via mediums of Kṛṣṇa’s qualities. And so it is that each of them displays various aspects of Kṛṣṇa’s unlimited personality.

And it is you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who brought this out in us. By your pure relationship with your spiritual master, Śrīla

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda and Kṛṣṇa, you unlock the hearts of everyone. You allow us to share in devotional service to Kṛṣṇa and fill our hearts with pure love for Kṛṣṇa.

How can we ever thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for making our lives perfect? We may not necessarily go back home in this lifetime, but we are well on our way. The fuel for this journey is measured by how many souls we can drag with us. As with most spiritual understandings, it is opposite to what happens in the material world. More drag generally slows one down, but by being dragged by you and grabbing others to drag, we accelerate our trip Back To Home, Back to Godhead.

From the bottom of our hearts, we thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. May we be eternally engaged in thanking you.

Your servants,

Purnamasi Devi Dasi and Krsnadasa Kaviraja Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances.

All glories to your holy lotus feet, that are the shelter for anyone seeking relief from the cycle of birth and death.

I first met Your Divine Grace early in 1973, through the *Back to Godhead* magazine. After reading just two paragraphs from the Founder's Lecture, I felt certain that I must meet you, the author, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami. The contents of those short, yet eloquent paragraphs resonated with me like nothing else that I had ever read or heard before...it was truly mind-altering and, ultimately, proved to be life-altering as well.

Not long after that, I was guided to an ISKCON temple and to the association of your followers. Inspired by their sincerity, kindness, dedication to service, I came to understand a little about the path of *bhakti-yoga* and about the teachings that you had given in your wonderful books. In due course, initiation followed, and I am still trying to repay your kindness upon me.

In my fallen condition, I have no qualification to glorify you. I can barely remember your exalted position as Lord Kṛṣṇa's most confidential servitor. Only by your mercy, can one understand what it means to become a devotee of the Lord – a servant of the servant, of the servant. I pray for such understanding as this, and I thank you eternally, for this most rare opportunity.

Standing in your presence for the first time, I was overwhelmed by your purity and potency. It was a mystical and otherworldly type of experience – the likes of which can change one's life on many levels and in ways that one cannot even begin to imagine.

Your extraordinary example of loving, devotional service continues to inspire me to honor the commitments that I made upon taking initiation. It enables me and empowers me to remain fixed in the ideal of service, with all its wonderful possibilities...and it all started with those two short, yet eloquent, paragraphs that opened up a window to the spiritual world! Such is the quality of your mercy that even one who is blind, can see.

You once said that we, your disciples, are your miracles. You have transformed my life. From the darkness of ignorance, you have brought me to the light of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As for me, your compassionate love is the greatest miracle. It is the matchless gift

that changed my life forever.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for the great personal sacrifices you have made and for all the austerities you performed in order to deliver the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to so many fallen, conditioned souls – including me! You never wavered in your determination to fulfil the order of your beloved spiritual master. Always teaching by your most wonderful example, you are my beacon of light on this ocean of nescience, my true north.

I pray always to become a worthy disciple of Your Divine Grace, and in your mood of compassion and love, assist you in spreading this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, for as long as you see fit.

Thank you for tolerating me.

Your insignificant servant,

Rasaliladevi Devi Dasi

Savior of the Fallen

In 1965 you set out across the ocean
to a land so far away, so far from your home
You didn't know anyone there
You didn't know which way to turn
But deep within your heart, you felt complete protection
(Prabhupāda)

With faith in the holy message, that we all live eternally
You left your home in Vṛndāvana, to give us life
and set us free
You set the perfect example, and put it down for all to see
You changed our lives, you changed history
On each page your personal ecstasy
(Prabhupāda, Śrīla Prabhupāda, Savior of the Fallen Souls)

The force of your purity, turned our minds away
Away from our petty games, and made us long to play
With Kṛṣṇa in Goloka and dance with Mahāprabhu
We can never know defeat, Prabhupāda remembering you
(Prabhupāda)

You opened many temples, so the world
could come and see
The beauty of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality
You made an army of preachers, a transcendental company
In every language your mercy, a flood through the BBT
(Prabhupāda, Śrīla Prabhupāda, Savior of the Fallen Souls)

Your eternal servant,

Balabhadra Bhattacharya Dasa
Atlanta, Georgia USA

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

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

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

“By satisfaction of the spiritual master, the Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes satisfied. And by not satisfying the spiritual master, there is no chance of being promoted to the plane of Krishna Consciousness. I should, therefore, meditate and pray for his mercy three times a day, and offer my respectful obeisances unto him, my spiritual master.”

When you were preparing to leave us, you commented that your “only regret” was that you hadn’t established the *varṇāśrama* system. And when pressed further, you stated that if you had more time you would “sit down with us and show us how to live off the land”!

I captured your “regret” in my heart and in early 2017 joined the New Tālavana community. Introducing them to the concept of Permaculture Design principles as a catalyst to develop our natural resources into a long-term plan for self-sufficient abundance was a most vital step. Subsequently, in 2018 we developed our community “Vision and Mission Statement”, formulating this as a guideline to follow in your footsteps.

As previously reported, by the end of 2017 I had certified two additional Permaculture Designers/ Consultants in the community. They continue to apply and share their expertise with other community members and were instrumental in the development of the previously-mentioned “Vision & Mission Statement” in 2018.

In this light, I want to submit to you my current annual report of my humble effort to serve your mission.

My feeble attempts to serve you for 2019 & early 2020:

Separately, I also previously reported on my development of a 2-acre “Food Forest Demonstration Site”, beginning with 104 fruit

trees in a mix of 4 varieties.

1. By the Fall, the fruit trees had become mostly 6-7-foot single (healthy & leafy) shoots with limited branching. Therefore, they were pruned during their ninth month, in mid-November to generate appropriate branching. This would give them the Winter dormancy to recuperate their strength for the Spring recovery and expansion.

The troughs above their swales have been filled with well composted wood chips to keep the troughs from collapsing, while allowing rainwater to wash the nutrients from the compost directly into the soil at their root systems. This also allows for occasional treatments of cow urine and cow dung mixtures seasoned with biochar to be added advantageously into the compost trough, where it would be absorbed by the compost, and then be released to the trees over time.

The trees are currently sprouting new branches and exploding with new leaf growth. Now, I will be preparing the swale mounds for the companion plants that will be planted beginning in the upcoming Fall season, shortly after your birthday anniversary.

We will intermingle berry bushes, medicinal and cooking herbs, and root crops as companion plants to “demonstrate” a series of rows of fruit tree guilds on this level-contour. We will then separate these rows with productive vegetable gardens. This “demonstration” can then be duplicated elsewhere throughout the property.

2. My effort to generate interest in establishing a Permaculture Demonstration-site Fund was practically a total failure! In a six-month period there were so little donations collected (which had to be divided for the Temple’s “50%” tithe) that I didn’t want to deprive the temple of the paltry amount left over. It would not have been sufficient to accomplish much of an upgrade for the orchard. It was depressing for me, but a standard result for my past “collecting” experiences.
3. I also tried to generate some funds by presenting a Permaculture Design Course in Alachua’s “New Raman Reti” community. The course was minimally successful in that, it shared this important system of agricultural symbiotics with only six students who took it (out of a community of over a thousand devotees). Of these six students, four have presented

me with their innovative Permaculture Design Plans which has qualified them for their Permaculture Design Certificate.

Hopefully, they will go on to teach others the means for living off the land while increasing the land's bountiful resources. This would be a "success," but the cost of presenting it exceeded the income generated from the students who took it.

I am determined to do my part to support your effort to establish self-sufficiency in our floundering rural farming communities, and am always seeking the means of financially supporting and expanding this effort!

4. Every year we hold a "Cow Festival" here in New Tālavana, and despite the yoga classes, and numerous vendors that provide hot food preparations and sandwiches, it is only the freshly-squeezed sugar cane that is grown here. Similarly, the greatest majority of products that are displayed and sold are brought from *other* locations around the USA...

With 1,200 acres, we have not developed any sense of importance for cottage industries as you have encouraged us to do! Our annual "Cow Fest" festival is a demonstration of show-bottle self-sufficiency in this respect. However, this brings in some of the funds needed to care for our cows over the winter and covers any medical bills; in this sense it has a valuable place in lieu of our *actually* developing self-reliance on Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Rādhākānta's bountiful property.

5. There is some talk amongst the second generation of an interest in developing a hemp business to help support the agricultural department. But I have not heard of any interest from them in processing the hemp fiber into any of the over 5,000 known byproducts; neither for this community's use, nor for public marketing. The sale of the raw hemp bales would generate some additional cash-flow, but would not create any necessary community occupational handicrafts or subsequent cottage industry products for public sale. We need devotees who want to turn their "hobby-interests" into marketable entrepreneurial businesses!
6. Over the decades since you personally visited, devotees who were inspired by your impact on their lives, have dedicated themselves to studying the natural flora in this region and have developed a herbal pharmacy that they have called

“Blue Boy Herbs”! This reference to Kṛṣṇa’s energy is the basis of their outreach preaching to their clients about His *healing* nature. They hold semi-annual seminars and tours to train others in this science and its relationship to healing the body and spirit. They produce varieties of tinctures, holistic skincare products, salves, perfumes, essential oils, and other Ayurvedic products. This is the only leadership in this community that has taken your idea to heart! I personally find it deeply gratifying to see their effort bear fruit, and prosper so generously by Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Rādhākānta’s grace. Perhaps their good association will influence the handicraft development of the hemp project – I pray so!

7. With our handicap-accessible parking pad and sidewalk system which connects the Temple building, kitchen, office complex and the pavilion’s restrooms, the temple’s Community Complex is now qualified as a state-licensed “Agri-Tourism” destination. The signs for this were also approved and will be installed throughout the local region this year, from which we can advertise broadly. This is the prime opportunity to demonstrate your objective of “self-sufficiency” to the masses – including other ISKCON communities. It IS the most viable outreach for rural farming communities!
8. We have so many positive factors already in place to facilitate the necessary growth. And we have a “Master Plan” being developed from several excellent proposals, and sites for proposed expansion projects being identified and updated using drone and LiDAR technology. A new multi-media presentation plan is in the works, as a result.

You have told us that the masses, becoming overwhelmed by the onslaught of material energy, will soon be coming to our rural-farming, “Vṛndāvana-like villages”, and will need our support and guidance. We are doing our best to capture and imbibe this vision and mission, and prepare for this rising-tide of urgent need!

9. Currently, the global population is overwhelmed by a viral pandemic that provides a glimpse of the future increases of Mahāmāyā’s strength. The segregation of devotees to reduce the spread of this virus (as opposed to the *association* of devotees) is an opportunistic demonstration of Mahāmāyā’s sanction from Kṛṣṇa to test the resolve of individual and

collective members of Lord Caitanya's mission! I find it interesting to note the variegated transformations that individual devotees go through in the throes of such angst. Even the various temple communities take a defensive posture against neighboring community members, or other travelling parties.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you stated that each devotee community should be managed in an autonomous manner, and rightly so. However, this gives the GBC an unparalleled challenge to maintain uniformity during such calamitous chaos. I understand that this only a test of the resolve of the surviving devotees who will be faced with future major calamities; as you, our BEST friend and ever well-wisher have described! In the face of this illusion of Mahāmāyā's, the challenge to see through the multitude of 'fearful' veils which manifest in the minds of the individual devotees results in so many speculations! We all have so much on our plates now – to mitigate our separation behind our anxious "social distancing", we want what we are missing!

The non-devotee communities are even LESS trusting of others at times, as this 'test' signifies! How much tension there must be in their reactionary minds? But we DO have to cling to our patience, and our compassion to enlighten them!

As you have described Śrīla Prabhupāda:

"AFTER the war, preaching will be good!"

Let US *first* learn the message that is being shared by this 'anomaly'; then, when this event subsides, teach others to prepare for the inevitable tests that are yet to follow!

Saṅkīrtana WILL go on, as demonstrated by Lord Caitanya; and, we will become stronger for our participation, by our participation in *community*!

By our patience, and compassion for others' suffering the angst of separation and resultant confusion; we will define how we become stronger in our own *sādhana*, and in service to His other part and parcel children!

10. In this respect, I am especially happy to be combining my efforts with my revered companion, who is also sincere for us to help each other in participating in opportunities to serve you together. I thank you for allowing our distant past to catch up to us at this time, and to afford us the opportunity to

complete this chapter together, in this lifetime!

We pray that people may see the light beyond segregation and sectarianism and acknowledge the higher purpose of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which is to serve and love Him unconditionally. So, we at New Tālavana, celebrate the Lord for His wonder and mercy to create diversity within His unity according to individuality, love and needs.

11. The hesitancy of individual community members to develop handicrafts that are capable of replacing the artefacts that they purchase at the local Walmart is like trying to break one of an addiction. It is only by the involuntary “cold-turkey” elimination of such dependent sources of supply (such as the current Covid-19 pandemic), that it will become *obviously* beneficial for them to develop these simple skills of self-reliance!

I pray ceaselessly for the community’s collective realization and compliance with Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s “Vṛndāvana-like village” concept, that you have come to deliver to us!!!

Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Your struggling servant in the groves of New Tālavana Dhāma!

Langaganesa Dasa

Carriere, Mississippi – USA

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet.

On this day of your blessed Vyāsa-pūjā, I pray and seek your causeless blessings, and the strength to carry on with my devotional service.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.22.47 Prithu Mahārāja expresses his gratitude to the four Kumaras vide this *śloka*. He says that he is not able to repay his debt to the Kumaras for the transcendental knowledge that they have imparted to him, and that they should be satisfied with their own auspicious activities. He uses the word '*vinoda-pātram*' which you have explained means "joker." You explain that it is simply not possible to repay the debt that a disciple owes to his spiritual master. One who thinks he can do so is *vinodpatram*, or "joker." Nevertheless, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have also said that if we at all feel obliged to you, please preach, preach as I preach.

I pray that I become worthy of being a servant of your beloved servants.

An ambassador from Goloka Vṛndāvana, you could exactly feel the pulse of the people on earth and touch their hearts. It is difficult to imagine anyone else to have had such influence.

The progeny of a lion is also like a lion. Similarly, like your *siṃha-guru* Mahārāja Śrīpāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, you make atheists flee.

Kali-yuga's forces march relentlessly on. Material energy continuously poses challenges, but Lord Caitanya's mercy is being distributed by you and your followers.

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.18.44, it is stated that the first class son or disciple can anticipate the will of his spiritual master or father without being told. Clearly, you are this first class devotee who could fathom and execute the divine will of your beloved spiritual master Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

Finally, Śrīla Prabhupāda, as stated in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* Ādi 1.44, although I know you as a servitor of Śrī Caitanya, I know you also as a plenary manifestation of the Lord.

Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!

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

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

My beloved master,

I place my head at your lotus feet, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and beg you to continue to give me the ultimate shelter, which is your service.

Hearing your voice delivering this vast spiritual knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness has revived the remembrance of our eternal relationship with the Lord. The voice of the pure devotee has a direct connection with the “saffron mercy-particles strewn over Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet” and “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 you describe in the purport of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Fourth Canto, Chapter 20, verse 25. You woke us up, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and you continue to “live in sound” and in the hearts of all your disciples.

That is the miracle you have performed, Śrīla Prabhupāda. You have shaken us awake after being lost in the slumber of aeons, and you have awarded us this wonderful Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I know I am not much of a disciple, my beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda, and that I fall short in so many ways, but I do try to meditate upon you as much as I can and what you have done for the world. I do my best to encourage your granddisciples and great-granddisciples to develop their relationship with you. And I am swimming in the nectar of your many wonderful pastimes by listening to narrations about them as much as possible and talking about them to others.

You will go down in history, O divine master, Supreme Personality of Servitor Godhead, as the *Senāpati Bhakta*, Lord Caitanya’s Commander-in-Chief. Your disciples, although we are ageing now, don’t give up the hope of being able to continue to serve you even in our old age. I always think that at 70 years old, you embarked on a revolution, a great transcendental adventure, to please your spiritual master, so I can at least get my rusty bones moving a bit to continue serving you, although I probably could not

keep up with you during a morning walk!

On this most blessed event of your Appearance Day, I offer whatever service I can perform at your soft, pink-hued lotus feet.

Your servant,

Krishnarupa Devi Dasi

My dearest Guru Mahārāja,

All glories to your lotus feet, my only shelter.

In our young years, we would be part of a community and temple life set the beat of our days. One of our first duties just before *maṅgala-ārati* was to pay obeisances to your *vyāsāsana* and chant a few rounds glancing at you. Large pictures of you were framed and displayed everywhere with flower garlands. Yes, temple life really gave us all the facilities to connect with you. It was obvious and natural.

Then we were scattered all over the world, deprived of your physical presence, your loving shelter, and drowned in a battle to survive in this material world, for many of us joined at a very young age and had no scholarly degrees. Dealing with *karmīs* was frightening and traumatizing.

We still had your books (at least some of them) stacked in trunks somewhere with our favorite pictures of you. Our *śikhās* cut, our hair grown, we looked for petty jobs, begged the government aids for allowances. To carry a bead bag would be too conspicuous so we used clickers, but even they became too loud... Separation. Cold, superficial lives. No more *kīrtanas*, no more *mahā prasādam*. The material world was out there and we were in it. But somehow you had given us a matchless gift: the sweet holy name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Whose potency is inconceivable. We were drawn back to it like iron to a magnet.

Then step-by-step, baby steps, we opened your books again, purchased more books, visited Hare Kṛṣṇa Temples, held old godbrothers to our hearts and shared *prasādam*. The Deities were there, effulgent as ever. Very little had changed, or for the good mostly. New bead bags, new *tulasī* beads, a new dawn. The turmoil of life is still there with its ever-increasing disease and death everywhere and many have passed away.

Chanting *gāyatrī* three times a day puts me right back where I belong: at your lotus feet as your humble servant "...gurave namaḥ". All glories to you Śrīla Prabhupāda, our ever well-wisher.

Your unworthy disciple,

Avyaya Dasa
France

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

Every day, I wonder how I was so fortunate to have met you. It is only yours and Kṛṣṇa's incredible and unlimited grace that allowed someone like myself to receive sacred initiation from a *Mahā bhāgavata*, *Śaktyāveśa*, *Bhakti Senāpati*, such as yourself.

Although I am most fallen, I recognize the utter simplicity of what you have given us, and how it is unparalleled anywhere – Krishna Consciousness – the simple process of absorbing one's consciousness in Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa – His holy names, pastimes, and associates. Additionally, you gave us everything we could ever need to do that – Lord Kṛṣṇa's instructions in *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*; Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Kṛṣṇa Book*; as well as the instructions and pastimes of Lord Caitanya and His followers.

Your every word is nectar to my ears and heart, and I only wish to bathe in that nectar continuously. Everything I am is based on your mercy. I would not / could not exist but for you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please be merciful to me. Bless with me ever-increasing attachment to you and your transcendental instructions. Let me fully realize the essence of those instructions and carry them out for your pleasure. Let me take complete shelter in the holy names of the Lord.

I am barely qualified to even write of your greatness or approach you at all. But as you have seen fit to accept me as one of your disciples, I can only beg that you allow me to remain eternally in your service!

Your insignificant servant,

Aja Dasa

Mahakarta Dasa

To my dearest spiritual master His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

I had the opportunity to see you first in Germany in the year 1973 at the Schloss Rettershoff in Königstein. Even though I was an ignorant soul, you blessed me by accepting me as your initiated disciple. Because of your mercy, I have been in your presence in other places in the world as well such as in London, Paris, and Vṛndāvana. You gave me my second initiation in London in 1975. I also got your unlimited mercy in Vṛndāvana Dham where I was able to personally serve you many times and also perform *Guru-pūjā* for you. I came back to Śrī Lanka in 1976 after you instructed me to start a Temple here and spread Krishna Consciousness.

To be born as a human being is so fortunate. It is more fortunate to have associated with a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa such as yourself, have you as a spiritual master, and to serve you to fulfill the mission of spreading Krishna Consciousness in this Age of Kali. Since I came back to Śrī Lanka, now we are in the point of building a Temple for Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa and the project is nearing completion with the expected date of consecration of August 2020. However, the sudden onset of the coronavirus since March 20, 2020 in Śrī Lanka has stalled everything and everyone's day-to-day activities and economic sustainability and schools and jobs, etc have all come to a standstill. However, by your mercy and the mercy of Śrī Narasimhadeva, the Temple construction has not completely stopped. It is still going on.

You had faith in Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission and tried to fulfill your spiritual master's order and established this International Society for Krishna Consciousness for the welfare of the

world. My humble prayers to you Śrīla Prabhupāda, is to bless me to have your mission established in Śrī Lanka with a beautiful temple for understanding Lord Kṛṣṇa. This will also fulfill your spiritual master's desire, as well as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission to have people in every town and village chant the name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Please bless me so that this temple in Sri Lanka is also completed without any further hindrance and that we can progressively spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness to every town and village in Sri Lanka.

Your humble servant,

Mahakarta Dasa
ISKCON Śrī Lanka

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace, the emissary of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for accepting me. Try as I might to be a good disciple, I have to often remind myself that every endeavor is tainted by some sort of fault, and my endeavors to serve you are no exception. But by your causeless mercy, you somehow have chosen to keep me under your wing all these years, despite my faults and offences, for which I am immeasurably indebted to Your Divine Grace.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I take heart in your words when you say that even if we are imperfect, even if we can't follow everything perfectly, if we have unflinching faith that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then we are "saint." I'm not a saint, but it's encouraging to hear you say that.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for all that you have given us – *japa*, *kīrtana*, your books, service, Deities, ISKCON, devotees to associate with and try to serve, your lectures, your conversations, your letters, your personal association, both physical (in the past) and subtle (in the present).

Please show me how to please Kṛṣṇa at every moment, and give me the desire and the courage to choose to do what is most pleasing to Kṛṣṇa at every moment.

Begging to serve and to remain in the association of your disciples and granddisciples and great-granddisciples for all of eternity,

Your grateful daughter,

Phalini Devi Dasi

For my spiritual master

This is a part of a preface to the book “*Śyāmānanda, the joy of Rādhārāṇī.*”

Never could a Vaiṣṇava write a book without first addressing a thought to his guru mahārāja.

My spiritual master is the light that has illuminated a path in a dark world. Without his words so full of knowledge where would I be now? I would have fallen into a ravine without even knowing it, victim of lust, greed and anger.

My spiritual master is the selfless angel who gave free of charge everything to others, without caring about his own comfort or pleasure.

My spiritual master was sent by Nitāi Gaurāṅga to make Śrī Nāma known all over the world. Nobody had had such power before. In the Western world nobody knew the holy names of Rādhā Kṛṣṇa. Now everybody knows.

My spiritual master did not care about disqualifications. He didn't say to anyone “you are not qualified, I'll not give you initiation and instructions.” He accepted everybody and anybody. He gave us chance that we had been waiting for ages, and our fortune is incalculable.

*pātrāpātra-vicāra nāhi, nāhi sthānāsthāna
yei yāñhā pāya, tāñhā kare prema-dāna*

“In distributing love of Godhead, Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates did not consider who was a fit candidate and who was not, nor where such distribution should or should not take place. They made no conditions. Wherever they got the opportunity, the members of the Pañca-tattva distributed love of Godhead.”

— *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā 7.23

My spiritual master dealt with everyone – disciples and nondisciples, with love. He gave us everything and did not expect anything in return.

My spiritual master gave me another life. A wonderful life. The best life I could have desired. Had he not arrived, what would I have done, said, felt, thought? There would have been no Kṛṣṇa.

No Rādhārāṇī. No Vṛndāvana. No *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*,
Veda, *Vedānta*. Nothing. I tremble at the thought.

Being unable to express in words what I feel in heart, I only
prostrate again and again at the lotus feet of my spiritual master, Śrī
Abhay Charan Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, my Prabhupāda,
the representative of the Lord.

Manonatha Dasa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my obeisances at your lotus feet.

Every day we are remembering how you left Vṛndāvana and your Lords Śrī Govinda, Gopinātha, Rādhā-Dāmodara, and came to the West. But today (13th August 2020), we can especially meditate on what you accomplished in such a short period of time. As Śrīla Bhaktivinoda predicted, “a personality will soon appear to preach the teachings of Lord Caitanya and move unrestrictedly over the whole world with His message.”

When you arrived in New York, after traveling by ship for 37 days, you were 70-years-old. Alone in New York, you were thinking “...who will listen to me in this horrible, sinful place? All right, I shall stay little longer, at least I can distribute a few of my books, that is something. But Kṛṣṇa was all along preparing something I could not see, and He brought you to me one by one, sincere American boys and girls, to be trained-up for doing the work of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Now I can see that it is a miracle. Otherwise, your city of New York, one single old man, with only a few books to sell for barely getting eatables, how he can survive, what to speak of introducing God-consciousness movement for saving the humankind? That is Kṛṣṇa’s miracle. Now I can see it. (Śrīla Prabhupāda Letter, December 23, 1972)

(Miracle – an unusual and mysterious event that is thought to have been caused by a god because it does not follow the usual laws of nature.)

I have just turned 70 and can now appreciate much more (than when I was younger) what you have accomplished. Actually I feel you are still here with us guiding us and leading us on the path back to Godhead. Your instructions are not difficult to follow – in fact they give us great happiness and are saving us from being swallowed up by the external energy which is trying to derail us. That’s her job, and she is happy when we don’t succumb to her temptations. Every moment she is there doing her service – but if we are strong and sincere in our devotional practices then we can succeed.

Chanting 16 (minimum) rounds and hearing the philosophy are daily practices that cannot be neglected. As you said in the Sixth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, “There are so many dangers in this material world that one may fall down from an exalted position at

any time. Yet if one keeps himself always pure and steady by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, he will be safe without a doubt.”

There are so many things going on within and without, but let’s try and keep it simple... chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, follow the four rules and try our best to spread Krishna Consciousness to every town and village. “The citizens (of Kali-yuga) will suffer greatly from cold, wind, heat, rain and snow. They will be further tormented by quarrels, hunger, thirst, disease and severe anxiety.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto 12: *The Age of Deterioration*, Text 10).

You saved us, of this there is no doubt and we shall never forget your compassionate service and dedication to the mission of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Every town and village is unfolding right before our very eyes, and as Kali-yuga intensifies, more lost souls will take shelter of your ISKCON movement.

I remember one morning in 1974 in Melbourne after you had *darśana* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Vallabha. You paid your obeisances and we all followed you. My head was on the floor and your lotus feet were just a few inches away from my head. So I am praying and hoping that I will always be close to your lotus feet in this life and whatever future lives that I may have.

Your servant,

Jagadvira Dasa
Okinawa, Japan

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity at this point in my life to absorb myself in service. There is an urgency about this time of life. You so kindly engaged us in our youth and we made sacrifices to please you and Lord Kṛṣṇa for which we have felt your reciprocation throughout this life.

You said on occasion that, “when you go to Bengal, you take your fortune with you!” Upon arrival at our new home, there have been some striking tests for which all I could do, was take shelter of the *Narasinha Kavaca Stotram*. These prayers were compiled with pictures of the Lord and given to me years before as a gift by my very dear friend. Only now have I dedicated each day to reciting them. This recitation was prompted by fear and those circumstances have not resolved as of yet.

However, when I repeat the translation of each verse and request that Lord Nṛsimhadeva destroy my obstacles, kick out my fears, scatter my enemies and destroy my karma, I am greatly affected by these words. I feel you are allowing me to capture some of the depth of these prayers by your mercy. It is not that the situation being resolved is the goal. That it clearly is not. Rather, these intense feelings that I want to be released from anything and everything which is keeping me from tasting pure devotional service has now become the impetus. Although I had been unable to relish Queen Kuntī’s prayers before, because of not being aligned with her perspective of requesting suffering, my present situation has brought about some real appreciation. Some very valuable advice given to me a long time ago in regards to spiritual matters was to be brutally honest with oneself.

I am aware that to please you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda and Kṛṣṇa, I must recognize and identify which enemies need to be scattered as there are many lurking inside of me which I have been blind to. I am

now begging to become purified by sincere chanting and by your daily guidance.

Please forgive me for all of my offences, and I beg you to let me stay sheltered at the dust of your lotus feet,

Hoping to become a sincere disciple,

Your daughter,

Lalita Devi Dasi

Kali thought the struggle over
But Back to Godhead on every street
The war now rages as bright as ever
Hope for the fallen, at your feet

You showed how one grain becomes a mountain
And how *māyā* is made to retreat
No one can measure the debt we owe you
Tearful prayers, at your feet

You brought a society a new way of living
To replace our slaughterhouse complete
Varṇāśrama dharma when all is shaken
Delivering fallen, at your feet

Mayesa Dasa

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you, my eternal master.

My connection to you began when I received a copy of *Kṛṣṇa, The Reservoir of Pleasure* from Devamrita Dasa Brahmācari in 1973. The first two sentences of that pamphlet (“Kṛṣṇa—this sound is transcendental. Kṛṣṇa means the highest pleasure.”) made it clear to me that your mission was to give Kṛṣṇa to others!

By your grace, my connection to you strengthened as I listened to your lectures and engaged in service at The Bhaktivedānta Book Trust, your main channel for distributing consciousness of Kṛṣṇa to others. Even one as dull as me could appreciate your dedication, determination, and patience in the matter of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness and thus I continue to give some of my time and energy to assisting you in your tireless efforts.

In your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.28.51 you state:

When one becomes serious to follow the mission of the spiritual master, his resolution is tantamount to seeing the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As explained before, this means meeting the Supreme Personality of Godhead in the instruction of the spiritual master. This is technically called *vāṅī-sevā*. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura states in his *Bhagavad-gītā* commentary on the verse *vyavasāyātmikā buddhir ekeha kuru-nandana* (Bg. 2.41) that one should serve the words of the spiritual master. The disciple must stick to whatever the spiritual master orders. Simply by following on that line, one sees the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

In a letter to Gargamuni prabhu you wrote:

Certainly you are mine and I am Krishna’s,
therefore you are also Krishna’s. In the Krishna
Consciousness activities that is the process.

There's no doubt that to be in your presence is tantamount to being in the presence of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, therefore I am hopeful that in the future, despite my deep-rooted recalcitrance, I will be admitted into your association in the spiritual world. The remains of the form that you exhibited in your ISKCON *līlā* are interred in Vṛndāvana, land of Kṛṣṇa. Having only experienced association with that form, I wonder how I will recognize your original spiritual form when that day finally arrives.

Your eternal servant,

Arcita Dasa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my respectful obeisances unto you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa having taken complete shelter at His lotus feet.

Most respectful obeisances unto you, my spiritual master, servant of Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You have so compassionately brought the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to these Western countries that are filled with impersonalism and voidism, just to save this worthless beggar, such that I am.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! How can these inadequate words possibly carry the full measure of meaning that I wish to convey?

You accepted me as your disciple, though I lack any qualification, and have given me a chance to be restored to my true nature.

The austerities you performed to come here are still beyond my ability to comprehend. The depth of compassion you possess to run headlong into this Western inferno and single-handedly drag us to safety and freedom, sometimes kicking and screaming, is incalculable.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you brought the Spiritual Sky to us, showed us Kṛṣṇa's extraordinary pastimes, filled us with *prasādam* and bestowed on us the most precious gift imaginable, Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the form of Their holy names.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu broke open the storehouse of love of Godhead, you gathered up its contents, packed it up in a trunk and carried it around the world, freely giving it away to any and all, no matter the qualification or lack thereof.

Without you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, my life would have been without meaning, just another roll through the grist mill of the material energy, struggling, suffering and dying over and over in an endless cycle of despair.

By your loving grace, the shackles have been unlocked, freedom is in reach and the opportunity of continuous joy without measure serving your lotus feet is within my parched grasp.

It is only by your potency that I can do anything of value. Every moment engaged in service, chanting, reading, associating with your disciples, everything is by your mercy alone.

And your greatest gift to us has been each other. Without the shelter of association, I would be lost. Thank you for the gift of your

disciples! They are the wellspring that can quench the blazing fires both within and without.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I pray that I may always remain in the shelter of your lotus feet. Please do not let me go or kick me away, even though in my heart I know that is what I deserve.

Kindly bless me that I be allowed to remain eternally in the association and service of your devotees.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your servant,

Gopisa Dasa

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my repeated obeisances, prostrated in the dust of your lotus feet.

Today I am remembering your extraordinary kindness toward me, despite my insignificance and uselessness. I have done nothing to deserve your mercy, but causelessly you chose to pick me up and give me your shelter. You saved me, Śrīla Prabhupāda. How can I ever thank you enough?

Your blessings upon me have been innumerable. But not only have you taken care of my spiritual upliftment, providing all facility for my progress in the present and into the future, like a loving father you even personally looked after my material well-being.

Once in Mumbai, I unwittingly consumed some very bad water. I then traveled to Māyāpur where I soon became very gravely ill. I was in a coma with a raging fever for a week before I was discovered by the devotees. When my condition came to your attention, you made arrangements for my care at the devotee-staffed infirmary within the temple compound. There, I remained on a gurney under a papaya tree outside the infirmary. You prescribed a medicinal diet for me, and you personally came to check on my welfare daily.

You were giving classes every morning, but I was unable to attend due to extreme weakness. I was greatly aggrieved to miss the opportunity to hear the nectarean and medicinal words emanating from your lotus mouth. Understanding the importance of hearing to my spiritual sustenance, you personally came to my side every morning and spoke for many minutes. It was your habit to take a morning walk each day with an entourage of *sannyāsīs* and GBC men. Each day during your walk you made a point of stopping beside my gurney where you spoke extensively on many subjects.

Though your words were intended for everyone present, it seemed to me as though you were speaking to me personally and in retrospect I see that you appeared to anticipate all the events of

my life, providing pertinent instruction. Over the many days I lay ill, you instructed me on all kinds of spiritual topics and though I was a brahmacārī at the time, you even went into detail about how I should raise my children, particularly my daughter. In the years that followed, all of your instructions from those days have proven to be immensely valuable to myself and my family.

Daily you monitored my recovery, but after weeks had passed I still could not properly digest and I remained so weak I could barely move. Seeing this you sent a message to me one afternoon. You said, “If you work hard you can digest even a stone”. You made arrangements for me to work at the *gosala* and I was immediately shuttled there to begin serving the cows, a service that entailed lots of hard work such as lifting heavy bags of feed. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are always expert and your words never fail. I struggled to perform my cowherd duties at first, but quickly I began to gain strength.

I began attending temple functions again, and there you kept your eye on me. I felt too weak to dance in *kīrtana*, but you would not allow me to sit or even stand and simply shuffle. At every *kīrtana* you would stand in front of me and motion for me to jump up and down. The extremely pained look on my face surely conveyed the extent of my inability, yet you were absolutely insistent that I jump and so I did, though awkwardly and with much difficulty.

Because I had acquired great faith that you alone could deliver me from all my life’s miseries and out of an intense desire to please you in reciprocation of your kindness, I followed your instruction to jump in *kīrtana* and to care for the cows in spite of the pain and difficulty. Sure enough, within days I recovered my health and though I never attempted to digest a stone, my power of digestion was fully restored!

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master, who is possessed of such great compassion that he lovingly cares for his disciples, both body and soul; even an insignificant rascal such as myself. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I can never adequately reciprocate your kindness, but I humbly beg for the chance to try, birth after birth. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your servant,

Taraka Dasa

Edhaniyasvabhava Dasa

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

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

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my prostrated humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

The profound example of serving Guru, you have set.

Left me in loving gratitude, never forget.

The magnanimous sacrifice you have made.

To save a fallen soul, from *māyā*'s darkest shade

Your love and compassion, knows no bounds

At your lotus feet I beg, please keep me around.

Please bless me with taste and attachment to the holy names

Please keep me in your service in loving attitude of gratitude

And follow your example of giving Kṛṣṇa to others, as
you have taught

O' Śrīla Prabhupāda I beg to remain your loyal servitor, please
give me the shelter of your divine *vāṇī*.

All glories to your most auspicious holy appearance day! Jaya
Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your aspiring servant,

Edhaniyasvabhava Dasa

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you for everything.

For the reason to wake up in the morning,
to pay obeisances to you before rising.

For the purpose of being up before dawn, to chant,
sing, offer myself with love for another day.

For the joy of cooking, not for my belly, but for making an
offering to the Lord, and to any soul who may partake.

For the energy to work, as a loving offering,
making all work joyfully performed.

For the ability to keep in touch with the bliss of devotional
service, regardless of external circumstances.

To know that nothing I may have worked so
hard to create, belongs to me, that it all belongs
to Their Sweet Eternal Lordships.

To see that my ageing body is simply
becoming like a threadbare coat, covering
my bright and everlasting true Self.

To know that each pain and every heartbreak
is another chance to allow the holy names
deeper entry into the cavern of my heart.

To cherish each relationship as another
chance to share the most precious gift.

To know the overwhelming nectar of the Gift of Faith.

To learn as I stumble and fail, that these are nourishment
for humility, softening my heart for *bhakti*.

To see, as I create things of beauty, that any
apparent achievement is another drop of grace

to always have something special in my heart
to offer anyone who may cross my path

to have been given the invitation to let flow, all the
love that can possibly occur in this human form.

To feel the beautiful, melting sweetness of bowing down.

To touch new beatitude with every Vaiṣṇava festival,
celebrated with deep attention and *smaraṇam*

To have inspirational images imprinted in my mind
of others' devotion, far greater than my own.

To not be afraid to say sorry from the depths of me, for
hurts or offences knowingly or unknowingly committed.

To know each moment and every breath to be
due only to your kindness toward me.

To be able to lay my head down at the
end of each day and be grateful.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you for everything.

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

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

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda
Forty-seven years have passed
Since seeing you in New Dvārakā *dhāma*
Hearing your *Bhāgavatam* class

From that very special moment
I gave my heart to you
Though ISKCON's had some ups and downs
We've just kept on pushing through.

Not a single soul on planet Earth
Could preach like you, dear Prabhupāda
Or print books by the millions
And build temples for glorifying God.

Without a doubt, dear Prabhupāda,
You are a *śaktyāveśa* avatar
You spread the holy names far and wide
You are the greatest of all stars

And by your strong conviction
To build the gigantic TOVP
May Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi
Bless you eternally

Your insignificant servant,

Haripada Dasa
Udupi, Karnataka, India

Hiranmayi Devi Dasi

*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*

Haribol to all Vaiṣṇavas!

All glories to our beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Glorifying the *ācārya* and spiritual master is always very auspicious. So, even if I am an insignificant devotee, *Śrīla Prabhupāda Tributes* gives everyone the possibility to do so. I'm therefore immensely grateful.

I was certainly born in the darkest ignorance, but by the mercy of His Divine Grace, who has opened my eyes with the torchlight of knowledge and *bhakti*, I have now become civilized. I notice that Kali-yuga doesn't affect me as often and I remain centered on the essence so as to put the finishing touches on this human life.

The ordeals along the way have allowed me to grow in wisdom. I thank Śrīla Prabhupāda and Kṛṣṇa for all this mercy.

Prabhupāda said that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not an imposition on the mind; it's the living entity's original energy and is beyond our mental, intellectual and speculative conditioning. Always taking shelter of Śrī Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa in order to be more and more established in the mode of goodness, so as to receive the mercy of transcending this goodness to become definitely fixed in transcendence and our original position as servant. One must not leave the path of complete healing even if difficulties as always encountered there.

I encourage one and all to always remain at the lotus feet of our glorious master and well-wisher. A thousand thanks to Śrīla Prabhupāda as well as to the Pañca-tattva he introduced us to.

Everyone, please accept my humble obeisances.

*An insignificant servant among the many
other servants of Śrīla Prabhupāda!*

Hiranmayi Devi Dasi

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare*

Divine Lord Śrīla Prabhupāda my celestial Eternal Father.

Please accept my most humble prostrated obeisances at your divine lotus feet millions and millions of times.

How I long to be with you.

I miss your divine presence so very much. In your separation, every minute of my useless life seems like twelve years or more.

Of course, it is very true that you have never left us, you are always present in your divine instructions, in your books, in your temples, in your devotees, in all the wonderful gifts you bestowed upon us, and of course, you are always present in my heart, guiding me and instructing me about my real identity and my duty to serve the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. And yet, because I am so fallen, I need your physical presence...I need to see your beautiful smile, and if at all possible, touch and care for your divine body once again.

Every day now I have become addicted to hearing your divine voice, as I joyfully listen to your classes. Oh, how much nectar there is in listening to your divine voice. It soothes my mind, my heart and my spirit and gives me so much bliss and peace and understanding.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are so kind and merciful to all of us, we are nothing without you.

The world is experiencing such turmoil right now with a deadly epidemic that is killing lots of people, but for us, your helpless disciples, your divine lotus feet are our true and only shelter and, at least I can speak for myself when I say that just thinking about Your Divine Grace makes me feel safe and protected.

Please don't ever leave me, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and don't allow me to drift away either.

Please always remain in my heart and in my mind like you have been all these years.

As I get nearer to the point of having to depart from this useless body I now occupy, you have allowed me to see things better and clearer. I only pray to be engaged in your service, either in this life or in whichever life I go to.

If Lord Kṛṣṇa kindly allows me to serve you, to serve your divine lotus feet and your divine mission, as well as those sincere devotees who serve your divine lotus feet and your divine mission, before I reach the end of my life in this body, then my life will be successful

and sublime. I pray to Lord Kṛṣṇa that wherever I go from here I can serve you, serve your divine lotus feet, and serve those devotees who are serving you and your divine mission.

These are my sincere desires, Śrīla Prabhupāda, please allow me to fulfill them.

So many times you corrected me while doing different things. Like the time I was sitting at your lotus feet while the Gurukula boys were having a *kīrtana*, and I was clapping my hands trying to create some intricate beat to follow. You were so kind and merciful to me at that moment; you didn't have any physical strength because of so much fasting, and yet, you turned to me and took the trouble to tell me "No, not like that, like this", and showed me how to clap my hands in a proper way...

"One, two, three" you calmly said while showing me with your own hands how to do it.

Such compassion, so much mercy.

Oh dearest Father.

And what about the time I entered your room and while paying obeisances, I put my *japa* beads on top of a little mat thinking it was ok, but you immediately corrected me and like a roaring lion said to me, "why you put your beads on the floor!"

Or the time I was so foolishly trying to ask a *nāga-bābā sādhu* to please leave the temple because he was standing naked in front of Gaura Nitāi while he was getting *darśana*,

I was thinking that because I was the manager of the temple I would show my gurudeva how I could handle a situation like that (which at the time I considered wrong, because in *The Nectar of Devotion* it says that one should not stand naked before the Deities).

Well, I was making a fool of myself, trying to ask the *nāga-bābā sādhu* to please leave the temple, but you, very calmly simply called me and said to me, "don't bother him, let him be," showing me that not all the rules apply to everybody.

Or how about the time I was carrying you back to your house and suddenly I stumbled and I nearly dropped you, you remained so calm and unaffected, and when I finally put you down instead of chastising me you put your hands together and with great kindness and compassion said to me, "Thank you very much."

Oh Prabhupāda, you have given me so much love and infinite mercy, and not just to me but to everyone.

You even allowed me to travel with you in an airplane, and even

though you didn't arrange for me to come along, I know that it was due to your divine mercy that I was able to do so, just like everything good and auspicious that has happened in our lives has been just a product of your causeless mercy. I remember on that airplane trip, we all enjoyed the remnants of the *prasādam* you had just eaten, and when the flight attendant came to ask you if there was anything that she could bring you, you so casually said to her, "Yes, bring 7-ups for everyone."

What a thrill! Useless me flying in an airplane with my lord and master, my eternal father and drinking a 7-up with Him. How much more could I ask for?

All thanks to your divine mercy.

I could go on mentioning all the different times you gave me your special mercy in so many different ways.

You even allowed me to put your divine lotus feet upon my head while I was massaging your legs and your divine lotus feet.

You told me you liked the mamey milkshakes that I was making for you and said that that was Kṛṣṇa's favorite fruit.

Indeed, all these memories and many others of being with you are sustaining my otherwise useless life, and I can simply weep longing for your divine association once again.

It has been 50 years since I joined your Movement, and even though I have rendered service in many departments of your great society and in different temples, when I look back at the wonderful things that some of my godbrothers and godsisters have done for you and your divine mission, I feel so humble and ashamed thinking and realizing that I haven't done enough to serve you.

Please forgive me, dear Father, I am so fallen and useless. Please engage me in your service, let me serve your divine mission, let me serve those devotees that are so sincerely serving your divine lotus feet and your mission, and please, please, forgive my offences.

I totally belong to you, so you please do with me as you like.

All glories to your divine lotus feet, all glories to you, oh divine Father, divine Lord, divine Master, You are my life and soul.

Begging to remain a speck in the dust of your lotus feet forever and ever,

Your most fallen and humble dog,

Jaya Gouranga Dasa

“For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost nor is he ever lost to Me.” — Bg. 6.30

Please accept my humble obeisances Śrīla Prabhupāda, my most wonderful lord and master.

All glories to you for your sublime munificence,
a brilliant divine beacon for clarity, sanity
in the darkness of disturbed emotions and commotion.
You enlighten ‘n’ heighten our awareness of devotion.
“Standing before you can be thus seen directly.
Only in this way, can you enter into the mysteries
of My understanding.” (Bg. 11.54)

You fill our hearts with transcendental
knowledge that inspires,
so we can cross over the ocean of material desires.
Only by Your Divine Grace, can we serve favorably
Hearing from you, serving you, we are safe, strong and free.
Deaf can hear, lame can walk, blind can see,
By Your Divine Grace and the merciful glances of our Lords

I fervently aspire to live, serve, sing, sway ‘n’ pray
For you, Prabhupāda, every day.
Celebrating you, Prabhupāda, every day
Hearing the Absolute Truth from you
Ultimate shelter and solace, you.

I relish hearing your *bhajan*s ‘n’ classes every day
Especially your NOD classes from '72, Vṛndāvana
or like “*The Thief in Vṛndāvana...*”
“Faithfulness, we must be very eager to see Kṛṣṇa.”
Bliss in hearing you chuckle when you speak,
how the thief was trying to trick Kṛṣṇa with duplicity,
Humorously, you describe how the thief was dealing with
the Supreme Trickster
Association with Kṛṣṇa, the thief became purified.
“You simply make contact with Kṛṣṇa.”

Maybe some hope for me...
Your sacred voice Prabhupāda,
Goloka Vṛndāvana śabda.

Prabhupāda, you are always with me

You constantly help me hear and see
even when I don't want to hear and see...
Your divine presence and Kṛṣṇa
is in everything, everyone
You help me calm my restless mind
Time after time,
So I can learn to love you and Kṛṣṇa
All the time.

I pray every day to be able to serve your devotees
selflessly, effectively, devotionally.

*Your stumbling, bumbling, fumbling,
sometimes grumbling servant,*

Mahadevi Dasi

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

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

All glories to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Jaya Gurudeva *Patita-pāvana!*

*pitāsi lokasya carācarasya
tvam asya pūjyaś ca gurur garīyān
na tvat-samo 'sty abhyadhikah kuto 'nyo
loka-traye 'py apratima-prabhāva*

“You are the father of this complete cosmic manifestation, of the moving and the nonmoving. You are its worshipable chief, the supreme spiritual master. No one is greater than You, nor can anyone be one with You. How then could there be anyone greater than You within the three worlds, O Lord of immeasurable power?” — *Bg. 11.43.*

In this significant verse, we can realize the infinite supremacy of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, masterfully explained by His close friend and pure devotee, Śrī Arjuna. Actually the blessed Lord is the original spiritual master, and He decided to speak this divine and eternal science to Lord Brahmā, the first living being, from whom emanates the chain of disciplic succession of genuine and authorized spiritual masters, until it reached our much loved gurudeva, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is the center and guide of our destiny, our life and our devotional service.

From the moment he decided to come to the West, he gave us the great example of what a genuinely sincere, loving, humble, simple and 1000% dedicated devotee is, and who has Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and his guru mahārāja, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja Prabhupāda, at the center of his life, solely and exclusively. He has never found meaning at this material life, except through the absolute dedication of devotional service at the lotus feet of the blessed Lord, renouncing all pleasure that could offer it. His example of life is surprising to anyone who has in his hand his biography, the books he wrote, the books he translated, masterfully

written, with their brilliant meanings.

Despite his advanced age and upon reaching a continent unknown to him, he risked his life, his health, his safety, his personal comfort, to arrive in a country where he believed with full conviction that people – especially young people – needed someone to guide them on a luminous and spiritual path, and in this way to leave the infernal world of drugs, illicit sex and ignorance in which they were submerged.

Apparently he came alone, but in reality, he brought with him the guidance of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the divine association of many pure and liberated souls who guided him and gave him the necessary strength to continue in his effort to save this multitude of souls and bring them back home, back to Godhead; always following the instructions of his spiritual master.

After many obstacles, his absolute effort, dedication and dedication triumphed. And in this way, he made many disciples and followers around the world, in all corners of this planet Earth, founded hundreds of temples, farms, Gurukula schools, preaching centers meanwhile publishing hundreds of books that to this day continue to be successfully translated, printed and distributed throughout this planet. As he himself predicted, his books will be read for the next 10,000 years.

Year after year, we are allowed to pay him a sincere tribute for the celebration of his wonderful transcendental Vyāsa-pūjā, with deep love, dedication and devotion from each of his disciples.

Every day I try to honor his holy memory, trying to follow his divine and sacred instructions. In this way I perceive him instructing me, guiding me and enlightening me for the rest of my insignificant existence in this current body and in all the future ones that he wishes to give me, life after life, to continue fighting in an attempt to serve and please Him as he'll see fit.

It is true that each year we disciples are less, since many have already left, perhaps some to meet him for all eternity, others taking new births to continue their service at his divine lotus feet.

But there are also new generations of devotees surrendered to his divine lotus feet, who read his books and sincerely try to follow his instructions, distributing books and performing various services to please Him. It is a devotional chain that will never be broken, because fortunately, this Movement for Krishna Consciousness that he created and founded with so much love will continue to grow.

Thank you, thank you very much, Your Divine Grace, for coming to this material world and bringing the mission to cleanse us from the material contamination with your holy association and guidance.

Infinite thanks for being my spiritual master, my guide, my light, my illumination, my counsellor, my confidant, my companion, my father, my friend, my example to follow. With you I have everything, without you I have nothing. I'm nobody, please don't ever leave me as you have not done yet.

All glories be to you for all eternity!!

All glories to your divine, immaculate, perfect and sacred books, just as they are, just as you left them!

All glories to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda! Over and over I fall at the shadow and dust of your divine lotus feet.

Your retractile servant of the servant of your servant's servant,

Maha Punya Devi Dasi
Celaya, Guanajuato, Mexico

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*

Never like this year (2020), due to the pandemic that hit the whole world, have those who took shelter at your divine lotus feet had such an opportunity to take particular advantage of your teachings. For the first time, I have tangible experience of how the authoritativeness of your instructions is an indispensable condition for our survival. From every point of view – both material and spiritual.

Recently I listened to one of your lessons on the various calamities that afflict this material world. Calamities that can directly affect also the devotees, even though they are under Lord Kṛṣṇa’s protection; the Supreme Lord whom you have made known to us, not in that “sentimental” and generic way as many (perhaps on purpose) present Him, but in His authentic aspect, as described by the Vedic scriptures.

The benefit we are enjoying, especially in such a moment where the material energy is clearly revealing all its nature of precariousness, is exclusively due to your teachings, authentic and devoid of any hint of personal interests.

“Authentic” is something that in this era of Kali is very difficult to be found.

You taught us how, by fixing his mind in your teachings, even in the midst of calamities, the devotee always remains undisturbed and free from fear. If those teachings were not genuine and authentic, they could never give us such tranquillity, realization and trust.

We read in your comments and listened in your lessons, “the devotee always knows how to make a good profit, even from a bad deal”. A phrase that perhaps until now we have only read and listened to, without being fully aware of how this would have been possible in a practical way; now that we are in it (the bad deal), we fully understand the importance of these instructions and how important true spiritual realization is.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Thanks to you, I am becoming aware and realizing in its crude reality what this material world really is.

Your teachings are not like the flowery language that many self-interested so-called “gurus” show, just to capture as many sentimental disciples as possible. On the contrary, your teachings make us touch reality as it is, without deception and without double purposes, in a real and direct way, without the need for subterfuge.

In a dangerous situation the mind becomes confused, it tries all the possible remedies to get out of it but, as far as we are concerned, everything becomes easy, even in the most fearsome circumstances.

*vyavasāyātmikā buddhir
ekeha kuru-nandana
bahu-śākhā hy anantās ca
buddhayo 'vyavasāyinām*

Without asking for something in return, you have endowed us with that resolute intelligence that allows us to remain stable and determined in facing any danger caused by material nature.

Materialists cannot understand our privilege in having you as a source of all our inspiration.

If the world could truly realize the importance of having an authentic spiritual teacher like Your Divine Grace, as in a gust of wind, all suffering would be swept away.

Just as the spiritual soul, being part and parcel of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, naturally possesses His qualities, by our contact with you, we disciples, have acquired a portion of your characteristics. As far as I am concerned, my only hope is that this tiny particle acquired by me will remain always ignited, so that I can serve you until the end of my days. Both in this life and the next.

With sincere and endless gratitude that will never be enough to repay you.

Your eternal servant,

Mrtyuhara Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my loving obeisances at your divine lotus feet. All glories to you!

When I was living at Juhu temple, Hare Kṛṣṇa Land, Bombay, from 1990 to 1995, I knew there were several of your key associates still alive at the time, and I felt compelled to meet and interview them. One of your friends who ended up performing very crucial service for you and our Movement was Mr. Kartikeya Mahadevia, who I met and interviewed in 1992.

He first began to hear about you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, through the local papers and a few international magazines in 1968. He was quite surprised to understand that an Indian *sādhu* was attracting followers in America. He thought it rare that an Indian could attract the attention of the American people. Well, he had not yet met you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Kartikeya Mahadevia was from a Gujarati textile family. He was working as a purchaser for the textile industry. When one of the merchants invited him to his house to meet you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, he was eager to do so.

Kartikeya Mahadevia: “One day in 1971, my friend Mr. Rasiklal Gandhi invited about 20 executives of the Mafatlal Group to his house in Santacruz to meet Śrīla Prabhupāda. This was my first meeting with Prabhupāda, and he explained clearly how his teachings were coming from the *paramparā*, or line of disciplic succession, which was authorized by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. I had been raised since childhood as a Vaiṣṇava and I knew about Lord Caitanya, but I didn’t know that He was non-different from Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda explained these things so clearly, and that very same day I became a Life Member of ISKCON.”

At the time, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you had the small temple at the Akash Ganga building close to downtown Bombay. You would periodically visit for 10 to 15 days, and Mr. Mahadevia came often to see you there.

Kartikeya Mahadevia: “Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mystic potency was not to create gold, but his *chamatkaar* (miracle) was that he was completely cleansing contaminated people and changing them into Vaiṣṇavas.”

In January of 1973, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you were invited to visit

Ahmedabad in Gujarat as a guest at the house of Navanitlal Patel. Mr. Mahadevia went there for eleven days to meet with you, and he invited you and some of your disciples to stay at his place in Bombay after you left Gujarat. As soon as you returned to Bombay, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you stayed at Mr. Mahadevia's house with four of your disciples for four days, after which Mr. Mahadevia let the devotees use one of his empty flats, and you established a small temple there for 41 days.

Kartikeya Mahadevia: "I watched him from close quarters. Every morning I drove him to Worli at 6 am, and we walked for 45 minutes along the main footpath at the oceanfront. I realized that he was a different type of *sādhu*; he spent his own money and didn't want to burden me. In fact, after he stayed at our house for a few days, he would always give us a gift in return, such as a sari for my wife, or a tape recorder. I found this loving exchange to be very touching. Ultimately I realized how genuine he was."

When you gave lectures, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you would read the Sanskrit, and you asked Mr. Mahadevia's 14-year-old daughter to read the English translation. One day she asked you if they could do their own Deity worship at home. You, in turn, asked her, "Who will wake up early to bathe and dress the Deities, and perform *ārati* and regular *pūjā* in the afternoon and evening?" When she promised to do so with the assistance of her family, you presented them with nine-inch brass Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa Deities. Then, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you yourself performed the first *ārati* to Them on March 8, 1973. How magnificent it must have been.

One day, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you told Mr. Mahadevia that if he wanted to propagate ISKCON's work, he should either publish, translate or sell the books. He contacted his former school teacher who spoke perfect Sanskrit, English and Gujarati. He paid him to translate the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* into Gujarati. After 18 months it was completed.

In those days, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you were travelling throughout India. Mr. Mahadevia went to hear you speak in Hyderabad, Vṛndāvana, Calcutta and Māyāpur. Then, in December of 1975, he invited you to return to Ahmedabad because he knew that a lot of Life Members could be made there. During this visit, Kartikeya Mahadevia arranged for you to stay for six days, December 24 to 29, 1975, as a guest at the palace of the Mahārāja of Sanand, which lies 18 miles to the West of Ahmedabad. While there the Mahārāja

greatly appreciated your presence, and he arranged evening pandal programs so that hundreds of villagers could attend your Hindi lectures.

As Kartikeya Mahadevia's family had lived in Gujarat for many generations, he knew many important people there. He was able to help make almost 100 Life Members. He also became the guarantor for the first ISKCON temple in Ahmedabad.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you had told Mr. Mahadevia that you wanted some agricultural land near Ahmedabad for a Gurukula. This compelled Mr. Mahadevia to attempt something, as he worded it, "very bold", for your pleasure.

Kartikeya Mahadevia: "I knew that the elderly gentleman, Mr. Bhogilal Patel, had a large piece of suitable land in Ahmedabad. I asked him to please give some to ISKCON. I was prepared to be refused, but he told me to return the next day after he consulted with his son. The next day I was astonished that they decided to give 100 acres. I had only expected 5 or 10 acres. As this land is in the middle of the city, its value is now incalculable. Some day ISKCON will build a wonderful project there." (Of course, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you know that by your mercy, twenty years later in the 1990s the most splendid and stunning temple, ISKCON Ahmedabad was built.)

Very dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I could see that by your association, Kartikeya Mahadevia developed the utmost respect, admiration and affection 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 Gopala Dasi
ISKCON Miami/ISKCON Alachua, Florida

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my humble obeisance to your lotus feet on the most auspicious day of your divine appearance.

We were young, strong and very determined, helping you change the world in those times. Now we are ready for your call at this time of uncertainty. This is the time the bell is ringing. This is the time for us to stand up and unite and be the change you wanted us to be in your revolutionary mission, which will bring an end to the present satanic system in control.

You boldly challenged modern “civilization” as demons. You told us paper money is worthless, universities as slaughterhouses that were degrading people to the level of dogs (job-seekers) that go begging for a master in modern society that is nothing but an animal society. Its entire populace nothing more than dogs, hogs, camels, and asses.

And you rightly, and repeatedly emphasized that real wealth was land, cows, and actual goods that people can use. You told us “Don’t be dependent on anyone else. Become self-independent. And don’t be after money. Simply produce your bare necessities of life. Keep yourself fit, strong. Chant *Hare Kṛṣṇa*, read my books. Then you’ll grow strong. Is there any difficulty?” (lecture, Oct. 5th, 1975, Mauritius). No, there isn’t any difficulty. Become self-independent, it’s the secret to my success in spiritual life by following these simple instructions.

For your glorification on this auspicious day Śrīla Prabhupāda, our distribution is still going on of your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatams* in ten-volume sets.

K.B.I printed the first 5,000 sets and recently another 5,000 sets under B.B.T. India labels were printed thanks to your sincere, self-independent disciples financing both printings.

Ten thousand sets total printed and being distributed with only Your Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda translations/purports up to 10.13.64 with *Kṛṣṇa Book* included in a beautiful wooden case.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your glorious achievement of the Macmillan 1972 edition of *Bhāgavad-gītā As It Is* that changed my life is still in demand and our team is distributing both B.B.T. and K.B.I. printed editions.

This classic book is enjoyed by our customers who told us how they appreciate the perfectly composed, thoughtfully considered and well-said preface you selected by Dr. Dimock. They also tell us they are inspired to continue reading by the pictures you approved of, including your smiling picture, along with our Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya disciplic succession, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura revealing the line of bona fide saints authorizing your transcendental writings as authentic and bona fide.

We must continue glorifying all the artists under your guidance on this classic book who labored to create amazing artwork, all vivid and effulgent pictures that you have authorized, including the attractive beautiful cover of your worldwide bestseller, the original Macmillan 1972 edition of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Our customers ask for this book because they know not a single scholar or academic anywhere complained about this *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

The fact is, they all gave rave and outstanding reviews, many buying outstanding orders, including libraries, colleges, and universities, and local book stores in every city and town.

The worldwide devotee community have been financing the purchases for this fallen fool to buy and distribute your original books. Only by your mercy can this happen, and I'm forever grateful for their support.

Śrīla Prabhupāda you boldly declare, "I will never die".

"I will live forever in my books and you can take advantage".

The more I read and distribute your original books the more I realize you are right there with me, helping me at every step taking advantage of your association which is ever fresh.

In return for your mercy upon this fallen fool, here are my humble book scores for this year on your 124th appearance day celebration:

1. Distributed 1,500 large hardback Macmillan 1972 edition of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. (K.B.I. printed).

2) Distributed 100 B.B.T. India printed Macmillan 1972 editions of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* (5 sets) along with our distribution of *On Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa* pamphlets with your transcendental message about chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa with each book, small and large, sold throughout India and overseas cases were donated by K.B.I. for our mass distribution for your pleasure.

Distributing your books since joining Chicago ISKCON in 1974 has been an honor. Śrī Govinda Dāsa, our Temple President invited

me to be part of your mission on my very first visit. Seeing devotees on the temple steps is forever etched in my memory. Truckloads of books came to our *saṅkīrtana* temple in Evanston, Illinois, every week. We distributed everywhere we could and even where we were not allowed to by wearing wigs and suits in disguise to conceal our shaved head and *śikhā*.

Having the opportunity to be trained up by Tripurari Swami at O'Hare International airport busy terminals gave me the skills to sell your large books and handle all kinds of adversity in those early days until Detroit ISKCON needed me for their *saṅkīrtana* leadership after the Fisher mansion was purchased. Spending precious time in that glorious temple during your stay was magical, especially when you personally gave me the Gāyatrī mantra and thread privately in your office where we spoke our first words together. This continues to be an inspiring moment that is helping me to be like you one day.

You told us "...just distribute my books throughout your life, and even if you don't think of Kṛṣṇa at the time of death, then Lord Caitanya will force His way into your mind and carry you back to Godhead". (letter to Rupanuga, Māyāpur, 21 February 1976)

This will be always my service to you Śrīla Prabhupāda, my only business, obeying your order, "distribute my books".

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for giving me your constant association daily and continued great memories as your book distributor. *Om Tat Sat*.

Your insignificant servant,

Rathayātrā Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my obeisances at your divine lotus feet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda – Thank you for all you have taught us – every day I appreciate more and more all the instructions you have given us!

The more I read your books, the more I am amazed at how you have given us everything – practical and philosophical.

At this point, we are having a “pandemic” but I can see and hear your words instructing and guiding us. The practical knowledge you have given us – keep cows, grow vegetables and live simply – more and more the value of such a “simple” existence is becoming obvious.

Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa 24 hours a day is going on through “The Festival of the Holy Name Global Pandemic *Kīrtana*” – inspiring, encouraging and giving solace to so many. *Prasāda* distribution is going on – many people are accepting and relishing *prasāda*.

You said “*Kīrtana* and *prasāda* distribution. This is our preaching mainly.”

We could not predict this situation which is happening all over the world – but you have already given us the solution!

I am not much of a devotee but am trying my best to follow your instructions.

As this body gets older I can appreciate how hard you worked to spread this Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for guiding us, instructing us and saving us from drowning in this material world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda *ki, jai!*

Your useless servant,

Jagaddhatri Dasi

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

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

A sparkle in their eyes

Yes, this is what we see time and time again when we speak of you to the newer devotees. They listen in amazement and with such attention hearing every word with such excitement. Spellbound they sit and listen to the stories about you, wishing they would have had just a moment in time with Your Divine Grace. And, as we speak to them about your glories, we too are relishing the moments we shared with you. We too feel the special bliss of having had your personal association. Your smiles, your stern looks, your loving but scolding words, your laughs at our foolishness, and your forever instructing ways linger in our hearts and reawaken as we speak to the young. It is truly a blissful experience to speak about you, to remember you, to render service to you, to repeat your words, to follow your instructions.

Yes we are so fortunate to be messengers of the past and share the memories we had with Your Divine Grace. So, just as Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī recited the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and spoke of the glories of the pure devotees like Nārada, Prahāda Mahārāja and Uddhava feeling pure transcendental bliss, we too get a taste of that spiritual nectar as we speak of and glorify your persona. What a gift you have given us. What a gift we get to share with others.

Yes, you are that sparkle who is enlightening the whole world with the words, knowledge, and beauty of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Your humble servant,

Krishna Gopala Dasa
Austin, TX

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

You are so glorious and special. When you were here on this Earth planet you took so many troubles to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the most fallen souls. I am one of the most fallen. But I am also one of the most fortunate, because by Kṛṣṇa's mercy I came into your association and was initiated by you.

You are a great soul, a pure devotee of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and you are all glorious. I would like to glorify you by reciting some of your words that you have allowed me to remember over the years. Because I left ISKCON due to my own *māyā* and nothing else, Kṛṣṇa has given me much suffering. But I have found many words of wisdom in your books and lectures that have helped me make it through this life. I hope that other devotees who may happen to read this may also be inspired by your wonderful words.

In the purport of your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, 12.13–14 you wrote:

Whenever a devotee is in distress or has fallen into difficulty, he thinks that it is the Lord's mercy upon him. He thinks, "Thanks to my past misdeeds I should suffer far, far greater than I am suffering now. So it is by the mercy of the Supreme Lord that I am not getting all the punishment I am due. I am just getting a little, by the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

And then you say a devotee "is always calm, quiet and patient, despite many distressful conditions."

These comforting words of yours are greatly helpful, more than I can express.

Next is an excerpt from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.7.12, a class you gave in Vṛndāvana in 1976:

Therefore, even in the worst condition, a devotee does not see that this thing is happening without the direction of Kṛṣṇa. Even if he is in an adverse condition, he does not feel any pain, because he knows that this adverse condition is also under the direction of Kṛṣṇa. So, 'I am fully surrendered to Kṛṣṇa, why I shall take this adverse condition as not mercy of Kṛṣṇa? It is also the mercy of

Kṛṣṇa.' So, a devotee is not disturbed by adverse conditions. He takes that this is a gift of Kṛṣṇa. It is Kṛṣṇa's mercy. 'Although I am put into difficulty, it is Kṛṣṇa's mercy.' So anyone who takes it that way, his going back home, back to godhead is guaranteed. Because he takes everything as Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Just like Prahāda Mahārāja. Prahāda Mahārāja was so much chastised by his father. You know how he was put into difficulty in so many ways. But he was taking it as Kṛṣṇa's mercy. He did not take it otherwise. So in this way, everywhere there is Kṛṣṇa's hand.

I was always puzzled that suffering is a gift of Kṛṣṇa. But you explain that in an excerpt below. Whether we are fully surrendered or not, suffering is always a gift. We can meditate on this and accept it, because everything you say is the Absolute Truth.

Who else but you could give us this amazing transcendental knowledge? It is great mercy if we can see Kṛṣṇa's hand in everything, that suffering is His gift, and that He is bringing us closer to Him by our suffering as you say in this next purport excerpt from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.17.17:

A devotee is naturally so humble and meek that he accepts any condition of life as a blessing from the Lord. A devotee always accepts punishment from anyone as the mercy of the Lord. If one lives in this conception of life, he sees whatever reverses occur to be due to his past misdeeds, and therefore he never accuses anyone. On the contrary, he becomes increasingly attached to the Supreme Personality of Godhead because of his being purified by his suffering. Suffering, therefore, is also a process of purification.

How wonderful this is! To know know that by our suffering we are getting purified and closer to Kṛṣṇa. Thank you so much for giving us this knowledge, and giving it to me.

These last words I quote by you are from *Nectar of Devotion* Chapter 10, in which you quote a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.8, which summarizes it all:

My dear Lord, any person who is constantly awaiting
Your causeless mercy to be bestowed upon him, and
who goes on suffering the resultant actions of his
past misdeeds, offering You respectful obeisances

from the core of his heart, is surely eligible to become liberated, for it has become his rightful claim.

This statement of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* should be the guide of all devotees. A devotee should not expect immediate relief from the reactions of his past misdeeds. No conditioned soul is free from such reactionary experiences because material existence means continued suffering or enjoying of past activities. If one has finished his material activities then there is no more birth. This is only possible when one begins Kṛṣṇa conscious activities, because such activities do not produce reaction. Therefore, as soon as one becomes perfect in Kṛṣṇa conscious activities, he is not going to take birth again in this material world. A devotee who is not perfectly freed from the resultant actions should therefore continue to act in Kṛṣṇa consciousness seriously, even though there may be so many impediments. When such impediments arise he should simply think of Kṛṣṇa and expect His mercy. That is the only solace. If the devotee passes his days in that spirit, it is certain that he is going to be promoted to the abode of the Lord.

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you from the core of my heart for your comforting and enlightening words of wisdom. Thank you for every drop of Krishna Consciousness you've bestowed upon me by your divine grace. How wonderful and absolutely glorious you are. There is actually no end to your nectarean words and mercy.

I am praying that you may be so kind to lift this fallen foolish soul back up to my proper position of devotional service in the association of Kṛṣṇa's wonderful devotees. I pray to you that I can live in the wonderful Śrīdhām Māyāpur, where your beautiful and glorious "Temple of the Vedic Planetarium" resides. It will be the greatest and most glorious temple in this universe.

Thank you so very much for everything.

All glories to you again and again.

Your insignificant fallen servant,

Lelihana Devi Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances to your divine lotus feet.

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

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

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

I offer my respectful obeisances to all the Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord. They are just like desire trees who can fulfil the desires of everyone, and they are full of compassion for all the conditioned souls.

*yaḥ svānubhāvam akhila-śruti-sāram ekam
adhyātma-dīpam atititṛṣatām tamo 'ndham
samsāriṇām karuṇayāha purāṇa-gulhyam
tam vyāsa-sūnum upayāmi gurum munīnām*

“Let me offer my respectful obeisances to him (Śuka), the spiritual master of all sages, the son of Vyāsadeva, who, out of his great compassion for those gross materialists who struggle to cross the darkest regions of material existence, spoke this most confidential supplement to the cream of Vedic knowledge, after having personally assimilated it by experience.”
—SB 1.2.3.

I will suppose that the ravages of the “virus” and “lockdown” will be still fresh in everyone’s minds at the time this offering is presented, but it has offered devotees much time to reflect on how much time, thought and effort can go into unnecessary activity.

How the real problem of life is to meet death remembering Kṛṣṇa alone, *anta-kāle ca mām eva smaran muktvoā kalevaram.* (*Bhagavad-gītā* 8.5)

Now, at times, the choice is clear that one must serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa by the processes of hearing, chanting, remembering and praying for engagement in His service or else one

can continue wasting much of one's valuable time.

It is something that you remind us of constantly on every page of your books.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have so wonderfully carried the mission of all the *ācāryas* – the Goswamis, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda, Śrīla Gaurakiśora and especially your guru-mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura with such immense compassion and determination.

We were reading recently in your *Lilāmṛta*, of your visit to Europe in 1974.

You landed from India in Rome and experienced a very positive reception by the Italian people of Rome who behaved as if coming to receive the blessings of the Pope. You then proceeded to Geneva where you were officially received by the Mayor in the City Hall, spoke at the World Health Organization at the UN and met with the Indologist Jean Hulbert and several scientists and professors.

At the La Salle Pleyel in Paris, you were presenting a talk to a large audience of 2500, mostly students from an overly large *vyāsāsana* supplied by the devotees. Because of your reference to 'criminals being punished by the government' and their own anti-government stance, the students became agitated and began demanding for you, Par terre, Par terre – Get down, get down, (from the *vyāsāsana*.)

In my mind, the thought was, "When and where in the entire history of the Vedas and Vaisnavism has such an abominable event occurred? It was like the '9/11' of offensiveness.

But there is a somewhat similar instance in Lord Caitanya's pastimes, CC Adi 17. 250, when the impudent student criticized the Lord in His ecstasy of chanting, "Gopī, Gopī," was chased by Him and then organized to retaliate and possibly strike the Lord.

Students, it seems, have always had a rather chequered reputation.

Still in France, you calmly replied, "I could speak to you from the floor also, but that doesn't mean that you would understand any better. If you know the science of God consciousness, then you can sit on the *vyāsāsana* and they will bow down to you."

In the Vedic Age, a powerful sage would have burnt the protestors to ashes with a powerful curse or turned them into some amoebic species for a few million births, but you, Śrīla Prabhupāda compassionately instructed the devotees, "Have *kīrtana*," to which most of the audience participated.

The next day, you were on a 20-hour flight to Melbourne, Australia to attend Rathayātrā.

In this one passage from *Lilāmṛta*; in one location you are reverentially respected, in another, offered a high governmental reception, then speak at the United Nations, to an Indologist and intelligent professors, and in another accosted by disrespectful anarchists. But you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, take it all in your stride as Lord Caitanya’s servant and ambassador, not concerned with how you are treated but only how to distribute the Lord’s teachings and His holy names. Then you step on a plane and travel halfway around the world.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, your tireless efforts of traveling around the world spreading Lord Caitanya’s message, while instructing and inspiring your disciples, still every early morning rising to present the “cream of Vedic knowledge” in your books, is simply an indication of your immense compassion for all those struggling in this darkest region of material existence.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please allow me to always remember and be amazed by your unparalleled service to Lord Śrī Caitanya, to maintain a deep appreciation for all your servants – past, present and future; and a strong and unshakeable faith in your ISKCON society.

Still your aspiring servant,

Medhavi Dasa

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your wonderful lotus feet.

All glories to you my Divine Spiritual Master.

As I was thinking about what I could say to you on this most auspicious of days I realised that there is one thing that I really must say; thank you.

I know that it was not easy for you to do this – truly impossible – task of spreading Krishna Consciousness throughout the world. You saw your godbrothers fail before you, but your determination to serve and fulfil the orders of your beloved spiritual master never wavered. I recently read how you said that actually your health was not good after you left India, that you suffered three heart attacks. Yet you made everything look so effortless as you traversed the globe repeatedly. Thinking about your health makes me recall such a sad occurrence I was witness to in Bombay. As was the norm whenever you arrived in Bombay we would all follow you up to your room and cram in to hear your sacred words. This time was a more sobering affair. Rolling up your cloth to reveal your red and swollen knee, you explained that you had been in a car crash in Mauritius. You went on to recount how just prior to the impact you had positioned your walking stick in such a way that it was supporting the weight of your body. This had protected you from the full impact of the crash. Kṛṣṇa had saved you, you declared.

Maybe it was because of that crash and subsequent knee injury that you changed your toilet in Bombay from an Indian style one to a Western one. At the time I was baffled, surely everything Indian was superior to its Western equivalent. Ah but now my 67-year-old knees have helped me fully understand it.

Consequently, I can understand that your life was not as comfortable as it may have seemed to us youngsters. For us you walked through fire. And for that, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I thank you.

But, my thanks do not stop there. I also want to thank you for the effect you have had on my own life. For you put the numbers in front of the zeros that was my life and made sense out of this senseless world that I found myself in. As a child I knew instinctively there was something wrong. But I had no idea what it was, and no one was able to explain my uneasy feelings about the world. I tried to find answers at Sunday school and even took an A-level in religious

education, but I couldn't even get an explanation as to why my uncle was blind. I mean why is one baby born perfectly and another blind? No one had an answer that satisfied me. Thankfully you were working on the answers to life's puzzling questions in the form of your books and you had some pretty dynamic and forceful (in a good way) followers who were able to finally give me satisfactory answers.

So thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda, for burning the midnight oil as you tirelessly toiled over the translations and purports of your books making every word count. And thank you for, figuratively, heaving that trunk of books onto the Jaladuta and ensuring that they got read so that the extraordinary knowledge within them got spread even to a bemused girl like me in a faraway land.

To be honest with you Śrīla Prabhupāda, I never consciously planned to join your Movement. Materially speaking my life was good, but by associating with you and your devotees, I kind of just got swept along in the powerful energy that flowed from you and your followers. So thank you for just kind of gathering me up along the way.

I also thank you for the time that I had the good fortune to spend with you; every second was a blessing.

In one way your association was predictable and in other ways it never failed to surprise. I remember one thing that happened in the Vṛndāvana Kṛṣṇa Balarāma Temple Guesthouse. It was sometime in 1976, and the guesthouse had been opened for just over a year. Someone decided to remodel the reception area of the Guesthouse. A wall was knocked down and another one was built. It seemed everyone was sure you would like the 'improvements' and upon your arrival you were taken straight to see them. I don't think anyone was prepared for your reaction. It was clear from your face that you did not approve of the transformation, and you complained that Westerners like to change things. I think it was quite a learning curve for those who witnessed the intensity of this exchange with your devotees. It certainly cemented my understanding that you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, do not like changes.

So thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda, for making me reflect on the decisions I make in life. I would not want to upset you.

I once had a more direct experience of your correcting people. It all started when you discovered that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma's garlands were being made by the local flower seller, and not by the devotees. You did not like this and wanted to higher the standard. In fact you

invited all the lady devotees to your house to learn the art of garland making. Needless to say at the given time your house was packed, I wasn't even sure where everyone had come from as there were so many people. To be honest Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this occasion, I found you a little tricky because we were all under the impression that you were going to teach us how to make the garlands, but being so busy with your mission you had one of our godsisters do it. Anyway I'm sure we all knew how to make garlands, we were there for you.

Consequently in the following days we would all gather and make garlands for the Deities. On one occasion there were a lot of small white Jasmine flowers left with broken stalks rendering them useless for garland making. Almost impulsively, with an idealistic vision in my head of demigods showering flowers from the heavenly planets, I scattered the flowers from the guest house balcony as you passed underneath. I got a message back. Don't waste flowers. This not only was an example of your humbleness but also a lesson in frugality and economics. On reflection, the flowers could have been used for the *ārati* offerings.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving me these insights into the workings of the mind of the pure devotee. You just never wasted anything.

Prabhupāda, since I started writing this offering, a most unusual thing has happened. Due to some virus the whole world is in lockdown. Borders closed, airplanes not flying, supermarket shelves empty, non-essential shops closed and people ordered to stay at home. Even your Temples are closed. It is certainly unprecedented in my lifetime. It makes me feel very grateful that I know you care about me. You once showed how you care not only for my spiritual being, but also my material self. Somehow, in Vṛndāvana, you discovered I was walking to *maṅgala-ārati* alone from, what is now, the *gośālā*. I was innocent to the ways of the world in those days and had no idea about the dangers involved in this seemingly harmless morning ritual. You informed the management that they should find a place for me in the temple, which they did. Prabhupāda, as the apocalypses may be near, I have a confession to make to you; after you left they told me I could go back to the *gośālā*, so I did. Now it seems unthinkable that it happened like that, but it did.

So thank you so much Śrīla Prabhupāda for being so caring in every way about this naïve girl's well-being. It is such a relief knowing that you care about me in every way, come what may.

You are the person who made me make sense of my journey to this material world. You made it possible for me to join the dots in the puzzle that I find life to be; helped me navigate the shark infested waters I unknowingly swam in. You put the 1 before all the zeros that made up my life.

Thank you so much Śrīla Prabhupāda.

My prayer is that you allow me to remain in your service.

Your unworthy servant,

MokshaLaksmi Devi Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

On this auspicious occasion of your appearance, I pray that I always remember you until my last breath. Many years ago I came to Vṛndāvana one dark evening during the cold winter. It was not my plan to come here. I met a devotee at the train station from Delhi, and he asked me to come to Vṛndāvana.

We took a tanga from Mathura, and he dropped me outside the construction site of Kṛṣṇa Balarāma Mandir. I was in a strange, dark place. I went inside the construction site and slept on the cement bags, covering myself with an empty gunny sack. I was comfortable and stayed warm. The next morning I met the devotees who took me to Yamunā and shaved my head, and I became a Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Ever since you have been kind and gave me shelter and taught us the knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The greatest understanding of all the knowledge was that ‘you are not his body’. Simply understanding that we are not this body, our ego can be smashed, and we can become a humble servant.

On this auspicious day. I pray to remember your glories every day until my last breath.

Your servant,

Prassannatma Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Out of your compassion and austerities, you have given so many forlorn souls a chance to be happy. Your glorious master *Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa Parivrajakācārya Aṣṭottara-śata Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura*, himself, a veritable touchstone, said that making one devotee of Kṛṣṇa, was a far greater act of charity than opening thousands of hospitals. What a merciful personality you are, that you cured so many souls dying in the prison of material life, and led them to the freedom of the spiritual world.

It is certainly amazing, how much you labored to see to the success of your ISKCON Movement. Your thoroughness in presenting the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, writing exacting, exhaustive purports, for instance, in the *Ādi Līlā*, to close any loopholes in the *siddhānta* of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The thousands of letters, to anyone that approached you, your constant travelling, are testaments to the fact that you gave everything, to help others. You were a perfect living example of someone following Lord Kṛṣṇa's instruction. In that very important verse, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.22.35, "It is the duty of every living being to perform welfare activities for the benefit of others with his life, wealth, intelligence, and words." You certainly epitomized the fully surrendered soul who lived for other's benefit.

Where would the world be without you? Your divine Movement, which you explained, was a branch of the desire tree of Lord Caitanya's *Saṅkīrtana* movement is the only hope for this planet, which is travelling, with ever-increasing speed towards the darkest modes of ignorance and madness. You have given humanity a ray of hope. It is up to your followers to capitalize on your great gift, and beg for the intelligence to maintain your Movement and preach it with our lives and souls. We need to set aside our petty disagreements, which, are described in the *Caitanya-Caritāmṛta*, as false arguments, and in the same verse, the whirlpool of unfortunate circumstances.

There is absolutely no religion, philosophy, political system, or culture, that compares to the philosophy of the Vedas, and specifically of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. It is a vast ocean of nectar, and I feel so fortunate to be a part of it, and occasionally get a tiny drop of that life-sustaining nectar.

Ideally, I would like to be empowered to help many poor souls

from the ghastly experience called material life; I try in my own small way, but I would be much happier if I could bring millions to your lotus feet. That is my desire, but I realize it's unrealistic. I am trying to accept my shortcomings, which is a humbling experience, but my desire is to see you, recognized as the greatest friend and well-wisher of all living entities. So, therefore, I beg you Śrīla Prabhupāda, to bless me with a tiny drop of your purity and potency, and to be an anonymous touchstone made of your mercy.

I have, and have had, a wonderful life, due to your blessings, and my family is trying to follow your instructions about preaching and cow protection. I remember somewhere about every *grhastha* having 12 cows, which we have now, but it's a little hard to take *sannyāsa* because of that. So I hope you will overlook my weakness of heart and my addiction to the wonderful milk products we get from Mother Cow. I go out and distribute books usually on a daily basis, so I am hoping Lord Caitanya will be kind to me, and one day, give me a chance to see you again, and thank you personally for being my best friend and truly ever well-wisher.

Your insignificant servant,

Adikarta Dasa

Serving Your 20/20 Vision

Each day passes, another is lost,
So many goals I set,
Marveling at your deep compassion,
How to repay my debt?

Serving your mission is serving you,
To that I give my life.
Duty calling, seldom falling,
Free from undue strife.

To follow in your footsteps,
Always on my mind,
With each instruction followed
Desires are realigned.

You give me true purpose,
You set my firm resolve,
To help guide our Society,
Knotty problems to solve.

I strive to do much more,
But attachment holds me back
From being more bold in preaching,
Wish I had more your knack.

Empowerment from you,
Gaurāṅga's strong mandate,
To reach the souls in this land,
Their fortune you create.

Uncertain times in which we live,
māyā strikes the heart
Of greedy takers loathe to give,
Our purity sets us apart.

Since your mood of mercy flows
Toward each conditioned soul,
Bring the fallen back to Kṛṣṇa,
What else could be our goal?

Long days service, then brief rest
Early morning rise,
Living fully what you teach,
Going home our prize.

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,
With such fervent desire,
Working as you showed us,
Our eagerness shall never tire.

Your eternal servant,
Sandamini Devi Dasi

Sukhavaha Devi Dasi

*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*

Dearest father, master, and guide,

Bowing to you, in prayer I confide,
Though I, most certainly, unqualified,
Even still, your mercy was not denied.

How gracious are you!

Though outwardly you were tested and tried.
Your guru's order in your heart fortified.
With faith, you accepted Kṛṣṇa's free ride,
Though in the belly of that ship, you almost died.

How committed are you!

With no viable, visible support from outside,
Your compassionate love spread far and wide
Whatever you needed, Kṛṣṇa supplied.
Showing the power of prayer from inside.

How devotional are you!

Though I, a fool, so full of pride.
You open my eyes, exposing I have lied,
To myself mostly, though I cannot hide
Your clear words at my closed heart prided.

How transparent are you!

Never giving up, though you openly cried,
You persevered, your faith did abide.
Spreading the holy name world wide
With Guru and Kṛṣṇa ever by your side.

How resolute are you!

Your life epitomized what your words implied.
Pure and simple, by your message I was tied.
You showed us how Kṛṣṇa would always provide.
By your inspiration, we gratefully complied.

How supportive are you!

You asked us to cooperate instead of collide;
To curb our tongue, our senses subside;
To diligently chant, devotion applied;
Bringing back the mind whenever it would slide.

How attentive are you!

Smiling and nodding as we meagerly tried
Encouraging us when we got fried
Without you, dear father, to hell I would glide
Your life is a tribute, love exemplified.

How caring are you!

You showed us that *māyā* never gratified
Instead ever binds us, our soul defied.
Through service we learn to be satisfied
As our connection to you becomes solidified.

How available are you!

Not looking for quick fixes from the outside,
I pray that I find my soul buried inside;
That my tiny love becomes intensified
As you actively continue to be my guide.

How grateful am I!

*Praying for your blessings to remain,
Your ever appreciative servant,*

Sukhavaha Devi Dasi

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Please accept my sincere obeisances unto your lotus feet.

We are in a very difficult time on this planet of Mother Bhūmi. So I pray that you will look after all of us, wherever you are, near Kṛṣṇa, for sure, without any doubt.

We all know that this era of Kali-yuga is an ocean of failures (*doṣa-nidhi*) – a very critical moment that came faster than we expected.

It is time to take complete shelter in your lotus feet and to humbly welcome in our hearts the holy names of the Lord, deeply, as the only important shelter at this time.

There is a chance, an opportunity. *Kīrtanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ param vrajet*: simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, you can free yourself from the contamination of Kali-yuga and, in your original spiritual body, you can return home, return to God. This is Kali-yuga's opportunity.

My dear Spiritual Master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are our best example, because you revealed to all your disciples how to leave the body in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We also have knowledge of how Parīkṣit Mahārāja, even having only seven days of life, instructed the Naimiṣāranya sages on the science of Vedic knowledge, before leaving his body.

I really don't know how many of us will go through this critical time successfully and continue to serve Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission by spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness around the world by continually serving your lotus feet. Everything will change and a new worldview will be established; your instructions will be always the main purpose of our life in the art of serving Kṛṣṇa.

We know that Kṛṣṇa is the true sanctioner of everything and nothing moves without His consent. We also know that our dear Mother Bhūmi, Earth, has been under a lot of pressure for a long time and those who are supposed to protect her are exploring her to their maximum and she cannot tolerate it any longer. Everything will change.

Right now, we are sailing in this ocean of misery, but we want to be protected by the captain of the boat, because you have the answer for everything, for any doubt, for any problem and you know how to be above any material disturbance by applying true knowledge, faith

and love for all *ācāryas* in the line of disciple succession.

Please, Prabhupāda, bless all of your disciples and sincere souls who came to serve Kṛṣṇa and you in this life, because the most important thing is the knowledge you have brought to us and the Brāhmaṇic Vaiṣṇava culture.

You wanted everyone to be happy in Krishna Consciousness. Everyone means men and women, regardless of race, color, creed or religion.

You are our only savior and eternal spiritual master.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most fallen obeisance.

All glories to your mission of compassion for the misguided, suffering people of Kali-yuga.

Daily, we are striving to fulfill your order for a grand temple in Śrīdhām Māyāpur. We now have several teams who are working together to complete this mission. Every day practically there is a new problem, which can affect the work and timeline. Today there is a global pandemic that makes it difficult to collect funds and move resources. Despite these challenges, the work goes on and the devotees' enthusiasm is undiminished.

You have told us not to expect things to be easy as *māyā* is always ready to make things difficult. If it were easy, it would not be worth doing. As it is, the difficulty and struggles have made the small victories so much the sweeter.

This year we had the official opening of the massive *pūjārī* floor. There are over 60 rooms dedicated to the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, Śrī Pañca-tattva, and Śrī Prahlāda-Nṛsimhadeva. The TOVP team worked hand-in-hand with the project management company at a fever pace to bring this to fruition by February 13. This was the appearance day of your beloved spiritual master Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. This is the largest *pūjārī* facility of its kind in the world.

We know you wanted us to do things in a big way, and thus we have paved the path to excel all the temples of India in deity *sevā*. This event is most significant because it heralds the re-location of the Deities into Their long-awaited new home.. All ISKCON leaders and devotees who attended the celebration and saw the entire floor for themselves were overwhelmed by the size, beauty, ornateness, quality, and functionality of the whole floor. We are very pleased with Cushman & Wakefield and our wonderful TOVP team for handling this marathon effort so thoroughly and efficiently.

Our in-house GRC factory has earned a global reputation and has supplied the myriad of decorative elements in the temple. These elements have greatly enhanced the beauty of the building which is becoming famous throughout India and the world. Many beautiful *deva mūrtis* are being created by the wonderful artists in Māyāpur, to adorn the temple inside and out.

The external features of the Main Dome are almost complete, and the East and West Wing domes are not far behind. Marble flooring is complete in some parts of the temple such as the six *chatrīs* that surround the temple domes, as well as in other areas of the temple.

Beautiful hand-made relief panels which will adorn the temple interior are underway and several pieces are now complete. The marbling of the temple interior walls and columns continues at a steady pace throughout the main temple and East and West wings, as well as the stairwells and other areas throughout the structure. Installation of custom-made railings for the stairs and open areas of the temple such as the *chatrīs* is well underway.

Work Planned for 2020

This year will see further progress in all areas of the temple, but special attention will be made to completing your *vyāsāsana*, the Deity *śimhāsanas*, and especially the planned completion of the entire East Wing of the temple housing Lord Nṛsimhadeva and His altar.

Many big fundraisers are planned for 2020 such as the #GivingTOVP 10 Day Matching Fundraiser and the possible North America tour to shore up the pledges made several years ago, and to bring donors up to speed on the remarkable progress being made. We aim to raise \$15 million this year and with your mercy, this will be possible.

Plans for 2021

As we are planning the completion of Lord Nṛsimha's East Wing of the temple in that year, we will be celebrating the opening of the entire Wing and Lord Nṛsimha's altar around Gaura Pūrṇimā, 2021. This will be another spectacular event and milestone in our progress and will bring us one more significant step closer to the Grand Opening of the TOVP in 2022.

In 2021, we will celebrate your 125th Vyāsa-pūjā Anniversary. We are planning to offer you a one-of-a-kind, jewel-like Vyāsa-pūjā Book containing the names of all of the worldwide donors who have supported this project and made it possible to become a reality. It will symbolize our combined efforts to please you and bring to fruition your most cherished and ambitious project, the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium.

Please continue to bless all of us as we endeavor to do this humble service for you, the Guru Paramparā, previous *ācāryas* and Śrī Śrī

Gaura Nitāi. Only by your blessings will we be able to somewhat realize your brilliant plan for Śrīdhām Māyāpur.

Your servants,

At the TOVP

Dearest Prabhupāda,

Please accept my *danḍavats* at your lotus feet. All glories to you, my dear master.

A brother asked me to tell him how I feel about you in my life; he said...

Hare Kṛṣṇa Dear Vidyananda prabhū

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!

When you have time; please text me or email me with your few appreciations of, and gratitude towards Śrīla Prabhupāda. So that we can adopt your sentiments in our lives.

Your servant

Pran Govind Dasa

Here's my reply to him:

Mostly, I just remember that Prabhupāda saved me and he continues to save me every day.

I don't add anything more flowery than that.

This is my entire message of gratitude to Prabhupāda...

Thank you very much!

You saved me, once upon a time, by coming to America; and spreading the love of Śrī Śrī Rādhē Śyāma in the divine form of Lord Caitanya, accompanied by Lord Nityānanda.

You continue to save me every day by filling my heart, guiding my mind, and being my ever well-wisher.

Prabhupāda, thank you for hearing my simple words. Bless me to please you. I pray to be your disciple

one day and to rejoin you soon, as a helper, as you continue your *sevā* mission; wherever you are.

Jai Prabhupāda!

Hare Kṛṣṇa!

I love you.

Your servant,
Vidyananda Dasa

(As you said in Chicago, July 5, 1975, “The servant of one who takes pleasure in learning about Kṛṣṇa.)

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my respectful obeisances.

Please let me offer you your Vyāsa-pūjā offering on this Kāmada Ekādaśī Day 2020.

The whole world is suffering from birth, death, old age and disease! Right now especially disease. You gave us the solutions to the problems of life. You instructed us to become self-sufficient and live simple lives. You told us to establish *varṇāśrama* and produce our own food. Now we have to wait in lines to get whatever food we can. The coronavirus is king right now and is ruling the world, even causing the temples you worked so hard to open, to now be closed!

It seems like the world is ending, but how could that be? We are within the Golden Age of Lord Caitanya and spiritual life is supposed to be getting better for the next 9,500 years. Your books are destined to be the spiritual lawbooks throughout this Golden Age. So how are all these calamities happening?

We need to take full shelter of you. You told us time and time again you would be here for us, for all of your followers. You said you are present in your books. You said you are present in your pictures. Your *mūrti* form is presiding over all of your temples and honored every day in *Guru-pūjā* by all the devotees. There is no shortage, there is your spiritual abundance available to one and all. We are so fortunate to have your recorded lectures, talks and sweet songs. All of us are blessed by Your Divine Grace.

You came from the spiritual world, Kṛṣṇa's ambassador with your 'Matchless Gifts' and gave them to unlimited fortunate souls all over this world. The seeds have been planted. Some have fructified and some are going to fructify in the future. Many devotees have already been delivered Back to Godhead by your grace, by your books. You are surrounded by your devotees now and many more are on the way. The perfection of our life is to continue to associate with you after our deaths.

For those who follow you by chanting 16 rounds and following the regulations, your shelter is guaranteed. We should not take a gamble. We should take shelter of you and be assured of our ultimate victory; your eternal association with our sweet Lord chanting, dancing and feasting in the spiritual world. No disease can stop us from attaining victory as long as we follow your lotus-like feet. Please grant us your mercy!

Your eternal servant,

Gauridasa Pandita Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda!

All glories to you on this day and every day! It has been so many years...and I pray for you to accept this humble offering in the form of a Sanskrit song for your pleasure and the pleasure of all of your disciples and aspiring followers.

(refrain)

*jayācārya śrīla prabhupāda param
guruniṣṭhā padati sadāsmaram
karuṇāvātārādivāṇī śatam
bhaktivedānta svāmī(jī) śaraṇam*

jaya - all glories to you, *ācārya śrīla prabhupāda* - our *ācārya* Śrīla Prabhupāda, *param* - supreme, *guruniṣṭhā* - firm faith in the guru, *padati* - standing firm, *sadāsmaram* - remembering again and again, *karuṇāvātāra* - most munificent incarnation, *ādi* - beginning with, *vāṇī* - teachings, *śatam* - always, *bhaktivedānta svāmījī* - A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, *śaraṇam* - surrendering.

All glories to the *ācārya*, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. Infused with the highest *guru-niṣṭhā* and always absorbed in it, he is distributing the original instructions of the most merciful incarnation, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, so we surrender.

*kathaya nijaya kalusam harata karuṇa sindhuḥ prema prakāśam
bhakti parama bhāsita tattva vidā rasasukha mauna rahasya bhṛtam*

(refrain)

kathaya - story, *nijaya* - own, *kalusam* - impurities, *harata* - removes, *karuṇa* - compassion, *sindhuḥ* - ocean, *prema* - love of Godhead, *prakāśam* - reveals, *bhakti* - devotional service, *parama* - supreme truth, *bhāsita* - spoken, *tattva* - truth, *vidā* - knowing, *rasa* - supreme loving relationship, *sukha* - bliss, *mauna* - silence, *rahasya* - mystery, *bhṛta* - bearing or carrying.

The story of his own life removes impurities; as an ocean of compassion he is manifesting the path to *prema*. He knows the truth spoken about the supremacy of *bhakti*, and keeps silence about his confidential *rasa*, a source of joy. We surrender unto you.

*prabhupāda mukha sūri sabhāguruṅguṇa sañcaya bhāva sudādhina
śiṣyagūḍha sahasra kārena yathā vāñīpracāra gupta mahāmahāsa*

(refrain)

prabhupāda - Srila Prabhupāda, *mukha* - beginning with, *sūri* - learned men, *sabhā* - assembly, *guruṅ* - guru, *guṇa* - good qualities, *sañcaya* - repository, *bhāva* - highest *bhakti*, *sudādhina* - great repository, *śiṣya* - disciples, *gūḍha* - concealed, *sahasra* - one thousand, *kārena* - ray (of light), *yathā* - as, *vāñī* - instructions, *pracāra* - preaching, *gupta* - hidden, *mahāmahāsa* - true greatness.

He is the guru for all; the assembly of gurus is beginning with Srila Prabhupāda; he is a great repository of the wealth of good qualities. As thousands of disciples are being created by his followers they are indeed his, just as any ray of sunlight is originating from the sun, even if hidden by a cloud, thus true greatness of his own preaching continues through his *vāñī*, instructions.

*padadeśa calendriyanigrahaṇe patuna parakīyaguṇagrahaṇe
chalavarjita graṅṭhācāryabhāsa balatarjitabhīkarakāmaruṣā*

(refrain)

padadeśa - the countries of sinful people, *calendriya* - who's uncontrolled senses, *nigrahaṇe* - in defeating, *patuna* - skillful, *para* - others, *kīya* - belonging to, *guṇa* - virtues, *grahaṇe* - in mentioning with praise, *chala* - deceit, *varjita* - without, *graṅṭha* - scriptures, *ācārya* - previous *ācāryas*, *bhāsa* - expounding, *bala* - strong, *tarjita* - reviled, *bhīkara* - fear-causing, *kāma* - desires, *ruṣā* - slayer.

He is expert in defeating the materialism of the sinful countries, where people fight with the uncontrolled senses; he is also expert in appreciating and using the good qualities in others. He gives us scriptural views of the past *ācāryas* explained, "as they are", without deceit; and by that he is subduing those possessed by strong and passionate uncontrolled desires.

*bhavabhīkaravarinidhiṁ tarata karatāla kīrtana nijakaram
svaḍṣādhika śītalakantibhṛta bhayamanghrisarojajuṣām haratā*

(refrain)

bhava - worldly existence, *bhīkara* - fear-producing, *varinidhiṃ* - ocean, *tarata* - crossing, *karatāla* – with *karatālas*, hand cymbals, *kīrtana* - singing the *kīrtana*, *nija* - always, *karam* - performing, *svadṛśa* - own gaze, *adhika* - unsurpassed, *śītala* - calming, *kanti* - bright, *bhṛta* - to have, keep, *bhayaṃ* - fear, *anḡhri* - foot, *saroja* - lotus, *juṣāṃ* - resort to, *haratā* - removing.

He has crossed the fear-producing ocean of the worldly life and is always performing *kīrtana* of the holy names. His gaze is calm and bright, and he removes the fear of everyone who surrenders to his lotus feet.

*nāma saṅkīrtana tathā nidhina ghana tapa vidhunanasannidhina
parā dharmatatim paripalayata paritās ca tamo viniṅvarayata*

(refrain)

nāma - of the holy names, *saṅkīrtana tathā* – by the *saṅkīrtana* chanting, *nidhina* - treasure, *ghana* - dense, *tapa* - misery or austerity, *vidhunana* - destroying, *sannidhina* - presence, *parā* - highest, *dharma* - duty, *tatim* - mass, group, *paripalayata* - maintaining, *paritās* - everywhere, *ca* - and, *tamo* - darkness, *viniṅvarayata* - preventing.

He is a power-house behind the *saṅkīrtana* movement, his mere presence destroys deep-rooted misery. He maintains the *parā-dharma* for everyone to follow, and thus he is preventing darkness all over the world.

JAYA ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA!

Your servant,

Chaitanya Chandra Dasa

*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,

All glories to you on this most auspicious day of Your divine appearance!

Your appearance in this world is the greatest blessing for all the conditioned souls. We have been rotting here for millions of births, since time immemorial. Without the compassion of the Vaiṣṇavas of your caliber there would be no hope. As Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura says, *chāḍiyā vaiṣṇava-sevā nistāra peyeche kebā*, “Without serving a self-realized Vaiṣṇava, no-one has ever been released from the materialistic way of life.”

You descended into this material world on the request of your Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Yes, Lord Kṛṣṇa is yours, and He will do anything for you. By understanding your earthly pastimes it is clear that the Lord was constantly fulfilling your desires and aspirations and always looking for an opportunity to serve you. As when the Lord appears He also brings with Him His associates, You have followed Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to fulfill His prophecy, *prthivīte āche yata naḡarādi grāma sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*. “In every town and village throughout the world the chanting of My name will be heard.”

You are His great general who came to inaugurate the *saṅkīrtana* movement to the Western worlds and to reignite it within India. Once when you were asked why Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself did not preach outside of India, you replied “Because He wanted to give the credit to Me.” We sing daily, *ebe jaśa ghuṣuk tribhuvana*. Your fame is spread all over the three worlds. You truly are *jagad-guru* and a dearmost servitor of the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Lord Himself, Lord Brahmā, Lord Śiva, Nārada Muni, what to speak of other demigods, know of your glorious activities that you performed while physically present here on Earth. In the *Śrī Caitanya caritāmṛta*, when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was speaking about the activities of Śrīla Mādhavendra Puri, He spoke about him with great relish and ecstasy. Śrīla Madhavendra Purī’s devotional service and

your devotional service have many parallels, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I will quote from some passages of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā*, Chapter 4 to show these parallels:

[170:](#)

Thus Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally praised the nectarean characteristics of Mādhavendra Purī, and while He related all this to the devotees, He personally relished it.

[172:](#)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, “Mādhavendra Purī was so fortunate that Kṛṣṇa personally appeared before him on the plea of delivering milk. Three times the Lord gave orders to Mādhavendra Purī in dreams.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you also had many dreams, some of which You shared with us. Your spiritual master Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and the Lord appeared a number of times and gave you orders. On the night of the second consecutive day of heart attacks on the Jaladuta, you had a dream. Lord Kṛṣṇa, in His many forms, was rowing a boat, and He told you not to fear. You felt assured of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s protection, and the violent attacks did not recur.

[176:](#)

In the provinces of India governed by the Muslims, there was much inconvenience in traveling with sandalwood and camphor. Because of this, Mādhavendra Purī might have gotten into trouble. This became known to the Gopāla Deity.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in order to deliver the poor conditioned souls, you underwent so many inconveniences in printing your books and trying to obtain passage to America. So many obstacles were there. Then once onboard the Jaladuta you suffered sea sickness, ill health and in two consecutive days two heart attacks. You thought that if another heart attack had come, you would have not survived. Sumati Moraji and her associates had also said prior to your going “Swamaji, don’t go to America, you will die”. But living or dying,

your only concern was to execute the order of your spiritual master.

[180:](#)

“After receiving the transcendental orders of Gopāla, this great personality traveled thousands of miles just to collect sandalwood by begging.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, at the advanced age of 69 years, You traveled to the other side of the planet on a cargo ship. An ocean voyage that lasted 38 days!

[182:](#)

Without considering his personal comforts, Mādhavendra Purī carried one *maund* [about eighty-two pounds] of sandalwood and twenty *tolās* [about eight ounces] of camphor to smear over the body of Gopāla. This transcendental pleasure was sufficient for him.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, without considering Your personal comforts, sometimes not even eating sufficiently, you sacrificed everything to get the First Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* published. Going back and forth from Śrī Vṛndāvana *dhāma* to Delhi and Bombay on a very meager budget. Then you brought 200 sets (600 books) with you aboard the Jaladuta!

[185:](#)

Although Mādhavendra Purī did not have a farthing with him, he was not afraid to pass by the toll officers. His only enjoyment was in carrying the load of sandalwood to Vṛndāvana for Gopāla.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, You were fearless about coming to America. Along with the 600 volumes of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, You had only \$7 in rupee currency, a suitcase, umbrella and a supply of dry cereal in your possession. Not caring if you would die on the voyage or if there would be suitable facility or food once arriving in America. Your only pleasure was to please your spiritual master. You never did spend those rupees until you returned to India two years later.

[186:](#)

This is the natural result of intense love of Godhead. The devotee does not consider personal inconveniences or impediments. In all circumstances he wants to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

[187:](#)

“Śrī Gopāla wanted to show how intensely Mādhavendra Purī loved Kṛṣṇa; therefore He asked him to go to Nīlācala to fetch sandalwood and camphor.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in exactly the same way, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa wanted to show the three worlds how much love and devotion you have for your spiritual master and Him. Therefore, He had you endure so many initial hardships. All this was for your future glorification. You will come to be known as the greatest hero of this Kali-yuga!

[188:](#)

With great trouble and after much labor, Mādhavendra Purī brought the load of sandalwood to Remuṇā. However, he was still very pleased; he discounted all the difficulties.

[189:](#)

To test the intense love of Mādhavendra Purī, Gopāla, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, ordered him to bring sandalwood from Nīlācala, and when Mādhavendra Purī passed this examination, the Lord became very merciful to him.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the Lord similarly tested you, and after passing the Lord’s examination, He fully empowered you to spread His holy names to every town and village on the planet. The whole world is forever indebted to you for your glorious service!

[190:](#)

Such behavior exhibited in loving service between the devotee and the devotee's lovable object, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is transcendental. It is not possible for a common man to understand. Common men do not even have the capacity.

[210:](#)

In this way, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu personally tasted with His own mouth the transcendental qualities of Gopālājī, Gopīnātha and Śrī Mādhavendra Purī.

[211:](#)

Thus I have described both the transcendental glories of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's affection for His devotees and the highest limit of ecstatic love of God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I offer You millions upon millions of obeisances. I humbly beg that you forgive all of my countless offenses and fully engage me in pure devotional service at your lotus feet.

Your fallen, aspiring servant,

Tejaprasad Dasa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to you!

I feel like I'm the luckiest person in the world to have gotten your mercy to catch hold of your lotus feet at your temple on Capitol Hill, Seattle, Washington in September 1974. Shortly after I moved into the temple, your servant, Sukadeva Dasa, the Temple President, asked me to go into the understaffed Deity kitchen to assist Nistulla Dasa during the Christmas marathon. Just a few weeks later he sent me out on *Saṅkīrtana* to distribute your small books. Damagosh Dasa and Sura Dasa scrambled us out the door every morning by 8:30 sharp! Thank you for that initial opportunity to join your worldwide *Saṅkīrtana* Movement and to start doing service for you.

I thank you also for being our brilliant *Saṅkīrtana* general, our beloved teacher and our spotless example. In a world where the reputations of the founders who came from India of most of the other yoga organizations have fallen into dishonor, you are being recognized as a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra* and pure devotee of the highest caliber.

I am writing this offering to you from across the street from New Dwarka, one of your most loved temples, where my husband, Mrigendra, and I have been fortunate enough to live and serve amidst your disciples and granddisciples for almost 30 years. I am praying that you will continue to bless us to continue to serve you in some small or huge and wonderful way for many, many years to come.

Enthusiastically, your humble servant,

Pavani Devi Dasi

There are no contradictions in the pastimes of the Lord or His pure devotee. What appears to be contradictory automatically becomes equalized in their transcendental personalities.

*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*

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Possessing great humility
yet confident and bold,
though you are meek and gentle,
the truth is always told.

And fearless as you wield your sword
of knowledge all around,
you kick your lotus boot on heads
of rascals to the ground.

You are renounced and detached
from everything we see,
yet you are using all of this
to somehow set us free.

Though aloof from everyone
you are our greatest friend,
but seeing you as one of us
will cause our dismal end.

As you walk through this world
that wreaks of condemnation,
your purity cannot be touched
by gross contamination.

And in that secret place
beyond the lure of *māyā*'s veils,
you live with your beloved Lord
where truth and faith prevails.

You have come to save us all
from the things we hold most dear,
steeped in illusion thinking
that our home is really here.

O' ambassador of the Lord
and master of my soul,
you bestow the sacred gift
of life's eternal goal.

Hearing from the perfect master,
I'm quenched by nothing less.
Your sacred words are my life
and all I need possess.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda...

Your grateful and dependent daughter,

Samapriya Devi Dasi

Prabhupāda Tattva

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my repeated obeisance in the dust of your lotus-like feet. Why do we offer such obeisance? Aside from being an expression of affection for Your Divine Grace, for all the many riches you have bestowed upon us — and aside from the fact that you so fully deserve our reverence and love — we offer obeisance unto you because nothing pleases Kṛṣṇa more. As you taught us: Honoring and loving the Lord’s pure devotee is even better than honoring and loving the Lord Himself. It is all about pleasing Kṛṣṇa.

In Kṛṣṇa-līlā, Śrī Balarāma assists Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His enjoyment as Master of Līlās, and, through expansion and spiritual alchemy, He offers this same opportunity to all living beings. Indeed, everything in existence ultimately assists or serves Kṛṣṇa’s *līlā*, and is thus an expansion of Balarāma, either directly, through the various Viṣṇu expansions, or twice-removed as ordinary living entities and finally as material energy.

In Caitanya-*līlā*, this same Balarāma manifests as Nityānanda Prabhu, and, as Guru Tattva par excellence, guides us in pleasing Kṛṣṇa, the project initiated by Śrī Balarāma. Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda — you bring this same pleasure principle to everyone who has come after you, in all its fullness, and so Balarāma Tattva emerges in our world as Prabhupāda Tattva.

All glory, all glory to Lord Balarāma-Nityānanda-Prabhupāda, by whose mercy we may one day bring pleasure to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

But who serves Kṛṣṇa best? You have taught us that Rādhikā is unparalleled in Her devotion, in Her mood of loving Kṛṣṇa, even if Her level of consummate love is unreachable by any other living being. She is the embodiment of Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure (*hlādinī-śakti*).

Her very name “Rādhā” is derived from the Sanskrit *arādhana*, which means “worship,” and she is commonly known as “Rādhārāṇī,” for She is the “queen” of such worship. Her name implies that Her love for Kṛṣṇa is unsurpassed. You taught us that although Kṛṣṇa is so beautiful that He can attract millions of Cupids, and is therefore called Madana-mohana, “the attractor of Cupid,” Rādhārāṇī can attract even Kṛṣṇa. She is therefore called Madana-mohana-mohinī — “the attractor of the attractor of Cupid.”

Our greatest achievement, then, would be to follow in your footsteps, for you attract that unique personality who attracts the attractor of Cupid!

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

This is the great secret of Guru Tattva.

Along these lines, your Guru Mahārāja, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, has written as follows:

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

In the realm of *mādhura-rati*, it is Śrīmatī Vārṣabhānavī [Rādhā], Kṛṣṇa’s *ānanda-dāyini-śakti* (pleasure-giving potency) who is considered to be *guru-tattva*. She has two manifestations — one is Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and the other is Śrī Gadādhara or Śrī Gaurasundara who has taken the heart and halo of Śrī Rādhā. Those who take refuge under Śrī Baladeva-gopī Ānaṅga-maṅjarī accept Śrī Baladeva Nityānanda Prabhu as their *guru*, and they also accept Śrī Vārṣabhānavī-devī as *guru*. The reason is that except for allegiance to Śrī Vārṣabhānavī, Śrī Ānaṅga-maṅjarī has no separate fulfillment. Many have performed *bhajana* under the shelter of Śrī Jāhnavā, the *śakti* of Śrī Nityānanda.

Although expressed in esoteric terms, this is the essence of Guru Tattva as you have presented it to us. To summarize: Balarāma’s position as spiritual master is manifested further in his form as Nityānanda Prabhu, crystallized in His ultimate act of mercy to

Jagāi and Mādhāi. The two brothers virtually defined sinfulness and atheism among the townspeople of Śrī Chaitanya's Navadvīpa. Still, they eventually became great devotees by Nityānanda's grace. You offer this same opportunity to the rest of the world. You thus represent the essence of Balarāma and Nityānanda Prabhu.

And your guru affords us the inner meaning: Śrī Nityānanda is considered non-different from his wife Jāhnavā Ṭhākurānī, and it is She who represents guru for practitioners in *mādhurya-rasa*, or the most confidential form of conjugal love in the Gauḍīya tradition — the special dispensation that Mahāprabhu came to give. By Nityānanda Prabhu's causeless mercy, one attains Jāhnavā's shelter and thereby the shelter of Ānaṅga Mañjarī (the younger sister of Śrī Rādhikā), Jāhnavā's incarnation in Kṛṣṇa-līla. She is thus representative of Śrī Rādhā, the ultimate in Guru Tattva.

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda — it is you who manifest as all of these personalities for us, your disciples, and for your disciples' disciples, and for everyone forevermore, for without Your Divine Grace, we would have no access to Them or the mercy They so freely give. For us, YOU are Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma-Gaurasundara-Nityānanda-Jāhnavā-Ānaṅga-mañjarī-Rādhā Tattva, all summarized as the direct and beautiful Prabhupāda Tattva. Śrīla Prabhupāda ki jai!

Your servant,

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*

*tvam naḥ sandarśito dhātrā
dustaram nistitīṣatām
kalim sattva-haram puṁsām
karṇa-dhāra ivārṇavam*

“We think that we have met Your Goodness by the will of providence, just so that we may accept you as captain of the ship for those who desire to cross the difficult ocean of Kali, which deteriorates all the good qualities of a human being.” — SB 1.1.22

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet on the 124th anniversary of your divine appearance in Kolkata, West Bengal, India.

I am writing this offering the day after Narasimha Caturdashi. The world is suffering a pandemic caused by a flu-like virus. No one can enter the temple by edict of the Mayor of Atlanta. All the citizens are suffering great material stress and fear. An economic hardship like the Great Depression of 1929 in the USA has appeared. The worst has yet to come.

During this time of uncertainty and strife, I am meditating on your pastime during World War Two. This pastime is written by H.H. Satsvarupa das Gosvāmī in his book *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*:

Then in 1943 the British found that the Japanese, who had already taken Burma, were at the doors of India, approaching Bengal. By their tactic known as the “denial policy,” the British sank many Indian boats carrying food and destroyed large rice crops, fearing that they would fall into the hands of the enemy. This left local Indians starving and without the boats they needed for trade. The famine that ensued was the worst that had hit Bengal in 150 years. The government removed all control

of food costs, and those who could not afford to buy at the skyrocketing prices died in the streets of Calcutta.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: I have got experience – the government created artificial famine. The war was going on, so Mr. Churchill's policy was to keep the people in scarcity so they will volunteer to become soldiers. So this policy was executed. Big men, they collected the rice. Rice was selling at six rupees per mound. All of a sudden it came to fifty rupees per mound. I was in the grocer shop purchasing, and all of a sudden the grocer said, "No, no. I am not going to sell any more!" At that moment the price was six rupees per mound. So suddenly he was not going to sell. A few hours later, I went back to purchase, and the rice had gone up to fifty rupees per mound.

The government-appointed agents began to purchase the rice and other commodities which are daily necessities. They can offer any price, because the currency is in their hands. They can print so-called papers, a hundred dollars, and pay. A man becomes satisfied, thinking, "Oh, I have a hundred dollars." But it is a piece of paper...

That was the policy. "You have no money, no rice? So another avenue is open – yes, you become a soldier. You get so much money." People, out of poverty, would go there. I have seen it. No rice was available in the market. And people were hungry. They were dying.

Abhay managed to purchase just enough for his own family to survive. But he saw the beggar population increase by the hundreds. Month after month he saw the footpaths and open spaces congested with beggars, cooking their food on improvised stoves and sleeping in the open or beneath the trees. He saw starving children rummaging in the dustbins for a morsel of food. From there it was but a step to fighting with the dogs for a share of the garbage, and this also became a familiar sight in the Calcutta streets. The British had little time to spare from their war efforts, and they worked only to save those lives essential for the fight. For the common people the

empire's prescription was uniform and simple-starvation.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: One American gentleman was present at that time. He remarked, "People are starving in this way. In our country there would have been revolution." Yes, but the people of India are so trained that in spite of artificial famine they did not commit theft, stealing others' property. People were dying. Still they thought, "All right. God has given." That was the basic principle of Vedic civilization.

Abhay knew that under the laws of nature there was no scarcity; by God's arrangement the Earth could produce enough food. The trouble was man's greed. "There is no scarcity in the world," Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī had said. "The only scarcity is of Kṛṣṇa consciousness." And this was how Abhay saw the 1943 famine. Now more than ever, this spiritual vision was relevant – Kṛṣṇa consciousness was the prime necessity. How else could man be checked from his evil propensities to become greedy, hoard, make war, and thus create misery for millions?"

The inspiration I take from this pastime is:

1. Everyone must face extreme suffering. It doesn't matter if you are a Vaiṣṇava or non-believer.
2. A person who loves Kṛṣṇa is never disturbed by excessive happiness or distress.
3. The topmost devotee is so fixed in the preaching mission of his guru that his determination and desire to fulfill that mission intensifies in times of worldwide suffering.
4. The real *mahātmā* has great compassion for the fallen souls and is always thinking how to uplift them.

From this current worldwide crisis, it is difficult to see what our next step in service to your preaching mission is.

We know that book distribution must increase so that people will have the knowledge they need to get relief from the material world. I can foresee people who purchased the books out of kindness but not reading them put them on their bookshelves. At times of great stress and hopelessness like this, they will reach for your books and find the real solution.

We also are aware that we must become self-sufficient so that there is some shelter for the devotees and others who will need food, home, peace of mind, and happiness that comes from dependening on nature and Kṛṣṇa.

We must continue the worship of the Deities installed under your shelter. You requested them to appear and accept our service. These holy places can counteract the sinful reactions of the local residents and induce an auspicious atmosphere conducive for Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Kṛṣṇa is showing the world the fallacy of life devoid of simple living and high thinking (Kṛṣṇa consciousness). I pray for the intelligence and spiritual strength to expand your mission at this opportune time. Please empower us to fulfill your mission.

All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Your servant,

Sikhi Mahiti Dasa
ISKCON Atlanta

Śrīla Prabhupāda,

We never imagined you could ever leave us. It just didn't seem possible. Your bold steps, effulgent personality, filled with faith, knowledge, determination, and love. After all, you could have left on the Jaladuta as you sailed across the Atlantic, but Kṛṣṇa saved you... Kṛṣṇa personally saved you! When your health deteriorated here in America, you went back to India, but returned rejuvenated, ready to align your soldiers and continue the battle against *māyā*. We never dreamed of a world without you...such a transcendental personality will never leave, right? That's how we felt...that was our illusion.

When you left New York to go to San Francisco to assist your fledgling disciples, the New York devotees were lost. What could they do without you? You instructed them to keep your picture on the altar and to worship it as if you were there and thus they would feel the reciprocation. It was true. They felt your presence and strived to maintain and build their temple community, push on the *saṅkīrtana* movement. So it went, as you traveled from country-to-country, giving your association freely, leaving, but remaining in your picture and your instructions. Again you became ill, and we all prayed, "Dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, if you so desire please save our Śrīla Prabhupāda." Every devotee in each temple worldwide held this prayer on their lips and in their hearts. Again it looked as if our desire was strong enough to keep you with us. We worked harder than ever to please you.

So in November 1977 when you physically left it felt incomprehensible. The captain of our ship was no longer visible, and we floundered. Still, we flounder. There are so many questions we would like to ask. Could you just set us straight on some of the controversial issues that face us? Could you just return for a month, a week, a day, a few hours?

You closed the door on your *vapuḥ* pastimes on this planet. Devastated, bereft, heartbroken, confused...how could we go on? We struggled, fought and lost, struggled, fought and won, as we endeavored to remember and follow your instructions, continued with classes on holy *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, continued distributing your books, continued to care for the Deities, continued to maintain your temples.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we do feel your presence! The door to your

vāṇī pastimes unfolded, and we saw, we see you everywhere. In every remembrance of Kṛṣṇa we remember you. Without the grace of the spiritual master no one makes any advancement. In every drink of water...*raso 'ham apsu kaunteya*, the aristocratic way you held and drank from your cup, we see you in the light of the sun and the moon, in every flower that is meant to be offered to the Supreme Lord. *Paṇḍitaḥ sama-darśinaḥ*, you have given us the vision to see everyone from the germ up to the most perfect being as spirit soul. This vision allows us to see equally and thus divisions of race, nationality, and gender are erased. *Īśāvāsyam idam sarvām*, everything is owned and controlled by the Lord. Knowing this we should accept only what is necessary as our quota, and not accept more knowing full well to whom they belong. You have gifted us the perfect Peace Formula, and now it's our business to put it into action. You have awarded us true happiness. As you explain, one who thinks himself the master is automatically troubled by the three modes of material nature, but when one understands he is a transcendental servant he is at once freed from the threefold miseries. How incredibly amazing. As soon as we're feeling out of sorts, if we reflect on our position of transcendental servant we can begin to serve and all misgivings vanish!

You are in the hearts of every one of your disciples, granddisciples and great-granddisciples. As we strain our eyes to see, there are signs of you everywhere. You are in your cherished books...if someone touches the book, reads even one sentence, one word, his path back to Godhead begins. *Kīrtana* is fast becoming a household word spreading transcendental sound everywhere. You noted when you first arrived in New York that your classes didn't seem to make devotees, but when you started *kīrtana* that's when it really started to happen. So armed with our transcendental weapons of books, *prasādam*, and *kīrtana* there's a lot of your love spreading around.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the path back home, back to Godhead you have laid with a touchstone, revealing itself due to your mercy. It's decorated with the footprints of all who have traveled on this path before....your guru, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta, his guru, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the six Goswamis, Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura have all laid the foundation. The path at times seems long and arduous, but your words, and the words of the *ācāryas* as guides, are the fuel that nourishes. We know that the ocean can be reduced to a calf's footprint. These words hold all the promise we need to stick to the

path. You told us unequivocally, “Chant 16 rounds, follow the four regulative principles, and you will go back to Godhead at the end of this life.” Also, “chanting, dancing and feasting – this is the method for this age of Kali-yuga!”

You encouraged us that a beautiful feature of this process is helping others as we progress. At times it seems we are running, skipping, and jumping along the path as we reach out to those who long for relief from this desert-like existence. One of the amazing features of this trek is that the more we stop to help others the farther along the path we find ourselves. It doesn't heed the normal rules of physics. Someone who walks slow, carefully, meditatively can find themselves magically transported even catapulted long distances into the *bhakti* world.

You advise us “Don't become enmeshed in politics....avoid the crows and become like the swans, the *paramahamsas*.” Please empower us to avoid the pitfalls of politics, fault-finding and bickering in the greater world and in our ISKCON. Allow us to remain your transcendental servants... your white, black, brown elephants who aspire to humbly remain the servants of the servant.

Your eternally grateful servant,

Sukhada Dasi

*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,

All things must pass, and my time is coming.

Many of our godbrothers and godsisters have already left this world.

You taught me, “just do as I am doing.”

I have reached 77 years of age and still follow the teachings you gave me – doing as you did.

You have been the greatest influence in my life.

I am living in Śrī Vṛndāvana *dhāma* for many years since I first lived in our Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir in 1975. Now I have my own home in the holy *dhāma* and cannot imagine living anywhere else.

Of course, I continue to travel and preach, lead *kīrtanas* for many diverse groups – both in person and online, and lecture from the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

I live the life of a *sannyāsī* although I am a *gṛhastha* with wife and child because every disciple follows the regulative principles!

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu preached to every person he met:

*kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī, śūdra kene naya
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei 'guru' haya*

You have explained this verse in many purports:

“It does not matter whether one is a *brāhmaṇa*, *śūdra*, *gṛhastha* or *sannyāsī*. These are all material designations. A spiritually advanced person has nothing to do with such designations. Therefore, if one is advanced in the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, regardless of his position in human society, he may become a spiritual master.” — SB 6.7.33 Purport.

Yes, the external *aśramas* are all material designations that’s why I travel and preach like a *sannyāsī* although a *gṛhastha*. When one of my *gṛhastha* godbrothers was recommended for

sannyāsa, you quoted this *kiba vipra śloka* and commented that he could reach more people by preaching as a householder. Then you added, “Besides, you don’t need a pole to preach!”

Unfortunately, he did not follow your direction. After you left us, he took *sannyāsa*. Later, he could not maintain the *sannyāsa aśrama* and remarried.

All difficulties in spiritual life are due to not following the instructions of the spiritual master.

In a personal *darśana* in November 1976 in your Vṛndāvana rooms, you quoted the *kibā vipra* verse to me while looking me directly in the eye.

Yes, I have taken this verse as my *prabhu-datta deśa* – the personal instruction given by the spiritual master – and have lived my life accordingly.

Personally, I am healthy, happy, and content, although not all is well in your ISKCON. You taught me that the disease of Westerners is change, change, change.

There are many conflicts in our society now all due to this change, change, change mentality. I stay aloof from ISKCON politics, knowing well that Yamarāja will mete out justice to those who transgress Vaiṣṇava behavior.

Again, difficulties in spiritual life always come when we disregard the instructions of the spiritual master. I have seen this again and again.

Kindly bless me so I can continue living in Vṛndāvana, traveling, preaching, and doing as you did until my time is up and I also must pass from this world.

Your endeavoring servant,
Vaiyasaki Dasa Adhikari

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer at your divine lotus feet my most heartfelt obeisances.

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

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

Such a privilege for me to be in front of you! You are that special and unique devotee *ācārya* chosen by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu as a *Śaktyāveśa-avatāra* for spreading Krishna Consciousness all over the planet! And this happened because of your extraordinary high level of consciousness, or Kṛṣṇa consciousness! No other devotee has received such power as you received! This means that YOU ARE UNIQUE!

I was a young and bewildered boy looking for knowledge and understanding of the real goal of life. I was wandering the streets of Rome confused, frustrated. By your grace, I met the devotees Mrida Mataji, Somaka Prabhu and Dhananjaya Prabhu, who gave me shelter and hope!

Nowadays the entire planet is completely bewildered and confused about the present and future situation due to this unseen enemy called coronavirus. People are lost in deep confusion and frustration. Such a heavy situation! But under your shelter, I feel secure and intrepid as you said: “You have to be intrepid person!”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you. We are growing old, but we feel strong and secure with you in our hearts and your words in our ears. Your words give us security and strength to not only to carry on, but also develop – as you told us – a strong desire to help others to take up Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thanks to you, our old age is becoming the best age. I feel younger and younger, because you give me strength, day after day, and because of you I feel I’m entering in the eternal life. Where is old age, where is the coronavirus? I see your beautiful lotus face, your words resound in my ears and go into my heart. You are my only lord and master.

For you I gave up everything, and I’m very happier each day. Thank you dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please give me the strength and

the understanding of who you really are...the greatest devotee and *ācārya* who has ever graced this hearty planet! Śrīla Prabhupāda, I bow down again and again with deep gratitude at the dust of your divine lotus feet which are my real life and soul.

I'm happy, really happy to remain forever with your servants. Śrīla Prabhupāda, I understood with great happiness that the company of your disciples and servants are the greatest privilege. And when I'm away from them, I miss them all so much. Here in Genova we are starting to apply the self-sufficiency program that you spoke of many times, depending on Mother Earth and Mother Cow. We receive our water from the mountain, good and pure air, simple living and higher thinking, as you wanted.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we have only one desire, to remain in your service in your ISKCON family forever and preach your glories life after life!

Your servant from Śrī Prabhupāda Dhāma Genova,

Dayanidhi Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances to your divine lotus feet.

Having met you and having your holy association marked my life forever, and having the opportunity to thank you every year on the day of your Vyāsa-pūjā fills me with emotion.

The prediction made more than 500 years ago by Lord Caitanya, that the *saṅkīrtana* movement would spread throughout all the cities, towns and villages of the world is being fulfilled thanks to the impulse of the disciplic succession of spiritual masters that you represent with total dignity. The architect of this prediction has been you, helped by your disciples, who have then multiplied the number of new followers, and whose disciples continue to multiply them. Now, the institution you established is an increasingly voluminous snowball that absorbs thousands and thousands of conditioned souls in its path to purify them and integrate them into Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in the field of eternity.

By your grace, and by the faith placed in your person, your followers enjoy a little taste of what the spiritual world is, in the form of real happiness and true love. As the *śāstras* say, "to those who have full unwavering faith in the guru and Kṛṣṇa, all the meanings of Vedic knowledge are automatically revealed."

My dear father and master, although after serving you for almost thirty years, actively participating in your mission, creating temples and attracting devotees in various parts of the world, I became the shame of your institution. I feel that you have not abandoned me, otherwise I could not observe the four principles, sing Hare Kṛṣṇa and write books. For 20 years I have gone from one place to another in India, Europe, North and South America, without the opportunity to preach as actively as before for being severely sanctioned (fairly, I believe) by the GBC authorities. But today, after listening to your lecture (Atlanta, 1975), on the occasion of your spiritual master's Vyāsa-pūjā, although I have been in a town in Argentina for a few days, I thought that perhaps Lord Nityānanda has brought me here to introduce the glories of Lord Caitanya in this remote place. Please give me your blessings so that the desire that has sprouted in my heart upon hearing you continue to grow and never wilt. I think I have written enough books to exercise my spiritual understanding and communicate it in writing. Now I would like to proceed as in the

old days, publicly singing the holy name, distributing your books and *prasāda*, and preaching directly in the way the Lord allows me to do. Please tell your Guru Mahārāja that to also take me into account and bless me. I am very fallen, and I have no choice to serve Kṛṣṇa without your blessings.

With humility, respect and trust in your great mercy.

Your aspiring servant,

Śrī Padāmbuja Dāsa

My dearmost Gurudeva, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

My heart is crying for you, day and night!

When did you ever take any credit for yourself? It recently dawned in me, when I meditated on your name 'Prabhupāda'. Why did you agree so easily to have this title of your guru mahārāja added to your own name?

You allowed it really to happen because whenever anyone would call you Prabhupāda, Jaya Prabhupāda, you could be reminded of your own guru mahārāja and we also were unknowingly calling or glorifying not only you, but him as well. You did not want to take any credit for yourself. Who in the world is so selflessly engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service?

And his instruction gave you the power to pull us dreary, health abusing, misled hippies out of our hopeless, miserable life to lead us to a sheltered, regulated cultured life of 'happies'.

We young people were unknowingly waiting for something to happen, for somebody to come. Apparently it was for you. You were the only one who could free us from our animalistic, hellish godless life.

Now a much bigger mass of people, practically the whole world, is unknowingly waiting for something to stop this torturing 'lockdown situation' to return back to normal or even to some drastic change. Could they be ready to become humans and God-fearing? The deadly corona, or '*karuṇā*'(?) virus has been sent by the adhidaivic disturbing demigods to make us, by the appearance of the overbusy Yamarāja, remember what is the most amazing thing in this world? Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja was the only of the Pāṇḍavas who knew the answer for Yamarāja: We are every second confronted with death, in the nature, by seeing the decomposing plants, numerous dying insects, etc and people around us facing death, but we think, that we will never die.

Now in this time of the world's lockdown, where nobody is allowed to have a stroll in the park or a funfair to divert one's mind from an imprisonment phobia, the noose of fear of starvation and financial ruin is tightening around everybody's neck. That moment in many a person's mind has sprung up where each person looks for a real, reliable shelter deep within.

We hippies were lucky because we were personally given a taste

of this real shelter at the lotus feet of you, Śrīla Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the representative of Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi, the munificent benefactors of all living beings and the most merciful and compassionate incarnations of Godhead.

Where could the world in this probably most receptive situation find somebody of your caliber to convince them that the omniscient Lord can give us eternal shelter and real happiness of an eternal life? My heart is crying day and night.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please be merciful and send an empowered personality down to these most suffering souls, somebody as compassionate as you....

Thank you sooo much!

Your humble servant,

Subhangi Devi Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

For the past year or two, I did not submit an offering, thinking that what I have to say is not significant. Although that is certainly true, to not submit glorification of Your Divine Grace, nor a report on my current status constitutes, in my opinion, what can be termed “dereliction of duty.” Therefore, I am attempting to rectify that with this offering. Please kindly accept it.

We disciples are eternally indebted to you. There is no greater gift than that of your acceptance of we who were mainly wholly unqualified people from *mleccha* and *yavana* lands. Almost immediately after initiation many of us proved by our actions that we could not fully follow your instructions. You stated that your Western disciples are not afraid enough of *māyā*. This is certainly true in my case. I was unable to follow all your regulative principles fully, causing me to victimize others and to also become a victim of sinful reaction, that ever-present reaction to deviation from *dharma*.

After 1986, with a moderately materially successful business and some *krodha* issues, my *sādhana* began to wane until it became very weak. The big wake-up call came in April 2008 with a major motor vehicle crash and ensuing emergency surgery. After surgery, the nurses gave me morphine for pain, and the morphine sent me into an altered state of consciousness; I became entangled in some kind of personal hell from which I could not escape, though I tried using yogic techniques. When I say hell, there is practically no describing how hellish a state of mind this was. Once I realized that I was truly trapped, Kṛṣṇa, in His infinite causeless mercy, saw fit to rescue me. That rescue was a truly lovely experience which will stay with me forever. After that experience, I managed to revive my *sādhana* somewhat and have maintained it since, although it is still not up to the level which you had prescribed for your disciples.

Now I have been in old age for about four years. It is so awful. *Janma*, *mṛtyu*, *jarā*, *vyādhi* – all only suffering conditions. Something breaks down, I attempt to repair it, then something else breaks down. I can see where this is headed and it will only intensify. The pristine soul, whether aware of his identity as pristine soul or not, will no longer able to tolerate a debilitated and decrepit body. Then he leaves, or if too attached...kicked out!! His attachments carry him to his next

birth. If only I were attached to Kṛṣṇa, but alas, it is obvious that I am not serious enough about KC, that I am more attached to my false independence, which is illusory. Still, I attempt and do make some little progress. I am hoping to enter *madhyama adhikārī* status before I pass because of what use is it staying forever a *kaniṣṭha*?

My friend and godbrother, Kalanka Dasa, who had the good fortune to meet you personally, has always told me that we don't want to come back and be forced to enter a womb. Previously I didn't take the issue seriously, but recently I had a dream in which I was driving a tank. We drove in one direction, then had to turn the tank around. I had gotten out of the tank already, but had to climb back up the turret to see well to drive properly. I started climbing up the turret, but it was too narrow and tight and I became stuck. I realized, while dreaming, that it represented the womb. Then I became fearful and woke up. When we think about it, we all take for granted the ability to stretch out our arms and legs. But in the womb, even this is not possible, and the *jīvātmā*, the minute atomic-sized spirit soul, prays to God that if released from this restrictive condition, he will dedicate his life to God (Kṛṣṇa). Immediately upon birth, however, the *jīva* reneges on his promise and begins another life in an attempt at self-gratification, rather than service to and love of guru and Kṛṣṇa. This is despicable!

Very recently, as an immediate reaction to some deviation, I had a severe bout of bronchitis. I am now better, but the first 72 hours were nasty. This had given me the realization that we truly are on a razor's edge, and the slightest deviation can bring about an immediate reaction, leaving us open to a suffering condition.

As to what I am currently attempting to do in service, I had been co-sponsoring a monthly *kīrtana* program at a public hall, but due to what I considered low attendance (8–14 people), I discontinued it. Upon introspection, the real reason it did not take off can only be attributed to my own lack of genuine KC. Under the current Covid-19 shelter-in-place restrictions, now such a gathering would not be advisable, as it would endanger the lives of the devotees needlessly. Thankfully I am now distributing your pre-edited book reprints in "little free libraries" as well as one public library that has a public book exchange section. When I look at what some of my godbrothers/sisters have done in their service to you, it becomes readily apparent that I am far back in the pack based on both realization and service attitude. Frankly, my mentality (mixed modes

of passion and ignorance) and work in this life have amounted only to that of a middling *vaiśya*. I hope that in the next birth I can rise a notch to that of genuine *kṣatriya*, then perhaps within a few more births I can finally fulfill your desire to have your disciples become genuine Vaiṣṇava *brāhmaṇas*.

With full daṇḍavat praṇāms, I remain, your disciple,

Anandamaya Dasa

Please accept our humble obeisances, Śrīla Prabhupāda. All glories to you, who are a beacon of light in our rapidly darkening world.

We can literally see the acceleration of Kali-yuga around the world. You foretold this, but in our younger days, we foolishly thought since Kali-yuga is hundreds of thousands of years long, not much would change in our little lifetime. Yet today conditions are so tense and uncertain because many evil dictators around the world are rising to power and flexing their muscles much more than ever before. Because now they view the weakened state of America under an ignorant, inept, con-man president. Thus, US citizens are consequently teetering on the brink of disaster, with long-range missiles, drone technology, chemical and nuclear weapons aiming at total annihilation of countries and masses of people in the foreseeable future. Additionally, a worldwide pandemic is hastening the loss of lives on our planet.

In the 1970s, you warned us of impending war. You said that war would begin between India and Pakistan. Then China would come to India's aid and Russia would give help to Pakistan. But some months later, you told us that Kṛṣṇa had changed His mind about war at that time. Perhaps your success, Śrīla Prabhupāda, in spreading KC beyond the borders of India, into the West, helped Kṛṣṇa change his mind. But now there is no one who can tell us Kṛṣṇa's mind.

In Hawaii in 1975, you were translating the 5th Canto, while speaking to us in *Bhāgavatam* classes of other universes, other worlds and positions of the planetary systems. You stated then, that living entities from subterranean hellish planets were currently taking birth on our earth planet. You stated they would be very advanced in technology which they would use to fascinate, distract and mesmerize the human population. Yet none of this would be of any good, because, you said, " they (these leaders of technology) are all Godless."

Today in China they have created a 5G network where all citizens and all those entering China have their facial recognition, their eyes/irises scanned, their personal information, passports, cell phones decoded and their activities tracked wherever they are, wherever they shop or wherever they go within the country.

One young American journalist with shoulder length hair and a beard was walking through a park where children were playing.

Because of this activity of just walking through the park, his face popped up on a computer screen in some govt. office, comparing his features to others of criminal behavior.

His identity and phone were immediately flagged with warning signals, his phone charged with a fine, money taken from his bank account instantaneously. Then he was charged with a crime with no explanation and with NO recourse. No court of appeals, no trials or judges, no way to challenge China's authority. Increasingly, China has weaponized technology to abuse international human rights laws established around the world.

Interestingly enough, the United Nations pinpoints the origin of Human Rights to the year 539 BC. To a time when the troops of Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon, King Cyrus then freed all slaves, declared that every person had the right to choose their own religion, and he established racial equality in his empire. (However, the UN was unaware of the saintly kings of Bhāratavarṣa, millions of years earlier.)

Yet the Godlessness mentality is growing by leaps and bounds daily, making the spreading of KC more and more important and necessary. Back then you urged us to spread this KC Movement daily, by putting your books in the hands of all the people we meet. You said that you have done the preaching in your books and we just have to distribute them to everyone. You said emphatically we must do this before the world goes "mad". I thought about this statement a lot in those days. How will the world go mad? I knew you had grown up in British India where "mad" is the Brit's synonym for crazy.

So how does the world go crazy? Is it from pollution of our water systems, or foods processed with chemicals that are later to be found harmful to our brain cells? Or does this happen from war's nuclear fallout or global pandemics? Listening to your lecture some time ago, you suddenly stated clearly, "When I say, "mad", I mean the sum total of all STUPIDITY!"

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda! That's clear to me now as we all are witnessing the "dumbing down" of society, that uses less and less critical thinking with each passing day. Your mission and your instructions to us are more vital now than ever before.

Despite this ensuing darkness, your disciples and granddisciples, that you claimed to us in Hawaii, would all be far more advanced than any of us, your direct disciples. You said, "... because they will know the perfect, pure example without ever having seen it."

Without ever having seen you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, they will know you deeply and understand your mission more fully. Many times you commented that the demigods were lining up to take birth in this movement. Well, they are here now and they are among us and they are expanding the mode of goodness in the world as we speak.

In the *Science of Self Realization*, you stated:

This very important Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is meant to save human society from spiritual death. At present human society is being misled by leaders who are blind, for they do not know the aim and objective of human life, which is self-realization and the reestablishment of our lost relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

You have put everything thoughtfully in place through your determined dedication and desire for pleasing your spiritual master by writing and printing books in English (and other languages also). You have sent warriors for the future to assist us in what you have begun here in our world. Your books are the law books for the next 10,000 years. Your forethought, compassion and genius are protecting us daily, as long as we remain faithful.

We say, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that you are the miraculous WONDER of our world and there is no end to your mercy.

All glories to our Founder-*Ācārya*, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Thank you for all your blessings, all your gifts, and all your sacrifices to bring Krishna Consciousness to us. Thank you for all your unflinching mercy throughout all these years!

Your humble servant,

Mahavisnupriya Devi Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I know that I don't have the proper words to express my thanks for everything you've done for me and the whole world.

I thank you for giving me the *mahā-mantra*, your books with your translation.

I thank you for saving me from the illusion in which I was caught.

I thank you for the transcendental vision you have given me.

Thank you for introducing me to Kṛṣṇa by sweeping away the Māyāvādī philosophy.

I am grateful to you from the bottom of your heart.

Your servant,

Bhutiha Dasa

Saumyarupa Devi Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Our merciful and glorious spiritual master His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Please accept my respectful obeisances at your lotus feet.

Thank you very much for keeping me and protecting me as your servant.

I am very happy to be allowed to dress the Deities Gāndharvikā Giridhārī three times a week. This service is so wonderful and keeps me alive.

Thank you very much for whatever I have and whatever insignificant service I can do, is due to your mercy and the mercy of your devotees.

Please allow me to go on and to develop love and devotion. Please help me to get rid of envy and frustration.

I wish to please you and be able to help and inspire others on the path of devotional service the way how you liked it.

Your unqualified servant,

Saumyarupa Devi Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Your Lordship is my only means of getting out of this darkest region of ignorance because You are my transcendental eye, which, by Your mercy only, I have attained after many, many births.

This verse is very instructive, since it indicates the relationship between the spiritual master and the disciple. The disciple or conditioned soul is put into this darkest region of ignorance and therefore is entangled in the material existence of sense gratification. It is very difficult to get out of this entanglement and attain freedom, but if one is fortunate enough to get the association of a spiritual master like Kapila Muni or His representative, then by his grace one can be delivered from the mire of ignorance. The spiritual master is therefore worshipped as one who delivers the disciple from the mire of ignorance with the light of the torch of knowledge. The word *pāragam* is very significant. *Pāragam* refers to one who can take the disciple to the other side. This side is conditioned life; the other side is the life of freedom. The spiritual master takes the disciple to the other side by opening his eyes with knowledge. We are suffering simply because of ignorance. By the instruction of the spiritual master, the darkness of ignorance is removed, and thus the disciple is enabled to go to the side of freedom. (*SB* 3.25.8, verse and purport)

Like holding a candle to the sun, I hold these words up to you.

All I can say to you at this time is that I am very aware of my good fortune in encountering you and for the opportunity you have given me, literally, “out of the blue.” I was lost and hopeless in this world; and in this life, I was in the midst of futility and despair, when one bright blue-sky day I purchased your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Canto One, with its bright sky-blue dust cover. I took it home and read the preface and my life changed forever.

You mean more to me than life itself. I pray that, no matter what

lies before me in this world in this life, or however many lives it takes me to rectify myself completely, I never forget you. That I never forget your infinite and causeless kindness upon me. That I never forget your instructions. And that I never forget and cease to engage in your mission to fulfil the prophecy of Lord Caitanya that His name will be heard in every town and village on this planet.

I have a debt to you that I can never repay, but will always try to do so in whatever way I can by working to become your useful servant.

I was once in a *darśana* with you and a number of other devotees in your rooms in Vṛndāvana, when, after knocking on the door, Lokanātha Mahārāja popped into the room. He had only recently received *sannyāsa* initiation from you and was returning from his first preaching tour since that day. You stopped everything, beamed a broad smile at him and said “Yes, come on.” You were so pleased to see him and eager to hear of his preaching activities.

Literally and figuratively, we have to pass through many, many doors in life. I live in hope of the day, no matter how far distant in the future it may be, after returning from a preaching engagement, I will knock a door and enter a room, knowing you are there on the other side and you will smile at me and say, “Yes, come on.”

Your ever-grateful servant,

Bhagavat Ashraya Dasa

*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*

Most beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble and respectful obeisances.

All glories to Your Divine Grace.

I bow down in the dust of your lotus feet, well aware that, without you, I am nothing.

In Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 17.185 , purport), you write:

Those who follow social customs and behaviour forget to follow the path chalked out by the *mahājanas*; thus they are offenders at the feet of the *mahājanas*. Sometimes they consider such *mahājanas* very conservative, or they create their own *mahājanas*. In this way they ignore the principles of the *paramparā* system.

At the end of your purport on the same verse, you conclude:

One who tries to imitate the *mahājanas* just to become an imitative spiritual master is certainly far away from following in the footsteps of the *mahājanas*. Sometimes people cannot actually understand how a *mahājanas* follows other *mahājanas*. In this way, people are inclined to fall from devotional service.

In a submissive frame of mind I beg Your Divine Grace to forgive me for my questionable behaviour when at times, forgetful of my true position and engrossed in a false perception of myself, I am led into thinking that I'm more of what I really am.

Sometimes even up to the point where I think, "I know better", and thus neglect to check if what I consider the best and the right thing to do, is confirmed by you and it is coherent with your conclusions and personal behaviour.

Please forgive me. I will avoid that at any cost.

It is hard to be found, even since days of yore,
A soul of such glory, so kind and so pure

That even Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Greatest of all,
Adores your feet and responds to your call.

Your teaching and guidance, beyond time and space,
Know no faults or limits; are free from mistakes.

The wheel-saw of time, with its grinding teeth,
For thousands of years will meet its defeat

In chewing and crumbling your books and your fame,
Since after you appeared, no life is the same.

Your powerful Movement will face everyone,
So that also a rebel will come and become

The most happy and humble, a surrendered soul,
And by love and your mercy, fulfil his life's goal.

Of Spiritual Sky you have opened the door,
And of Love of Godhead you have plundered the store.

By flooding the world with your loving grace,
You've shown the true beauty: the Lord's lotus face.

Your lotus-like feet, unsinkable vessel,
Grant shelter to those who struggle and wrestle

Within this dark ocean of nescience and fear,
By just one condition: being willing to hear.

The sound of transcendence flowing out of your mouth,
Will shrink that vast body, without any doubt,

Again and again, by half and then half,
Downsizing to a hoof-print, left over by a calf

You're father, you're master, you are everyone's friend;
You're named "*Prabhupāda*" 'cos that's where you stand!

And all living creatures within these three worlds,
Men, angels or demons are struck by your words.

My life is worth nothing, without serving you,
No matter how “spiritual”, fresh or anew.

And even if held in the Lord’s warm embrace,
This soul cannot live without Your Divine Grace.

Dear Lord Caitanya, *mahā-vadānyāya*, please, protect me from the ill-advised inner thought that, “Śrīla Prabhupāda has given me everything was needed and for this I will be forever thankful. But now it’s my time, the time to walk with my own legs”, (an unseen offensive – ‘thank you and goodbye’).

Please concede me to remember, always, no matter in which life, that forever and ever I will depend on Śrīla Prabhupāda and that ‘we should always remain a fool before the spiritual master’.

Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jay!*

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your menial, respectful servant,

Narakantaka Dasa
Radio Kṛṣṇa Centrale – Italy

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace on the occasion of your appearance in this world.

Thank you for giving me the *bhakti-latā-bīja*, the seed of the creeper of devotional service, which for me means devotional service to you. You are Kṛṣṇa's confidential servant, and whatever service I render to Kṛṣṇa is only through my service to you. You and your service are the polestar by which I navigate through the ever-shifting constellations of life. I continue to water the creeper that has grown from the seed I received from you and your Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Your aspiring servant,

Drutakarma Dasa

*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*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I pay my most humble obeisances on to your lotus feet again and again on this auspicious day, your Vyāsa-pūjā day.

Devotees glorify Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, glorifies His devotees. Kṛṣṇa chose you to spread His message and to fulfill His mission.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, your Guru Mahārāja also chose you out of all his disciples to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the Western world.

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, “My name will be sung in every town and village.” That is happening with your hard work, sincere efforts, and working day and night dictating your books.

Not many people knew the name of Kṛṣṇa. You declared that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme God and created a revolution all over the world. Now Kṛṣṇa is known all over the world.

Your books are read in so many different languages which are opening people’s eyes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and making them devotees.

Kṛṣṇa is worshipped all over the globe, even in China and Pakistan. Your lotus feet are like touchstone. Your lotus feet touched the land of Russia only once, and look how many Russians have become devotees serving Kṛṣṇa. It is a miracle.

What has happened in your ISKCON movement is amazing. It is spreading more and more. So many temples have been created all over the world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the most pure devotee; you were a very pure devotee from the beginning of your childhood serving Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa and doing the Rathayātrā festival. Rathayātrā, your childhood pastime, has become a global event.

Your dream came true; TOVP has manifested. A landmark, a wonder of the world where millions of people from all over the world will come to glorify the Lord.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, what can I say to glorify you. It is not in my capacity.

That was the luckiest day of our lives when we met you and you accepted us at your lotus feet. Not only that, you gave us unlimited mercy whether we were qualified or not. Your mercy is keeping us in ISKCON and making us serve you and Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please always keep us at your lotus feet and in service regardless of any obstacles or obstructions.

Thank you very much for everything, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your worthless servant,

Ashalata Devi Dasi

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

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

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

It is a fortunate time again to prepare an offering for your annual Vyāsa-pūjā to honor your most wonderful and blissful appearance day.

Your glories are limitless and a person like me is not qualified to even touch upon them. In spite of this, I try to remember you not only today, but every day for your causeless mercy on me as well as upon millions of souls all over the world.

Your unique position has been summarized by H.H. Viśveśa Tīrtha as follows:

Of all people, the devotee of the Supreme Lord is the greatest. And in order to become a devotee, one does not need to be born in any specific type of class or caste or nation. Devotion to Kṛṣṇa was limited only to India but Swami Prabhupāda took this devotion out of India, and distributed it to anyone and everyone all over the world. That's why today we can see that people from all over the world are accepting devotional service and becoming devotees of Kṛṣṇa. In this way, they are becoming the best of humans.

The river Gaṅgā is famous for her purifying effect. At one time, however, this Gaṅgā did not flow through the earth planet. It is Bhagīratha who brought the Gaṅgā from the celestial planets down to the earth planet. That is why Bhagīratha is celebrated. Swami Prabhupāda, like Bhagīratha, brought the *bhakti-gaṅgā*, down from above and flooded the whole world. In this way, Swami Prabhupāda has done something which is much better than what Bhagīratha had done.

In 1896, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in his *Sajjana-tosaṇī* predicted the future appearance of a great personality who would come to the West and preach the message of Lord Gaurāṅga and fulfill the prediction of Lord Caitanya as follows:

Śrīmān Mahāprabhu did not descend with His associates to deliver a certain number of human beings in the land of India, but rather His purpose was to deliver and uplift all living beings in all countries of the world by preaching the eternal religion of all souls. There are many kinds of religion in the world, and among all of them the highest development of religion is the congregational chanting of the Supreme Lord's divine names. Of this there is no doubt. Alas! When will that day come when all greatly fortunate souls in countries such as England, France, Russia, Prussia and America will take up banners, kettle drums, *mṛdaṅgas* and *karatālas* and thus cause the ecstatic waves of *Harināma kīrtana* and the singing of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's holy name to rise in the streets of their towns and cities? O when will that day come, when pure and transcendental Kṛṣṇa *prema* (love of God) will be the only religion of all souls and all tiny sectarian religions will meet in the unlimited and universal religion of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, as rivers merge into the great ocean? O when will that day come?

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you appeared in 1896 and fulfilled Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's prediction.

You are the greatest Jagat Guru. You had a vision for ISKCON, and it is now one of the largest worldwide preaching organizations.

In 1922 and 1935 you received instructions from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Mahārāja, and you took them to heart as your mission.

You had a vision in Māyāpur. With a field and a small piece of land with no buildings and no roads, you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, declared it as the world headquarters of ISKCON and now it is a spiritual hub with the TOVP rising. The Temple of the Vedic Planetarium is becoming true because of your vision and mercy. With your mercy, the largest *pūjārī* floor was open on February 13, 2020. And now, the largest temple in the world will open in 2022, on the 100th anniversary of your first meeting with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī in 1922. It is your vision and mercy carried out by your sincere disciples and

devotees like Ambarīṣa Prabhu and associates.

In the early days of New York in 1966 only a few people were coming to the program at 26 2nd Avenue. But Your Grace announced that you wanted to set up the International Society of Krishna Consciousness. Each word was very important to your vision. With your mercy, ISKCON internationally came true.

The pillars of ISKCON are book distribution *saṅkīrtana*, *prasādam* distribution, Deity worship in your magnificent temples, and devotee *saṅga*. With your unlimited mercy you have somehow engaged me and my family in your activities as we humbly try to contribute to these pillars, and for this service we will be eternally grateful to you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I can go on and on and on for all my life to describe your glories and still then they would not be complete.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am yours. There is no greater, no higher destination, no greater fortune than serving you and your ISKCON mission.

Please always keep me in your shelter. You are my protector and my maintainer. Without you there is only darkness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, my humble request is to always please keep me and my family at your lotus feet and in the service of you and your ISKCON.

Your insignificant servant,

Subhivilasa Dasa

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

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

*jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya
prabhu nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara
śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet, on this your Vyāsa-pūjā day.

As the world remains captured in the grip of *māyā*'s illusion, so many years after you delivered the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* to the Western world, I marvel at the house you built, where anyone with a genuine desire can find shelter.

We are living in unprecedented times, with the influence of Kali-yuga showing its face on every front. Although pure spirit souls, with contact to the material world, we have become influenced by the three modes of material nature (goodness, passion and ignorance).

*sattvaṁ rajas tama iti
gunāḥ prakṛti-sambhavāḥ
nibadhnanti mahā-bāho
dehe dehinam avyayam*

(*Bhagavad-gītā* 14.5)

By your grace, we have the key to overcome these obstacles to our real nature, and find our true identity in the spiritual realm.

Your example is supreme, guiding us along the path, showing us how to eat, how to sleep, how to pray and dance in glorification of the one true God (Kṛṣṇa).

I recently read that you were observed laughing while

reading your own books, and stated that, "It is not possible for an ordinary man to write these books. I did not write these books, Kṛṣṇa wrote them."

This is proof that you are the via medium of the Supreme Lord. To love you is to love Kṛṣṇa. To serve you is to serve Kṛṣṇa.

So it is by your mercy, that I continue to strive for the nectar that we all hanker for, unadulterated purity and love, free from all desires for anything, but attachment to your service.

I remain your most unworthy servant, still carrying a glimmer of hope, that one day I will be worthy, and maybe one of the stars, illuminating the universe in your honor.

Your servant,

Ugresa Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my humble obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet.

Lord Caitanya instructed:

*śuno śuno nityānanda, śuno haridās
sarvatra āmār ājñā koroho prakāś
prati ghare ghare giyā koro ei bhikṣā
bolo 'kṛṣṇa', bhajo kṛṣṇa, koro kṛṣṇa-śikṣā*

(Śrī Caitanya-Bhāgavata, Madhya-Khaṇḍa, 13.8–10)

“Listen, listen, Nityānanda! Listen, Haridāsa! Make My command known everywhere! Go from house to house and beg from all the residents, ‘Please chant Kṛṣṇa’s name, worship Kṛṣṇa, and teach others to follow Kṛṣṇa’s instructions.’”

As the perfect servant of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura you are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanya, and specifically fulfilling the order of your Gurudeva, “If you ever get money, print books.” Over and over you demonstrated your dedication to this instruction, by distributing your *Back To Godhead* magazines in the heat and dust of Delhi though you barely had food to eat, by selling your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* volumes to New York bookshops though you barely had a roof over your head and, despite failing health, by fighting like a lion to establish ISKCON as a platform for inundating the world with your Bhaktivedanta purports.

The account of how you distributed the first *Kṛṣṇa Books* at the 1970 San Francisco Rathayātrā is most wonderful to hear. A devotee presented you with the advance copies. Surrounded by devotees and curious festival-goers, you admired the front cover, with the beautiful painting of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa on a silver cover and ‘Kṛṣṇa’ in bright red letters. You opened the pages and examined the paintings, the print, the paper, and the binding, and exclaimed, “Very nice!” Announcing that this greatly valuable book, ‘Kṛṣṇa’, had just arrived and that everyone should read it, and with the books stacked before you, you asked anyone desiring to buy a copy to step forward. With great excitement everyone pushed forward, clamouring with ten dollar bills in their hands, eager to obtain a *Kṛṣṇa Book*, and you sold every copy without even saving one for yourself.

I pray that one day I may become a worthy disciple and assist

my revered godbrothers and godsisters who are fully determined to serve you in your mission to distribute the message of Lord Caitanya.

Your servant,

Aniha Dasa

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 your lotus feet.

While wonderfully preaching and teaching about devotional service, and setting an inspired personal example, you always put Śrī Kṛṣṇa first as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and always presented yourself as the humble servant of servant of the Lord. By your selfless service, the people of the world came to know of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*, the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement, and the Hare Kṛṣṇa people. Everything was Hare Kṛṣṇa, which pleased you very much. But comparatively speaking, while this was occurring, the world's people knew little about you. That has changed.

Nowadays, you and your mission of establishing Kṛṣṇa consciousness around the world is better known, because your story is being told with devotion again and again in books, films, through computer connections, and by word of mouth. In the wake of your spreading the holy name of Kṛṣṇa throughout the world, now your disciples and followers are spreading your fame worldwide. And just as you appeared the day after the appearance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, you are appearing more prominently to the world's people just after the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement has become historically more solidly established, though you are the Movement's Founder-*Ācārya*.

Of course, in the *Bhagavad-gītā* you write that it is Śrī Kṛṣṇa who founded the Kṛṣṇa consciousness Movement, and Lord Caitanya inaugurated the *Sanikīrtana* Movement, but practically we see that it was your mission in modern times that spread it far and wide. Though when interviewed about how Kṛṣṇa consciousness grew during its early days in New York City, you humbly credited "the boys". And there was truth in that because they were part of your mission, as are all of your disciples and followers. But when Professor Hopkins commented on what he saw in those early days, he said that only when he met you did everything the boys were doing become understandable. You were at the heart of the Hare

Kṛṣṇa Movement then, and for your disciples and followers you will always remain there. As many more people learn about you and your compassionate activities, we trust this pleases Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Who we have heard is especially pleased when His pure devotee is glorified.

Praying to become your sincere disciple.

Your aspiring servant,

Haridāsa Dāsa

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Thank you for your wonderful and enlightening explanation of how to avoid the ten offenses in chanting the holy names of the Lord in your brilliant purports to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 2.1.11 & 12.

*om ajñāna timirāndhasya jñānājana-śalākaya
caṣṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

In this time of Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercifully forcing us to stay at home under lockdown, what can we do but surrender to chanting the *mahā-mantra* and reading your extraordinary books?

While recently studying the above verses and purports of your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* I was surprised to realize why I have been struggling to daily chant 16 rounds for the last 41 years. I am still immersed in the ocean of the three modes of material nature because of my offensive chanting, with hardly any taste to chant properly.

O kind well-wishing savior of this fallen rascal, who is still on the level of '*aharī-mamādi paramo nāmni so 'py aparādha-kṛt'* – which you so nicely explain as follows:

The tenth offense is to become uninterested in the holy name of the Lord even after hearing of the transcendental nature of the holy name. The effect of chanting the holy name of the Lord is perceived by the chanter as liberation from the conception of false egoism. False egoism is exhibited by thinking oneself to be the enjoyer of the world and thinking everything in the world to be meant for the enjoyment of one's self only. The whole materialistic world is moving under such false egoism of "I" and "mine," but the factual effect of chanting the holy name is to become free from such misconceptions. — *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.1.11 purport

Before joining your ISKCON and surrendering unto your lotus feet I was a crazy frustrated fool wallowing in the mire of drug-induced illusion, but you kindly saved me from thinking I was the supreme being. Thank you kindly my dearest sir. Impersonal calamity thou hast removed.

Viṣaya chaḍiya kabe? Driven down repeatedly into *māyā*'s depths by the strong waves of *saṁsāra* I feel I am simply a botheration to Your Divine Grace and unto your dearest Lordships. When will I stop being an embarrassment to you? My only desire is to please you and your Lord.

If we don't follow your instructions then we fall down and again suffer. When we again take up our *sādhana* seriously then we feel humbled, ashamed and remorseful.

However, my repeatedly falling down has been beneficial to me because it is curing this *ādi-vyādhi* or original disease of misidentifying myself as God and teaching me true humility. I feel so ashamed that my chanting becomes like a child crying for his mother. Sometimes I foolishly pray to die, *pāsāṇe kutibo māthā*, yet I mostly wish to live many more years so as to fully scrutinize all your teachings. Please kindly save me, although I am so unqualified.

Instead of futilely trying to lord it over everyone and everything please let me realize how to offer sincere and heartfelt obeisances to all, as Lord Kṛṣṇa teaches in His final instructions to Uddhava in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 11.29.12–22:

With a pure heart one should see Me, the Supreme Soul within all beings and also within oneself, to be both unblemished by anything material and also present everywhere, both externally and internally, just like the omnipresent sky. O brilliant Uddhava, one who thus views all living entities with the idea that I am present within each of them, and who by taking shelter of this divine knowledge offers due respect to everyone, is considered actually wise. Such a man sees equally the *brāhmaṇa* and the outcaste, the thief and the charitable promoter of brahminical culture, the sun and the tiny sparks of fire, the gentle and the cruel. For him who constantly meditates upon My presence within all persons, the bad tendencies of rivalry, envy and abusiveness, along with false ego, are very quickly destroyed. Disregarding the ridicule of one's companions, one should give up the bodily conception and its accompanying embarrassment. One should offer obeisances before all – even the dogs, outcastes, cows and asses – falling flat upon the ground like a rod. Until one has fully developed the ability to see Me within all living beings, one must continue to worship Me by this

process with the activities of his speech, mind and body. By such transcendental knowledge of the all-pervading Personality of Godhead, one is able to see the Absolute Truth everywhere. Freed thus from all doubts, one gives up fruitive activities. Indeed, I consider this process – using one’s mind, words and bodily functions for realizing Me within all living beings – to be the best possible method of spiritual enlightenment. My dear Uddhava, because I have personally established it, this process of devotional service unto Me is transcendental and free from any material motivation. Certainly a devotee never suffers even the slightest loss by adopting this process. O Uddhava, greatest of saints, in a dangerous situation an ordinary person cries, becomes fearful and laments, although such useless emotions do not change the situation. But activities offered to Me without personal motivation, even if they are externally useless, amount to the actual process of religion. This process is the supreme intelligence of the intelligent and the cleverness of the most clever, for by following it one can in this very life make use of the temporary and unreal to achieve Me, the eternal reality.

When your grace is bestowed upon us by allowing me to remain fixed in following your instructions, then I feel so deeply grateful and experience real happiness. After years of *taraṅga* waves up and down, oh the joy and happiness!

Please kindly keep me engaged in your service, it is my only hope.

Begging to remain,

Your servant,

Arjuna Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

In these dark times, in the midst of a global pandemic, you are, even more than ever, my shelter and succour. While I was suffering with coronavirus, I was faced with my own mortality, not knowing how it was going to end. You were always there by my side, calming my fears, and by your mercy, I survived the ordeal and was given another chance. It was a humbling and purifying experience. I am very grateful to the Lord to be alive today, because honestly, I don't feel ready to die, not only because of my material attachments, which I am certainly not free from, but also because of my strong desire to serve you more with this body. While I understand that my relationship with you and my service to you are both eternal, and will therefore continue beyond death, still I can't help feeling that I have not done enough in this lifetime, that I have wasted too much time, and that there is much more I could contribute to your mission. After all, there are countless lost souls in the world who are in need of spiritual knowledge, the same knowledge that you gave to us, and there are so few of us who can help them. Of course, there is no-one who can come close to doing what you did, transcending your frail body and working tirelessly to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the world. But still, we owe it to you to make an effort. If only I could contribute a tiny little fraction of the vast amount that you gave, I would feel worthy to be called your disciple.

Please bless me that I can do something to put a smile on your face and make you proud of me before I die.

Your unworthy daughter,

Jagannathesvari Devi Dasi

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I bow down to your beautiful lotus feet by whose causeless mercy I've obtained the supreme holy name, the divine *mahā-mantra*, Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Oh, Śrīla Prabhupāda, although I am unqualified, please bestow your mercy on me. Your mercy is a constant source of inspiration and sustenance to all us devotees in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

You taught us that if we engage in devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, we will get a different nature as told by Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura. He says that if one associates with *bhaktas*, one's very nature will change. If one fails to take advantage of this opportunity, one's human life is wasted. You established ISKCON, and we *bhaktas* have a family, a community of like-minded souls whose focus is to please you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, if you are pleased then Kṛṣṇa is pleased. You are saving human society from degradation. You elevate people to a higher consciousness by the sublime *bhakti-yoga* process.

In my family, we start our day by hearing your nectarine words in your recorded classes. It imprints our consciousness and sets the tone for the rest of the day. This allows us to be in transcendental consciousness throughout the day to make our lives spiritually successful.

You say, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that we need to follow the Six Goswamis, especially Rūpa Gosvāmī and Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī so that we would be able to understand the love of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. As you said, "There's only one price to pay for achieving Kṛṣṇa *prema*, and that's the anxiety to have it", and "If you are anxious to serve Kṛṣṇa, that is the real asset". You also said, "Kṛṣṇa is unlimited so what service does He require from you or me? He's perfect in Himself but if you are anxious to serve Him, then He does not refuse. That is His mercy. That is His magnitude."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you just made us aware of what is really happening in this world, both spiritually and materially. How can we

repay your causeless mercy? You told us that the Supreme Absolute Truth is a person, and this makes so much sense.

The year, 2022, will mark the hundredth anniversary of your getting the instructions from your spiritual master to establish a worldwide movement of God consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you gave all recognition to your spiritual master Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

On the material level, there is a coronavirus that is disrupting the lives of everyone on this planet. It is also showing the populace that we cannot exploit Mother Bhūmi any more. We need to follow in your footsteps, Śrīla Prabhupāda, of simple living and high thinking, by establishing farming communities, living off the land and forgetting factories, factory farming and the *ugra-karma* way of life. We need to establish, without a doubt, what you have talked about in your books. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Mahārāja sent a letter to you hardly two weeks before he passed away, asking you to take the message of Lord Caitanya to the whole world.

This was 1936, and by 1944 you had established *Back to Godhead* magazine. You would publish it and sell it in Delhi. You went through so much hardship to deliver the message of Godhead to the people. You also prepared yourself by living in Rādhā-Dāmodar mandir in Vṛndāvana where you chanted *bhajans* and translated *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

In 1971, you sent Tamal Kṛṣṇa Gosvāmī to Māyāpur. It was just a paddy field, but you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, wanted to establish the world headquarters of ISKCON in Māyāpur. You struggled to even build the grass hut with small Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Deities to worship, but you had the vision to see that in the future the TOVP would be built and millions of people would come. The TOVP will show that the *Purāṇas* are good science. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* shows that there's life on every planet of the universe. You liked to point out to the scientists that they needed to read the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to understand real science.

Thank you for being my guide and shelter. I have no ability, strength or intelligence of my own. I am completely dependent on your mercy. Remembering your greatness and my smallness keeps me safe under the shelter of your lotus feet. I want to reflect on the many spiritual treasures you have given to us by your mercy. The greatest gift is the gift of Kṛṣṇa's holy name. I want to please you by assisting you to the best of my ability and to help others to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

I have just come down from my fourth storey rooftop in Māyāpur. We go up there at dusk. We can see the treetops and different birds flying around and chirping their hearts out. My husband, Pancharatna Prabhu, blows a big conch shell and I ulalate loudly. Then we have a rip-roaring *kīrtana* until the sun sets. We shout out your name at the end of the *kīrtana* – Jaya Prabhupāda!! Being in Māyāpur, your place of worship, is like being in a spiritual paradise in the material world

Many people are suffering around the world due to the coronavirus, and ISKCON is helping by *prasādam* distribution making sure that no-one goes hungry within a ten-mile radius of Māyāpur. You have taught us to internalize our world by going deep within ourselves by reading your books, doing service and chanting Kṛṣṇa's names. The transcendental vibration is going through the atmosphere here and purifying our consciousness. We want this to happen all over the world by your mercy.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for being my guide and shelter,

Your aspiring servant,

Atitaguna Devi Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we hear how Yudhiṣṭhira praised Vidura, “My uncle, do you remember how you always protected us, along with our mother, from all sorts of calamities? Your partiality, like the wings of a bird, saved us from poisoning and arson.” (SB 1.13.8) In the same way, Śrīla Prabhupāda, your timely instructions, like the wings of a bird, protect and guide us again and again.

You gave us the positive path of progress in devotion to Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa, the path of hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa. This cleanses the heart and gives us a taste of real life. This is the best protection. But you also caution us again and again of the many pitfalls on the path. Out of immense wisdom and compassion you guide us away from danger and suffering. We simply have to hear from you again and again.

The dangers on the spiritual path come from outside of us and also from within. From outward attacks you warn us about the deviant and atheistic philosophies that destroy *bhakti* coming from so-called spiritualists, philosophers and scientists. You caution us again and again to be wary of materialistic association and the contamination and bewilderment that comes from carelessness. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* there are numerous examples. You commented candidly once, “The problem with you American boys and girls is that you are not afraid of *māyā*”.

You also caution us again and again of the destructive nature idle talk and fault finding. Once you put it very simply, “Gossip! It will destroy this movement.” Lord Caitanya said, “*grāmya-kathā nā śunibe, grāmya-vārtā nā kahibe,*” Do not talk like people in general or hear what they say.” (Cc. Antya 6.236). Rupa Gosvāmī said that *prajalpa* will destroy our *bhakti*. And Lord Caitanya compared offending Vaiṣṇavas to a mad elephant that can uproot our *bhakti* creeper.

Your powerful words save us from inward attacks due to conditioning and the lingering tendency to try to enjoy and control this flickering material energy. You help us see through the subtleties of *māyā*'s endless tricks. You reveal the enemies within and give us strength to confront them. You save us from anger and envy.

In practically countless ways your instructions protect,

strengthen and fortify us. Your words give us hope that we can free ourselves from illusion and find shelter at the lotus feet of the Lord. Your words illumine our life with joy. As you summarized, "There is great hope!"

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you for saving me and protecting me. I pray that I can always take shelter of your divine words and make them my life and soul. I pray that they will live in my heart and life. Please let me perfectly understand you in mood and intention and not misrepresent you in any way. I pray that I can become an instrument of your compassion.

Praying to become your eternal servant,

Bada Haridāsa

Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to your lotus feet! Your lotus feet are the perfection that fulfils all desires; you opened my darkened eyes and filled my heart with transcendental knowledge. By your mercy I feel no fear in these troubling times of *rākṣasas* doubling down on their world subjugation into unspeakable evil.

It is impossible to express the deep gratitude I feel for your boundless mercy and your tireless crusade against *māyā* in this world of darkness, gifting all of us with the matchless gift of Kṛṣṇa. It is difficult to grasp what a monumental transcendental opportunity you have provided us all. It is even more difficult to grasp the depth of your pure spiritual potency, which is the only hope for humanity in this time of abject material hopelessness.

My only wish is that you be pleased to engage me in the service of your mission to bring Satya-yuga to this dark Age of Kali, as you describe in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Your glories will shine above all the turmoil and warring when all of us fulfill our duties to you and the holy names are being sung on every street corner, and every bookshelf displays your glorious, unmatched, original books. I only live for doing my small part.

I pray for the day I can please you in some humble way, and for the day I can see your transcendental smiling face.

Your humble and extraordinarily grateful daughter and servant,

Madhavi-Devi Dasi

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*

Every year the enormity of your achievement bears down on me just a little bit more heavily.

Despite your bodily age the energy you manifested is difficult to comprehend.

You displayed a boy-like zest, which kept your disciples in total awe.

It is clear you were a Vaiṣṇava man and you seemed to get more enthused to preach with every challenge that came your way.

It is described in Shyamasundar prabhu's book just how fast a pace you kept. This can only be because of your full realization of the glories of your cowherd boyfriend Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

No sooner you had triumphed in one place, you were heading to the next. Within a short time in '71/'72 you had opened Russia, France, UK, Africa, and yes INDIA, your dearest preaching field.

How inspired the devotees were when you met with and were lauded by prominent Indians, especially in Vṛndāvana.

Then there were the phenomenal successes of Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi pandals. All knew then, positively, that you were the *jagad-guru*.

Nobody could match your desire to preach and present Kṛṣṇa consciousness with such a tremendous knowledge of the *śāstra*.

Thank you for your acceptance of the request of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī to preach the cult of *bhakti* to the English speaking world.

Where would we be if you had not done so?

Your worthless servant,

Mandapa Dasa

Paramahansa Ācārya

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

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

*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.

We think that we have met Your Goodness by the will of providence, just so that we may accept you as captain of the ship for those who desire to cross the difficult ocean of Kali, which deteriorates all the good qualities of a human being. — *SB* 1.1.22.

Śaktyāveśa avatāra

*vande śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya-nityānandau sahoditau
gauḍodaye puṣpavantau citraū śan-dau tamo-nudau*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, who are like the sun and moon. They have arisen simultaneously on the horizon of Gauḍa to dissipate the darkness of ignorance and thus wonderfully bestow benediction upon all. — *Cc. Ādi* 1.2

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, as the *yuga-avatāra* for the present Age, predicted:

*pr̥thivīte 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.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have said:

(Śrī Caitanya and Śrī Nityānanda) They appeared on the horizon of Gauḍadeśa to spread the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and it is predicted that as the sun and moon gradually move west, the movement They began five hundred years ago will come to the Western civilizations by Their mercy. — Cc. *Ādi-līlā* 102, purport

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you represent that mercy, you are that mercy personified. That ocean of *prema* that was contained in India, you have brought it in the form of an overflow of constant waves of chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, not only to the Western countries but also to the entire world and back to Bhārata-varṣa. Even ascending through the universe back to Goloka Vṛndāvana. The most merciful Lords, Śrī Caitanya and Śrī Nityānanda, wanted this, to overflow the entire universe with Kṛṣṇa *prema*, and you Śrīla Prabhupāda are the *śaktyāveśa-avatāra* to fulfill this mission loved by all the Vaiṣṇavas. There was one person meant to do it, Your Divine Grace.

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.” — Cc. *Antya-līlā* 7.11

“...*kṛṣṇa-śakty vinā nahe tāra pravartana*: Unless a devotee is specifically empowered by the Lord, he cannot preach the holy name of the Lord all over the world.” — Cc. *Madhya* 20.165, purport

Whenever the Lord is present in someone by portions of His various potencies, the living entity representing the Lord is called a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*—that is, an incarnation invested with special power. — Cc. *Madhya* 20.373. Quoted from *Laghu-bhāgavatāmṛta* (1.18).

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you were invested with that special power to spread the *saṅkīrtana* movement and save us, the fallen souls of Kali-yuga.

preme matta nityānanda kṛpā-avatāra
uttama, adhama, kichu nā kare vicāra

Because Lord Nityānanda is intoxicated by ecstatic love and is an incarnation of mercy, He does not distinguish between the good and the bad. — Cc. Ādi 5.208.

Lord Caitanya started the preaching of *saṅkīrtana* movement sending out the merciful Lord Nityānanda and Haridāsa Ṭhākura (of Muslim origin). Lord Nityānanda saved Jagāi and Mādhāi, but you have come to rescue millions of Jagāis and Mādhāis as representative of His mercy. As Lord Caitanya and Nityānanda accepted everyone from all walks of life, so you did Śrīla Prabhupāda. You made us, fallen Westerners, to be instruments to assist you in your preaching work to the amazement of the entire world, by your grace, by your mercy, by your power, by your surrender to your spiritual master Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Ṭhākura Prabhupāda. Some said it was magic, you answered that it was simply to believe in the words of the spiritual master, that is the formula for success.

You preached mercifully to the *yavanas*, *mlecchas* and other sinful races, is it not, then, that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* refers to you?:

*kirāta-hūṇāndhra-pulinda-pulkaśā
ābhīra-śumbhā yavanāḥ khasādayaḥ
ye 'nye ca pāpā yad-apāśrayāśrayāḥ
śudhyanti tasmai prabhaviṣṇave namaḥ*

“Kirāta, Hūṇa, Āndhra, Pulinda, Pulkaśa, Ābhīra, Śumbha, Yavana, members of the Khasa races and even others addicted to sinful acts can be purified by taking shelter of the devotees of the Lord, due to His being the supreme power. I beg to offer my respectful obeisances unto Him.” — SB 2.4.18.

Although it may refer to any Vaiṣṇava, it is you, although living in Vṛndāvana, who went out to reclaim everyone for Kṛṣṇa. At the time when you went to preach to America, many did not understand that every human being has the right to become Vaiṣṇava, and criticized you. Even now, many have not understood. However, here is the proof. By taking shelter of the pure devotee of the all-powerful Lord they can be purified, *śudhyanti*. Lord Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu is all-powerful; everything is possible for Him, *tasmai prabhaviṣṇave namaḥ*.

Therefore, the Vedas and great *ācāryas* command:

*chāḍiyā vaiṣṇava-sevā nistāra pāyeche kebā; ācārya-upasanam;
mahat-sevām dvāram āhur vimukteḥ; ācāryavān puruṣo veda;
mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ: [Cc. Madhya 17.186, purport];*

*tad viddhi praṇipātena; tad-vijñānarthaṁ sa gurum eva
abhigacchet; guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja, etc.*

Your Books

Actually anyone who tries to understand these books will become a great realized devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa gradually. The original potency of the *śāstra* remains in these books because I have not added or opinionated anything of my own. I have simply presented the scriptures such as *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as they are. Therefore, just see the effect they have on the world. — Śrīla Prabhupāda letter to Miss Nedungadi, 19th March 1975.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

In the Preface to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* you made a declaration that this transcendental literature is meant to bring about a spiritual revolution in the impious life of a misdirected civilization.

In the *Skanda Purāṇa* is also predicted that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* would be distributed all over the world, a fact that you also did, Śrīla Prabhupāda:

Uddhava to Mahārāja Parikṣit: “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, Sukadeva 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.” — *Bhāgavata Mahatmya* of the *Skanda Purāṇa*.

You personally started to distribute the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, later on, as the *senāpati bhakta*, you sent out your warriors like disciples to preach and distribute this transcendental literature. What a joy! You also established recitation and hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as a regular function around the world, as enjoined in the *Bhāgavata* (*SB* 1.2.18), starting with chanting *Jaya Rādhā-Mādhava...*

“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.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you were predicted by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu when He said that His holy names would be heard all over the world.

Therefore, you are the *sakty-avesa avatāra* to distribute the holy names and *prema-bhakti*.

You were predicted by Locana Das Ṭhākura, that a *senāpati bhakta* would appear.

You were predicted by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura when he said that there would be chanting of Jaya Sacinandana in Māyāpur by devotees from different nations.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Ṭhākura, your dear spiritual master, said you would do everything in due course of time.

You made the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* known to the world.

You revealed Lord Caitanya’s merciful aspects and the intimate reasons why He appeared.

“He has appeared in the Age of Kali by His causeless mercy to bestow what no incarnation has ever offered before: the most sublime and radiant mellow of devotional service, the mellow of conjugal love...” — *Cc. Ādi-līlā* 1.4–6.

As the Ganges is worshiped offering Her own waters, so I worship Your Divine Grace offering your own teachings. I am made of your mercy only. You opened my eyes with the light of knowledge. You filled my heart with transcendental knowledge, *prakāśito*, it is being manifested by your mercy. You are my lord and master birth after birth.

Please consider me yours,

Nandanandana Dāsa

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Expressing my gratitude knows no bounds for the wonderful practical and simple teachings of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Because of your merciful influence, my life is happy and peaceful. So many memories, good times of singing, dancing and feasting with the devotees, the nectar for which we all hanker. You are the biggest reason in my life. I can never forget you or the devotees, for remembering the sweet pastimes fills my heart with joy and love for Kṛṣṇa.

Your servant,

Garuda Vahana Dasa

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the savior of all fallen souls of this dark Age of Kali for those who are fortunately enough to take advantage of your mercy.

You are the spiritual master at whose feet the whole universe can take shelter. May I forever be counted amongst your servants. May I always keep your instructions and mission in my heart and be an instrument of your will. I fall at your feet again and again and glorify your great personality.

Your humble servant,

Ramananda Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!

Before we met you, we were addicted to many tamasic habits. You taught us that we don't have to make an extraneous endeavour to stop them but that we replace them with the higher taste of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You filled us up with so much Kṛṣṇa, that He displaced the inky consciousness of *māyā* in our lives, filling up on more Kṛṣṇa through the process of hearing and chanting. Your service to reform us was/is so huge. You made the impossible possible. Your task was impossible, but you did it anyway.

You taught us that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is our only insurance policy. Only Kṛṣṇa will never let us down. In Kṛṣṇa we trust.

When we took our initiation vows, you asked us how many rounds we chant? When we said 16, sometimes you said, "Minimum."

Some young fanatical *brahmacārīs* in the early days of 1966–1968, said that women cannot give classes because they are less intelligent. Govinda Dasi was one of your personal servants, so Jadurani asked her to ask you, "Is it true that women can't advance as quickly as men?" She was feeling depressed. You said "Yes, if you think you are a woman, how can you make any advancement?"

A *brahmacari* wrote to you saying that the women should not be giving classes, even though many of your spiritual daughters were giving classes in those days, such as Kanchanabala, Lila sukha, and Jadurani.

You quoted the *Cc* verse: *kibā vipra, kibā nyāsī*, regardless of whether one is a *sannyāsī* or anything, if one knows the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, everyone should be given a chance to speak.

Today is Mother's Day. You stated that just as a crying child is only pacified when being held by the arms of its loving mother, we are only happy when we are in the arms of Lord Kṛṣṇa, under His shelter.

You explained how sickness comes upon us. You said, "90% of all sickness is caused by the mind. Our mind will affect the body if not engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service". In another place you said that overeating, anxiety and uncleanness is the cause of disease.

A strange phenomena has taken place in the world right now called the Covid-19 virus, which has impacted society in many ways due to quarantining. When you were in L.A, you gave a class with

reference to the Hong Kong Flu. You stated that we should inoculate ourselves from the influence of *māyā* by the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. “This world is Hong Kong Flu. *māyā Jāgo, Jīv Jāgo*. I have brought this medicine for killing this Hong Kong flu of *māyā*.”

We were/are always impressed by your ability to speak out against the Māyāvādī impersonalist philosophers because of the destruction they did to the Vaiṣṇava culture of India. You said you did not come to win the popularity contest, or to be a part of a “mutual back-patting society”. You did this amongst us and not in public. You were doing your surgery of cutting away at the cataracts of ignorance, eclipsing everyone’s realization of Kṛṣṇa, and a surgeon should never be impeded when doing his life-saving work by some compromise.

When we remember your instructions and activities, you are present in our lives and in our hearts. You taught us everything. Sometimes we may feel lazy, and wonder what we can do to please you, and may feel depressed and hopeless. You have told us if we are reading your books, then we are pleasing you. If we are reading your books, the fruit of that reading will inspire us to distribute your books, which you told us repeatedly is what pleases you, because they transform not only the lives of those who receive them but this act purifies us. Beyond that, in Atlanta when Nirantara Prabhu asked you on behalf of all the book distributors what pleased you the most. you simply said, “If you love Kṛṣṇa”. If we could get one smile from you, by our devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, that didn’t just make our day, it became a memory to keep us going for our life.

In educating our children, you instructed us to never hit children but just to show the stick if they got too out of hand. You said the highest qualification to teach them is to love them.

One guest asked you about China, and the Chinese, being such a significant population on the planet, did not have much access to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So what about them? Your demeanour became very grave and you raised your finger like Madhvācārya and said: “The Supreme Personality of Godhead says “First they must suffer severely, then they can have some Krishna Consciousness. Therefore the bomb is now ready and in the next war, it will be used”. Everyone was trembling. You once said that the preaching will be very good, after the next major war. You are Kṛṣṇa’s viceroy, speaking on His behalf.

You taught us how to develop rapport with others, how to

establish relationships, which many of us are still unconscious of. When Locanananda Prabhu came to visit you in your room in L.A, you asked him to sit beside you and told him that (out of the 400 devotees), you saw him in the class. How special that must have made him feel. You made everyone feel special because of your pure heart full of love for Kṛṣṇa. You asked for his opinion of your travel itinerary, so that you could spend time translating the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. You said you were thinking of spending four months in Los Angeles, four months in London, and four months in India, so that your disciples could also come and visit you. You asked, “What do you think of that plan?” He told you he thought it was a great plan. We all knew that we could not make your plans, because your every move was being guided by Kṛṣṇa, and that you would make your own plans based on that. But still you would engage us and ask our opinion, getting us on board and more connected to you. This is also an example of how our spiritual leaders could be consulting with their godbrothers and godsisters, so that there is not such a feeling of disconnection with those of us who still remain in your service.

Pusta Kṛṣṇa Prabhu asked you, “Will we recognize you in the spiritual world when we arrive?” You said, “Yes you will recognize me”. You had previously said, “We will have *Big* ISKCON in the spiritual world. That is my role that when you return home, back home, back to Godhead, the spiritual master will take your hand and put your hand in Kṛṣṇa’s hand and make the introduction.” So that is an eternal position that he has. We are eternally elated to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

The above memories of you came from my transcribing the latest *Prabhupāda Memories* #79 interviews, by your disciple Siddhanta Dasa.

Once when a devotee mentioned that the “big devotees were coming”, you said “big devotee means big-hearted devotee”. Another time you said “We do not wish to become ‘big devotees’ we want to be small devotees”. You are the biggest-hearted devotee, and you showed your mood of all-inclusiveness. You welcomed everyone. You never told us we are not needed. You never turned anyone away from your door. Because you loved us, we loved you .

Thank you for creating many wonderful disciples that I may benefit from their association, even if it may only be through social media. We currently have 848 of your disciples in an online Facebook group we created for you, entitled “*Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Disciples, My*

Godbrothers & Godsisters." In your spirit of care that you showed us, we connect with one another to remember Kṛṣṇa through your instructions, discuss the practical application of your teachings, help your disciples that may be in hospitals or hospice, and find all of your disciples so that we can be of service to one another. I am grateful to your disciples, my Coadmins Sarvani Devi Dasi, Ashram Mahārāja, Mahashakti Dasa, Srutakirti Dasa, Rasangi Devi Dasi, and Mayapriya Devi Dasi and to others for their guidance and support in service to you. I hope we can connect with all of your disciples on Facebook before it is time for us to depart.

I pray to you that you will eternally engage me in your plans for increasing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I want to be with you forever. I miss your physical presence a lot. When you were physically present, the whole planet felt like it was electrified. You are still here, and I must rise above the lower modes to really feel your presence. I will continue to listen to your lectures and read your books

Your aspiring servant,

Gaura Dasa

Śrīla Prabhupāda, An Ocean Of Mercy

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

I have the good fortune of being able to still distribute your transcendental literatures. You gave us such a wonderful activity that at the same we can help others and purify ourselves as well. Many people have your *Bhagavad-gītā* and other books. So much so that sometimes it's hard to give it to someone. But on the other hand, there are many people who are looking for it and are very happy when they receive it. Your books are like a vast ocean. There is no limit to the quantity of water in the ocean. Similarly, the mercy that you are giving through your books is unlimited. Anyone, anywhere, anytime, can get your causeless mercy through your books. Most people don't realize what you are giving them. Many times when we approach people with your books, a standard reply is "No, I'm good". They don't understand their precarious position. But, now after the current events in the world, they can no longer say, "I'm good". Perhaps now they will listen to your divine message.

One time we were on a walk with His Holiness Giriraja Swami at a beautiful beach overlooking the vast Pacific Ocean. We were on a hilltop cliff with a wonderful view of the ocean. As my wife and I were walking, and chanting *japa*, a lady walking in the other direction approached us, and asked us, "Oh, are you praying?". We replied that we were, and that we were chanting the names of the Lord, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. The lady was familiar with this since she had visited one of our temples on numerous occasions. She told us that she had fallen on hard times and that she was homeless and asked us to pray for her. We said we would, and asked her to chant the *mahā-mantra* as well, and that Kṛṣṇa would help her. We parted ways and then I wished I had given her one of your books. But, then we saw her again at the end of our walk, and I ran to the car to get a book and I gave it to her. She was very happy and very appreciative to receive it. The interesting thing was that earlier in the day, I had heard you say in a lecture, that the pure devotee is just like an ocean. Just as the ocean has unlimited amounts of water, the pure devotee has unlimited amounts of mercy. He just keeps giving and

giving. So we got an example of that, giving this lady one of your books. At that time we were overlooking the vast Pacific ocean, with unlimited water, and giving her your mercy through your books. We could see that your mercy never stops. It just keeps giving and giving, through your books and your Movement.

I am also reminded of your mercy when we go on the altar, and we recite the following prayer: "I am by nature the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, but my misfortune, due to being inimical towards Him since time immemorial. I have been identifying with this body and have been wandering in the cycle of birth and death again and again in this material existence, being burnt by the threefold miseries. Now as a result of some unimaginable good fortune, by the mercy of my spiritual master, I know that I am an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, and that I am an infinitesimal spiritual being, completely apart from the gross and subtle body. Now by the order of my spiritual master, following in his footsteps, I have obtained the good fortune of being able to serve his lotus feet as well as the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara". Again, your mercy is everything. By your mercy only can I serve The Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

You said that your mission was to make *sādhus* that would spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. You have fulfilled that mission. So many of your disciples are powerful pure devotee preachers that are spreading your mission everywhere. We are fortunate that we have their guidance and inspiration. They are constantly enlivening us with their lectures, *kīrtanas*, *kīrtana* festivals, and seminars. I am personally benefiting by hearing from them, and I would like to thank them for giving us so much. That is another way your mercy keeps giving to us: through your perfected disciples.

Please let me continue to dive into your ocean of mercy. Your mercy is everything to me. Without it, I am lost. And, please allow me to assist you in your mission.

Begging to be your servant,

Cakri Dasa
Dallas, Tx. USA

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

You are the calm in the storm. You are a beacon of hope for a ship in stormy seas. Your Divine Grace IS the only hope for suffering humanity. As you well know, I am devoid of any good qualities, and therefore I would like to petition you to please be extra merciful to me, as you are an ocean of mercy. Time and time again, I become exposed, as not actually being humble, and definitely not sincere.

The 'proof' of your 'greatness' is that you have created a home in which the whole world can live. Your International Society for Krishna Consciousness is thriving, and it is obvious that you have sincere followers and disciples all over the planet. I relish their association, and delight in their accomplishments. And...this all—and only – because of you, and your pure love for Kṛṣṇa.

You are glorious, your Movement is glorious, and your followers are glorious. I pray to you to keep this wretched so-called follower close to you forever, and hope that one day, or lifetime, I will 'truly' become a sold-out dog, at your lotus feet.

Your insignificant servant,

Drumila Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.

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

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

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

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

On meditating on your transcendental appearance into this world today I am reminded of two of my favorite *Bhagavad-gītā* verses:

Bg. 18.57

*cetasā sarva-karmāṇi
mayi sannyasya mat-paraḥ
buddhi-yogam upāśritya
mac-cittaḥ satataṁ bhava*

TRANSLATION

In all activities just depend upon Me and work always under My protection. In such devotional service, be fully conscious of Me.

And

Bg. 18.58

*mac-cittaḥ sarva-durgāṇi
mat-prasādāt tariṣyasi
atha cet tvam ahaṅkārān
na śroṣyasi vinaṅkṣyasi*

TRANSLATION

If you become conscious of Me, you will pass over all the obstacles of conditional life by My grace. If, however, you do not work in such

consciousness but act through false ego, not hearing Me, you will be lost.

To me, these verses describe the essence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness (which is a term at least in English that I think you may have coined), and I do believe they were the secret of your success. You are the perfect example of one who is always conscious of Kṛṣṇa and depending upon Kṛṣṇa for your success and protection.

Another principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness that you embody in an extraordinary way is the idea that the order of the spiritual master is the active principle in spiritual life.

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

“By satisfaction of the spiritual master, the Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes satisfied. And by not satisfying the spiritual master, there is no chance of being promoted to the plane of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I should, therefore, meditate and pray for his mercy three times a day, and offer my respectful obeisances unto him, my spiritual master.”

Your spiritual master instructed you, as a service, to do two things. To preach to the English-speaking world, and to print books. Because you took these instructions into your heart as your purpose in life, Kṛṣṇa has reciprocated in an extraordinary fashion.

I was not fortunate enough to see you in this lifetime. I was not one of those fortunate few who had much *vapuḥ* association of Your Divine Grace. But I am fortunate enough to be initiated by you, and I do have my own direct connection with you through your instructions in your books. That is my lifeline to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and I will be forever grateful to you for providing these books for us. In your books you have very clearly delineated the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and what is Kṛṣṇa consciousness and what is not Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They are perfect as they were published back when you were with us. Those who are sincere will accept your books as described by Śrī Nārada:

*tad-vāg-visargo janatāgha-viplavo
yasmin prati-ślokaṁ abaddhavaty api
nāmāny anantasya yaśo 'ṅkitāni yat
śṛṅvanti gāyanti gṛṇanti sādhaḥ*

TRANSLATION

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

This verse by Śrī Nārada is very clear:

Such transcendental literatures, even though
imperfectly composed, are heard, sung and accepted
by purified men who are thoroughly honest.

I pray for the day when your original books take the place of primary importance in your institution, ISKCON, and again flood the world.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for your causeless mercy upon this fallen soul. May I have the blessing to properly take up this transcendental process with my whole heart and soul, just like you have done.

Your servant,

Makhanacora Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Once, in Honolulu, after you had come back from your walk in the park, I opened the car door for you. Later, I took dust from the floor of the car, where you had been sitting, and put it on my head. I didn't know so much, but had read in your books about the potency of the dust of the lotus feet of the spiritual master.

You've been gone from our vision for more than forty years now. I still love the Movement that you started, even though I know it's far from perfect. So am I. Yet your formula for practising *bhakti*, devotional service to the Lord, is perfect. I keep trying to practice, keep associating with your devotees, and reading your wonderful books. I'm so grateful that, despite my many faults, I still have a taste for reading your books and discussing the philosophy within them.

Twenty-three years ago, while I was engaged in college preaching, you gave me a spiritual son. Through the intervening years, we've both grown in our understanding. Now he is becoming deeply involved in your Movement, preaching, guiding others, and trying to keep the spiritual standards you set strong. He makes me so proud, even though I had little to do with his spiritual development.

You have given me everything, Śrīla Prabhupāda, friends, family, the most wonderful philosophy and way of life. Even in this time of global pandemic, I feel the shelter of my faith, which you have instilled in me, that whatever happens cannot happen without Kṛṣṇa's sanction and permission. So I trust that in the end, things will work out all right.

I pray I can be of some help in pushing on the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, even in a small way. To encourage others in their progress is small, but may be powerful.

Thank you for everything you have given to me, and to the whole world. I pray to become worthy of the dust of your lotus feet.

Your very insignificant servant,

Vegavati-Devi Dasi

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

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

My dear and always remembered Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please allow me to offer my humble obeisances to your divine feet! In this new year of your advent to this planet, I must confess that you have always been absolutely right, Śrīla Prabhupāda, regarding your forecasts of Kali-yuga. Every time I feel this way and in the midst of my amazement, I recognize that you have saved us from all the miseries that occur in this desolate world.

For example, currently, all of the inhabitants of this planet are in the midst of a pandemic, which undoubtedly is due to all the sinful activities and offenses that are committed at the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

However, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's promises that His devotee will always be free from all kinds of material misery and suffering are confirmed by Himself in the *Bhagavad-gītā* 5.29:

*bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ
sarva-loka-maheśvaram
suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ
jñātvā māṁ śāntim ṛcchati*

“A person who is fully aware of Me, who knows Me as the ultimate beneficiary of all sacrifices and austerities, as the Supreme Lord of all planets and demigods, and as the benefactor and well-wisher of all living entities, gets rid of from the torments of material suffering and find peace.”

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my infinite thanks for having taken me out of material hell, and placed in the real position as an eternal servant of yours.

Eternally at his divine lotus feet, his insignificant servant,

Hari Chakra Dasa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to your lotus feet. All glories to your service to your spiritual master.

There are no words I can fathom to express my gratitude for your guidance in my spiritual pursuits. Your instructions are my life and soul, a beam of hope and light in the darkness of this material world. As we are in the midst of a world crisis now, your instructions are a great source of refuge. The threefold miseries of this material world are very much prominent now. Your books, classes and instructions are the pathway to sanity in this insane world.

As I didn't have the opportunity of your personal association, I took solace in your books, so to me you are ever-present in my heart. Your books are the life raft to cross this ocean of death. You have given us so much. Your disciples have taken up the service to make available your teachings in so many different ways. Modern technology keeps us connected around the globe. It is so exciting to be able to have your association through so many venues. To have *darśana* of the Deities globally. There is so much to be thankful for. I am just in awe and full of gratitude. I pray that I am able to take full advantage of all you have given us. I pray to always remain your eager, grateful and humble servant.

*With much love,
Your eternal servant,*

Bhaja Govinda Devi Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

Danḍavats. All glories to Your Divine Grace.

In October 1977, I had the privilege of being one your scientist disciples speaking in Vṛndāvana at the First International Conference on *Life Comes from Life*. You called us into your bedroom for us to give you our '*saṅkīrtana*' report of the arguments presented by the invited academic scientists and the counter-arguments presented by your scientists. You were not well enough to attend yet this was keenly on your mind as you called for us each evening. Sadaputa Dasa, Svarupa Damodar Brahmachari, Jnana Dasa, Madhava Dasa and I presented various arguments based on science and metaphysics that consciousness is non-material and cannot evolve from matter. Our opponents presented theories that life is the result of the complex mixing of chemicals. To any neutral outsider, your scientists came out on top – you trained us well.

Fast forward 43 years, I am now the Director of the Bhaktivedanta Institute for Higher Studies. The Bhaktivedanta Institute (BI) was formed in 1976 to build intellectual bridges and create joint research paths between the empirical knowledge of modern scholasticism and the metaphysical, cosmological, and cultural descriptions of India's Bhagavata Vedanta tradition. You have blessed us with many great devotee scholars with new scholars coming forward each week to help us.

In 1977, you wrote to Balavanta Dasa:

Now I want that we shall recruit more and more of our men amongst the intelligent class of men. Because they are a little educated or they have got some wealth or fame or ability, so they will be sometimes little puffed-up, but that is all right, they deserve it. Now we shall have to learn the art how to approach such higher-class men and attract them to apply themselves to this Krishna Consciousness process of self-realization. That requires much tact, and we shall have to expect to meet all challenges by sharp minds. But if we remain always absorbed in remembering Lord Caitanya, how He converted so many intelligent men, even sitting for three days and nights to hear them speak without Himself speaking anything, and if we remember how Kṛṣṇa was so

much patient to explain everything to Arjuna, even Arjuna was speaking like a fool—in this way, being always tolerant of others and appreciating their points of view, it will be an easy matter for us to convince them gradually to join us.

In 1976 you wrote to Rupanuga Dasa:

“We require many PhDs for our Bhaktivedanta Institute for Higher Study.”

In January 2019 we put on a conference entitled “Consciousness in Science” with 400 attendees on opening night including several famous scientists. We followed your suggestion from 1976 and reached out to PhDs in ISKCON, and I am pleased to report that 50 devotee scholar PhDs attended. Your wish to gather PhDs is being fulfilled.

We pray that we can please you by keeping our consciousness elevated by following the principles of *bhakti-yoga* and present with credibility, scholarship and patience the great science of Krishna Consciousness.

On behalf of the executive board of the BIHS
Pracarananda Dasa, Prishni Devi Dasi, Tamraparni Dasa

Your servant,

Brahmatirtha Dasa
Director, BIHS

*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*

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

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

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

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

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

Who can comprehend the immense fortune
of what it takes to transfer
but just a drop of your mercy to others,
to touch their hearts,
to help them see . . .

“Yes, here it is, what your soul has been looking for!”
“Stop getting distracted!”
“Have the courage!”

“Take it!”

“Do it!”

Who can comprehend the immense fortune
of what it takes to comprehend the kind of surrender it takes to
understand . . .

“This is Jagat Guru!”

“Take advantage!”

“Surrender unto him forever!”

“Have faith and trust him!”

“He will show you the truth because he has seen it!”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Your trying-to-be servant,
Dīna-śaraṇa Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this Vyāsa-pūjā Day 2020, I offer my head to your lotus feet.

I humbly offer this poem to honor Your Divine Grace

Hail the great day Your Divine Grace appeared!

You came to America and saw it was weird.

A land of Godlessness and conditioned souls

People who were impersonalists and meat-eaters

You made the ultimate sacrifice to save conditioned

souls who had no brains and behaved like trolls.

Time waits for no man, the ole saying goes

You gave me the option to end my material woes

Under your mercy and guidance at your lotus feet

I found the purpose of my life was to serve Lord Śrī KṚṢṆA

Not just to exist like a dog and live like a hippie bum in the street.

Now we live in dangerous times, your instructions were to make

Varṇāśrama, community, farms for all devotees, mankind.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you gave us the MAP and told us what to do

You said that we fill in the gaps and follow only you.

You also strongly told us, "DO NOT CHANGE ANYTHING".

Your KC instructions were the transcendental BEST!

Alas.....history tells us the rest. I must be serious about KC

You told us this time and time again...was I (we) listening?

When will we take your instructions to the letter... seriously?

Fearlessly, I hope we will. Only then we will really be FREE.

Free from the cycle of birth, death, disease and old age

To go back to our eternal HOME, Back to Godhead.

With you and Lord Kṛṣṇa and devotees' association

Far from the material world of suffering, false ego, pride and

endless exploitation. You gave us KC, the *mahā-mantra*.

You preached KC was The ONLY solution to our

precarious situations

Being trapped in the world of *māyā* illusions is our mistake

Was your very grave warning to us, get out of this
horror for God's sake
In the 70s we heard and saw your serious, grave preaching to us
to not KC alter
Not that we think we know better than you,
then change things and falter.

Now in 2020, the world is full of FEAR, as coronavirus
is far and near
This is the time to follow your exact instructions on KC
in all respects
Not be a Titanic ship and sink or get lost at sea. To be
only loyal to thee
I bow to your lotus feet and pray you protect all your devotees
Bless them with the intelligence to practice KC very pure and clear.

Dear Your Divine Grace, Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Forgive me for my fallen condition. Pardon me for my offenses.
I'm very grateful to you eternally for taking me as your disciple
Giving me your "family of devotees in and out of ISKCON"
Your gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is PRICELESS
Everything I have that's auspicious is due only to you
Thank you Your Divine Grace Śrīla
Prabhupāda for EVERYTHING KC.

Your fallen servant,
Jaya Madhava Dasa
Moscow, Russia

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Everyone who understands the importance of the path to Śrī Kṛṣṇa which you made available to us knows that it is impossible to pay back such a gift. We must adore every occasion to serve the mission which Śrī Kṛṣṇa entrusted you with.

Daily I offer *guru-pūjā* to you by studying your books, and from your books, I get the guidance for every daily resolution. To defend such a generous gift is the basic duty of my life, and to make known your guidance every time you requested it, is what the Supreme Soul wants from me. For every incident, your instructions are the only solution, and in order to become a light even during real or unreal social calamities, the regulative principles you taught us of devotional service to the Supreme Lord are our substantial answer.

I hope to be able to persevere in following your teachings up to the end of my life, so that my little example could be in some way useful for others. You are the representative of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Master of the whole universe, who will come to save us, in our need as His devotees, from this exile, life after life.

Your insignificant servant,

Vaibhava Dasa Adhikari

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

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

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

How can I even begin to offer a tribute to the one who saved my life? There are no words that can adequately convey the importance of what you achieved, and whatever words I contribute here have already been written countless times before. Yet you tolerate my feeble attempts at glorifying you, such is your mercy!

You showed us the path by which we can save ourselves, and that path is by rendering service to the Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord. Nobody in this modern world has exhibited the 26 qualities of a devotee more than yourself. Therefore, even so many years after your departure, we can all still benefit by these offerings. That is but one feature of your munificence.

Although I had never demonstrated any qualification or devotional sentiment, somehow or other by your compassionate glance so many years ago, you took root in my heart and that seed of love you planted has sprouted to become a mighty tree that continues to bear unlimited fruits. I have heard this same account from so many other souls, and yet this is only but *one* of your mystic potencies!

When you announced that the spiritual master should be worshipped the same as God, many of your followers blanched. I myself didn't understand it at the time. Now that the seed of love has grown in my heart, I can see the validity of that statement. Just as Kṛṣṇa is all-attractive, so you have included so many aspects to your service that one can approach you from practically any angle of vision. You have accepted service from scholars, scientists, artists, cooks, musicians, writers, philosophers, engineers, military leaders, politicians, laborers and even those like me, who have no capabilities, but are simply suffering the pangs of this material world. *Anyone* can bring themselves to you, and you are so compassionate you accept *all* of our offerings. This is *impossible* in the material world! The only place such things can occur is the spiritual world. Therefore, we must conclude that wherever you go is Vṛndāvana.

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I pray you never give up on this useless soul. After a lifetime of floundering like an armless man in a turbulent sea, I am now in a whirlpool circling the drain. Your love is my only refuge.

Your eternal debtor,
Vaikunthadeva Dasa

*sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstrair
uktas tathā bhāvayata eva sadbhīḥ*

“...The spiritual master is addressed as Prabhupāda because he is a completely self-realized soul. The word *pāda* means “position,” and *Prabhupāda* indicates that he is given the position of *prabhu*, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, for he acts on behalf of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Unless one is a *prabhu*, or controller of the senses, he cannot act as spiritual master, who is authorized by the supreme *prabhu*, or Lord Kṛṣṇa. In his verses praising the spiritual master, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes: *sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-śāstrair uktas tathā bhāvayata eva sadbhīḥ* “The spiritual master is honored as much as the Supreme Lord because he is the most confidential servitor of the Lord.” Thus Pṛthu Mahārāja can also be called Prabhupāda or, as described herein, *prabhu*.” From Śrīla Prabhupāda’s purport, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.23.18

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

You are an authentic saint, a true “*sākṣād-dharitvena*” – God’s representative. In a lecture you gave in 1973 at the University of Uppsala, you explained the role of the spiritual master as one who acts on behalf of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, delivering His mercy, just like a post pion who acts on behalf of a rich uncle or relative, delivering us a large sum of money that they have mercifully sent, when we were in need. It is not the mercy of the pion. The honest post pion simply delivers the money, and so we are very satisfied with him. Similarly, the spiritual master delivers the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The spiritual master does not have his own mercy. He acts on behalf of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The spiritual master is compared to a cloud (what a lovely analogy you gave). The cloud does not have its own water – the water in the cloud comes from the ocean, by the evaporating power of the Sun. The spiritual master delivers Kṛṣṇa’s message as it is. He does not add or subtract, he does not represent himself as one who has mercy of his own. Rather, he honestly delivers Kṛṣṇa’s merciful message – as it is. Please take it, and be happy.

In the purport, cited above, you state, that “unless one is

a *prabhu*, or controller of the senses, he cannot act as spiritual master, who is authorized by the supreme *prabhu*, or Lord Kṛṣṇa." You, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, controlled your senses perfectly – always, and without an exception. You were untouched by *māyā*, illusion. That is why I wish to always remember You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and never forget you. You are alive in the form of your *vāñī*, your instructions. In this connection, I would be a great fool, if I was not grateful, to all the hard-working and dedicated devotees who created your Vanipedia, a transcendental encyclopedic tool for getting your *vāñī* in written and spoken form on internet – 24/7.

Your insignificant servant,

Jayagurudeva Dasa

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!

This year, 2020 has started with a bang. Mother Nature fighting back by slowing down the pace of the population. People are having to find happiness and satisfaction in their homes with their family members. What a wake-up call!

Now more than ever the wisdom you imparted upon us is paying dividends. You gave us the tools to stay peaceful and hopeful in this lockdown situation. I am just so grateful to hear your words, to read your teachings, and to practice this *bhakti-yoga* life. My enthusiasm to follow the process of purification only increases as time goes on.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa as His holy names bathes us daily of envy, lust and greed accumulated from many lifetimes.

I am just so grateful for Vaiṣṇava association, devotee warriors fighting daily the onslaught of *māyā*. Devotees have an aura of bliss around them. No matter the troubles they are facing, they glorify the Lord, praise Him, and you have taught us an endurance we never thought possible! Your association allotted this wealth in our lives.

I have learned to see difficulties as an opportunity for growth in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I hope to grow more and more lucid in my views of this world, and more and more in love with the Lord, His holy names, His pastimes, appreciating the qualities of the devotees, and the way they help me get closer to Kṛṣṇa. Thank you so much for taking the trouble of crossing the ocean to bring us Gaura-Nitāi's mercy.

I pray to be a worthy disciple and see you again when my time is up.

Your grateful servant,

JayaGauri Devi Dasi

ॐ अज्ञान तमिरिन्धस्य ज्ञानाञ्जन शलाकया
चक्षुरुन्मीलति येन तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः

*om ajñāna timirāndhasya jñānāñjana śalākayā
cakṣuru nmlītaṁ yena tasmāi 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.

नम ॐ वषिणुपादाय कृष्णप्रेष्ठाय भूतले
श्रीमते भक्तविदान्त स्वामिनिति नामनि

*nama om viṣṇupādāya kṛṣṇapreṣṭhāya bhūtale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta svāmīnīti nāmīni*

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.

नमस्ते सारस्वते देवे गौरवाणी प्रचारणि
नरिंविशेष शून्यवादि पाश्चात्यदेश तारणि

*namas te sārāsvate deve gauravāṇī pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa śūnyavādi pāścātyadeśa tāriṇe*

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

Gaura Keśava 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.

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,

We are always reciting this prayer to you, but Śrīla Prabhupāda is it correct? You did not stop at preaching just in the Western countries, but also went to the Eastern, Northern and Southern countries, in fact the whole world. Your preaching is having great effect in so many places. Every day in all parts of the world your books are being read. The holy names are being chanted and many, many souls are coming to your divine teachings, and all it took was one pure devotee of the Lord to conquer the whole world.

And what of the impersonalist and voidist agents of *māyā*, those who are the last ones to hear the message you bring? They are just an empty shell. They seek to lead the world to a dark future due to their constant blindness. As Jesus said “they have ears to hear, but do not hear and eyes to see, but do not see”.

Now the times are different. Due to your books the impersonalist, voidist persons have become diminished. Your army of devotees are countering their nonsense philosophy. Before you there was no one to stop the onslaught of *māyā*, her agents had a free range. Lord Caitanya sent you, His secret weapon to push on this transcendental Movement.

The world is changing by the presence of your books and the chanting of the holy names all over the world. This year meat consumption and animal slaughter have diminished. Now we see a change in society by the presence of a virus. As everything is happening by the sanction of Lord Caitanya and as mentioned in the *Ādi-līlā* 7.38:

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in order to deliver all the fallen souls. Therefore He devised many methods to liberate them from the clutches of *māyā*.”

You are the great *ācārya* who is devising so many ways to capture the fallen souls.

You came and you conquered, you did not just win the battle against māyā Devī but you conquered our hearts and minds. You gave us the great gift of your books, books that are beyond the material sphere, full of great potency. The mercy that flows from them is from a place far beyond the material world, every person who receives such a gift is the most fortunate person, and that is before even reading.

Thank you for bestowing your kind mercy upon this fallen soul.

Your eternal servant,

Atmatma Dasa

Ocean of mercy, Your Divine Grace, my spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I bow down completely again and again in the shade of your lotus feet.

I know I'm not qualified to be your servant or disciple because of my disqualifications. However, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, by His unlimited causeless mercy, kindly put me in your shelter when I was still a teenager. I'm here today to surrender my mind, body and everything at your lotus feet, knowing that you are my eternal well-wisher, eternal (and real) father and friend.

I've not enough words to glorify you because nobody can describe completely your divine qualities, but still I want to say thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. What you gave us has no price nor a way to repay the debt. At least, allow me to serve you life after life. If I could be fortunate enough to take birth in a family that has great love, dedication and respect for you and for your teachings, I will consider that my years of dedication to your mission got a wonderful and precious reward.

Jay Śrīla Prabhupāda! All glories to you!! All glories to all your associates and servants!

Your menial servant,

Gunesvara Dasa

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

I am writing this in April 2020, in the midst of ‘lockdown’, an unprecedented situation that is affecting practically the whole world. It has been a time of much contemplation and reflection – which for a devotee or spiritual practitioner is a much-welcomed bonus in these usually busy lifestyles we lead...

Because of this wonderful wisdom you have made available to us, we are able, to a certain extent at least, to rise above from some of the illusion, fearfulness, lamentation and misery which we could so easily find ourselves drowning in, were it not for the extensive writings of Your Divine Grace. Coming in disciplic succession in the Brahma Gauḍīya Sampradāya, this wisdom of the ancients has been presented with such clarity, vision and realization by you. Out of compassion for the suffering of mankind, nay, every living entity within the universe, and on the order of your spiritual master Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Mahārāja, undergoing so much austerity and hardship at an age when most people are looking for the comforts of retired life, you have painstakingly translated and written vast works which you have told us “will be the guidebooks for the next 10,000 years” as we enter into the prophesied “Golden Age of Kali”.

Could this lockdown be the beginning of the ushering in of this Age? Certainly, due to your influence Śrīla Prabhupāda, millions of these transcendental literatures have been flooding the world for the past 50 years. Throughout every continent there are devotees and spiritual seekers who have been influenced and affected by your words – in towns and villages around the world, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra is being regularly chanted – this surely is having a tremendous effect on the consciousness of the planet.

For years concerned people have highlighted the plight of this Earth planet, and how as human beings we are the most dangerous species – polluting, dumping, exploiting the Earth’s resources due to our lust, greed, envy, avarice. Our misdirected civilization running headlong to the edge of the precipice in pursuit of ever more levels of sense gratification, ignorant of the eternity of the soul and the karmic reactions for every activity. Mankind is destined

for destruction, war, famine, pestilence, disease, untold suffering and natural disasters. Completely the opposite of what everyone is desperately searching for...happiness, love, satisfaction.

Then suddenly, after years of lobbying and protests, world summits on “greenhouse gases and the ozone layer destruction” – a tiny little virus has stopped the world in its tracks. Suddenly Mother Earth has been given a chance to breathe fresh air, renew her rivers and oceans, to repair and recuperate from the damage and rape humans have been inflicting upon her since the beginning of industrialisation and so-called “civilisation”.

Will this be enough to shake up and wake up the world? I doubt it, but it’s a start..

As your disciples and granddisciples, “O expert and thoughtful men, relish *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the mature fruit of the desire tree of Vedic literatures.....” (SB 1.1.3) Let us collectively and co-operatively serve you unreservedly, in making these important literatures available and understood throughout the world. You came to the West with three volumes of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, you understood the importance of this knowledge being disseminated throughout the world. May we be as useful instruments in your hands to assist you in making this wisdom available for the benefit of the whole world. It’s time.

Please bless me with your merciful glance, that I may be purified within the heart, so that I can make tangible spiritual progress in order that I may be a help, not a hindrance, to your great mission and vision for the world.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

*Your very fallen, unqualified and foolish daughter,
ever grateful and aspiring,*

Janaki Devi Dasi
ISKCON Leicester

**Interview with the Religion Editor of the
Associated Press – July 16, 1976, New York**

Interviewer: ... by getting up and having the two hours or three of chanting in the morning and prayer beads constantly and the group life ... Did you work out the spiritual disciplines for the group yourself? I mean about the morning chanting and the recital of the two thousand Hare Krishnas a day and ... Did you work those out yourself?

Prabhupāda: No, this is the disciplic process.

Interviewer: Yes, who originated those steps?

Prabhupāda: It is since time immemorial ... Just like in the *Bhagavad-gītā* you'll find, *satataṁ kīrtayanto māṁ yatantaś ca dṛḍha-vratāḥ* [Bg. 9.14]. Find out this ...

Radhavallabha: ... verse Śrīla Prabhupāda?

Prabhupāda: *Satataṁ kīrtayanto māṁ.*

Hari-sauri:

*satataṁ kīrtayanto māṁ
yatantaś ca dṛḍha-vratāḥ
namasyantaś ca māṁ bhaktyā
nitya-yuktā upāsate* [Bg. 9.14]

“Always chanting My glories, endeavoring with great determination, bowing down before Me, these great souls perpetually worship Me with devotion.”

Prabhupāda: So, this was spoken five thousand years ago, and we are doing the same thing ... Now your answer is there, it is not that I invented something.

The morning program established by Śrīla Prabhupāda – *maṅgala ārati, japa*, Deity greeting/*guru-pūjā*, *Bhāgavatam* class – comes from

the disciplic succession “since time immemorial”. By following this *sādhana*, we associate not only with Śrīla Prabhupāda through his instructions, but we enter the association of our *ācāryas*. It is not that Śrīla Prabhupāda invented something new. *Sādhana bhakti*, especially in the early morning, is an age-old practice. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākuras practiced and preached this same method. At the time of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, when Bengal and Vṛndāvana were under Muslim rule, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas maintained close association with one another not so much in civic life, as in their individual and collective practice of the regular routine of hearing and chanting. “[I]n any position and anywhere in the world, he can perform this devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead and thus become actually a *mahātma*, a great soul” (Bg 9.14, purport). It is not that devotees must live in a temple. The temple standard from early morning until late evening is exemplary, but wherever one lives and whatever one does for a living:

These four things will make one happy... One need only chant *Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare*, accept the remnants of foodstuffs offered to Kṛṣṇa, have some discussion on books like *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and engage oneself in Deity worship. (Bg 13. 8–12, purport)

Under all circumstances, we should live like this, as far as possible. Now in 2020, disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda have been Kṛṣṇa conscious for at least 43, some as many as 55, years. Now more than ever as the end of life approaches, Kṛṣṇa’s promise to be “the swift deliverer” (Bg, 12.7) points us toward the imminent realization of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s promise that “not only is this devotional service easy, but it can be performed in a happy mood ... guided by an expert spiritual master” (Bg, 9.14, purport).

May I always remember the instructions of Śrīla Prabhupāda and recite them without difficulty.

Yogindra Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you Śrīla Prabhupāda for your never-ending compassion, guidance, love and protection. You have so kindly given us more than we can ever repay.

I cannot thank you enough for the wonderful life I have lived in your temples with your dedicated devotees. You have provided us with everything we need to always remember Kṛṣṇa and never forget Kṛṣṇa. You have worked tirelessly every day translating your books and managing successful temples throughout the world. You have given shelter to unlimited souls and made being in this material world bearable. You have told us this is no place for a gentleman.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I simply pray (beg) to become your sincere and surrendered servant. Please empower me to help many others along the way. Although I am beyond unworthy, please allow me to remain in your association forever.

Your loving daughter,

Jagajjanani Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

It has been 43 years since you left us to continue your mission in the material world.

It was difficult knowing we could no longer hear about your preaching activities, or that a personal letter from you was not going to happen, or that you were not present for us to rush to with news of activities, as an eager child hastens home to parents to convey their day's events.

If only it was possible to regress time to those former days, so long ago, knowing what I know now, how different things would be, how much more gratitude I would express. It is an unfortunate trait in this material world that we don't fully learn to appreciate those around us until they are gone, just like most children never fully appreciate the love and sacrifice of their parents until they have children themselves. If only it was possible to see you now with a warm inviting effulgent smile on your face.

Out of your kindness and pureness you didn't completely leave us alone. When my father passed on there was sadness and sorrow to lose a gentle, kind hearted well-wisher and friend. But the passing of time gradually and carefully healed that loss. However, the loss of your physical presence has never diminished in my heart, particular now at this time of year. My mind is invariably drawn back to the sorrow and utter overwhelming grief that filled my being when you ended your physical pastimes. Whenever your departure enters my mind it quickly overwhelms every corner of my existence causing symptoms of crushing pain, but miraculously, also great joy.

Just as we are all only a good joke away from laughter, so similarly, by your grace, just a hint of your presence in my mind in any form whatsoever, immediately dispels the darkness and ignorance of this cold and damp Age of Kali, filling me instead with hope, strength, and joy.

Now, by your unfathomable mercy, I know that I am never alone, nor was I forsaken in the past. Also, I understand Kṛṣṇa never ever let me down in any of my countless lives in the material world. He fulfilled every desire I dreamed of; if not immediately then in time when I deserved. Desires that aided and assisted my growing Krishna Consciousness and even other desires that were not healthy or beneficial for spiritual growth. Fortunately, He set the

material world in motion with a self-regulating system to realign the misguided consciousness of fallen living entities; they question the utility of their actions for their greater good. Also, He allowed saintly souls such as yourself to be available to guide those who were not convinced about *māyā*'s illusionary façade.

By your boundless kindness I can see Kṛṣṇa's hand everywhere I look. Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself in countless different ways that even a blind person, such as myself, can appreciate and derive transcendental nectar from when looking through your eyes.

Upon reflection of my life I realise that the last decade has contained the most defining moments. Contentment, cheerfulness, joy, and bliss have been present in the midst of great turbulence, and yet, each single solitary moment had Kṛṣṇa conscious relevance. And each moment was only available by your causeless ceaseless love for me, all collectively bound tightly to your magnanimous gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Hemingway coined the term 'movable feast', and in the real sense of that term that's exactly what Kṛṣṇa consciousness is. Your free gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be compared to a wondrous feast. Just as a feast is a situation of great pleasure and abundant enjoyment, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is precisely that, at every moment. Out of your causeless mercy, you taught how Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be available to me through each change of mind and as I move through each situation in my life. Life has truly become a moment by moment moveable feast through each interval of time.

I can never praise you enough for the compassion you showered upon this most unfortunate soul. Your association, your books, your temples, your disciples, your personal untainted saintly example, and your kind heartedness to freely give all these things. I am happily bound to you eternally for you are the best well-wishing father and friend.

I was raised in England as a child and was addicted to sweet things from my earliest years. In the coldest and darkest moments of winter I was only ever one sweet away from feeling lively and happy, or one hot chocolate away from feeling cozy and cheerful, ready to push ahead in life with renewed resilience. Similarly, your super-excellent gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the most brilliant boon, better than sweet dark chocolate, for when Kṛṣṇa consciousness is applied the result is astonishingly sudden; sugary sweet; mind-blowingly potent. Just a hint of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in one's life is

all that's needed to produce auspiciousness, just like the suggestion of a sweet, when I was a child, brought a warm glowing jolly change in consciousness.

However, you didn't just give a hint of the spiritual world to your spiritual soldiers, you gave everything needed, the whole kitten caboodle. You left nothing to speculation. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is just like the most desired King of Sweets, *rasgulla*, for when it is sincerely applied in life, the sweet-smelling syrupy essence of transcendental nectar bursts forth like the floodgates of a dam bringing about a rapid change in consciousness and character.

You exposed that love is really lust in this material world, while in turn making public to the world the secret of what true love is, where it could be found, and how we could taste its sugary mellows.

You revealed that happiness was really a cessation of suffering, and brought to light the real source of where eternal bliss and ecstasy could be discovered.

You clearly explained we were spirit soul, part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, eternal, blissful and all cognizant. You disclosed that we were not the body, and misidentification with the temporary realm would lead to repeated birth and death. You finished your pastimes by bitter-sweetly implanting in us a deep love for You. You were very ill, so we prayed for you and held 24-hour *kīrtanas* feeling great sadness and distress as if our own life was leaving us. Then miraculously you began to eat and regain some strength, ordering that a bullock cart be brought, so you could go out and preach village-to-village. This pleasantly gave our life back. Soon afterwards you fell ill again, which broke our hearts once more. Then again you threw a lifeline saying it was up to us if you stayed or left. In response we practiced Kṛṣṇa consciousness meticulously, doubling *sankīrtana* efforts in the hope bigger scores would make you pleased; knowing you were in our hearts we chanted with attentive care believing this would invigorate you; in our minds we offered you the results of our own sacrifice and penance trusting Kṛṣṇa would intervene and you would want to recover and stay. How simple our thoughts were, like children not wanting to lose something dear to their heart. You pulled our heart strings this way and that, to the point of elated happiness and then total despair. Reports were coming constantly, one moment you gained strength then the next you weakened, recovered then fell ill again. Over and over. Then you finally left it in Kṛṣṇa's hands and my heart sank

when I heard this knowing that Kṛṣṇa would want you close. But then one sunny day I heard You had eaten some strawberries after not eating in such a long time and I thought Kṛṣṇa is going to fulfil our desires for you to remain. Oh..., how wonderful that day was! However, too soon afterwards my elated heart became profoundly overwhelmed again by devastating grief on hearing your body was not digesting food; then filled again by overwhelming joy because you expressed a desire to go to London to preach.

Over and over, ISKCON's grapevine news reports dragged my consciousness from the heights of rapt euphoria to the lows of dark melancholy. Constantly, from day to day, my usually steady mind involuntarily flickered from jubilation to woefulness. All the while setting the perfect example, you never stopped preaching and translating, and your loving devoted disciples increased their purity, perfected their *sadhana*, stayed out day and night to distribute more books for your pleasure. After months of good and bad reports, wrenching and pulling on my heart, the very seat of my deepest thoughts, emotions, feelings and sensibilities, I could understand that the love I felt for you had been growing in leaps and bounds.

Finally, even though the signs had been there all along, it was most unexpected when the devastating news arrived... "Śrīla Prabhupāda had left." I couldn't believe the news... surely it was a mistake... I had only just got to know you! You had left, it was so final. Overwhelming grief grabbed my throat, I couldn't think or breathe. My body became extremely hot and tears fell uncontrollably as I struggled to keep upright. I kept thinking, without you how unfortunate the world became, how ugly and dark everything appeared.

It took some time to hide my grief, but I understood that you had been using the time before leaving to teach us your final lesson; how to deepen our love for you! Love is a most wonderful magical experience, and you gave it to the world in spades. The love you showed us does not acknowledge material corporeal boundaries and isn't confined by distance or moments in time. Along with the great pain of separation from you there grew an ecstasy that remains today because of the efforts you made to bring my heart and soul back to life. Although this pain is still existing, you are still very much present at every moment blessing me with your divine teaching, guidance, and blessings.

Forty-five years after coming in contact with you I am still in awe

of your saintly nature and what you inspired and accomplished in me. From the depths of my heart I wish to thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for introducing me to the transcendental sweet that never wears down and always increases in size and taste the more I partake of it. The sweet that gives eternal blissfulness to my existence.

On this auspicious day I have only one prayer; I don't desire anything material; I see no value in a long healthy happy life if your instructions and Kṛṣṇa are not central to any thought or activity; I simply pray that Kṛṣṇa will soon bless me with your presence in Vraja, so I may assist you in service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, as you desire. Whether by a word, a slight gesture, or a momentary sidelong glance, I am ready... to act according to your will.

Your loving disciple,

Paurusa Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my respectful obeisances.

All glories to you Śrīla Prabhupāda. Thank you for giving your shelter to all devotees and the whole world, now and always.

Without your *vāñī*, it would be hell on earth. Many souls now are able to take advantage of your words via electronic means. Right now devotees are having much *sādhu saṅga* via the internet, etc., during lockdown.

One person who listens to our classes via webcam said that if it were not for your books, she would have ended her life. Now during quarantine, she has your words to give her hope, and she is spreading that hope amongst her friends and family.

Another person during lockdown distributed your books online with the conviction that the books saved him from suicide. He made many phone calls to friends and shared your message of hope and everyone in his life wants books and wants to ask many questions about this human form of life.

One congregational friend decided to go alone to the train tracks, where hopeless souls were committing suicide at this time of pandemic, and loudly chanted the *mahā-mantra*. Other persons who were waiting to possibly do the same suicidal act became uplifted by the names and simply walked away and gave up their despair. This congregational friend continued to chant for the souls there and the world. She was doing it because she learned it from your books. She cried and cried out the names and felt your presence. She felt more hope for her own life, which she had almost given up many times. She glorified your instructions with happiness and devotion.

I was so touched how you touch lives. Only because of you are so many devotees appealing to the suffering souls to chant, to pray.

“We are not being sectarian; just glorify the Lord. Please uplift yourselves and the world.”

It’s because of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that the darkest times are times of beacons of your *vāñī*. People want your books now more than ever. May more and more of the bewildered fall at your lotus feet as they realize now and in the near future how you are imparting the most valuable knowledge, saving all of us from despair.

By your blessings and mercy, may your *saṅkīrtana* army be your pure instrument to deliver your *vāñī* everywhere. By your grace,

may the weeping of this planet become joyous cries to Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda. May the people know how much you care for them and may they reciprocate by glorifying the holy names. May your army of devotees all prepare themselves more and more to be qualified to be empowered to be your instruments to turn the cries of hopelessness into joyous *harināma*.

*Begging to aspire to be an instrument,
Your servant of your servants of your servants,*

Nidra Devi Dasi

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this very auspicious day of your divine appearance, I humbly prostrate at your lotus feet and submit some words as my humble offering.

ISKCON is now a rapidly growing society in all parts of the world. The welfare activities you have chalked out for ISKCON are also growing by leaps and bounds. For many years, I wondered how you established an ever expanding international movement, with practically no resources in terms of funds, property and facilities, with just around a dozen volunteering devotees in 1966. I know one thing. Way back when you decided to enter *vānaprastha*, you were already thinking, praying and preparing yourself in this regard. Your life's very purpose itself was, as per the instructions from your Guru Mahārāja, to preach in "English speaking countries" and to "print books". You knew the "Books are the basis". You wanted to publish the entire *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Śrī Bhagavad-gītā* and other books of our lineage, and to distribute them widely along with the *mahā-mantra*. In this way you were to bring to reality the prediction of Śrīmān Mahāprabhu, "The chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* will be heard in every town and village all over the world." It is no exaggeration that you became obsessed with your purpose and you spared no opportunity in this relentless pursuit.

(Many books have been written by your disciples who were with you in the early days. A few as biography and many others as memoirs about the times they spent in your auspicious and empowering association. From these books one can easily recognize your true identity as a loving servant and true emissary of Supreme Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa. You are also the "*Senāpati Bhakta*", as predicted by none other than Śrīmān Mahāprabhu.)

For me still something was missing to complete the picture in my mind to understand how you created an ever expanding international movement. Recently upon reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*

1.5.16, “the picture” became complete in my mind.

This chapter is titled “*Nārada’s Instructions on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam for Vyāsadeva*”. While reading the translation and the purport of text 16, something became very clear to me. The translation reads,

The Supreme Lord is unlimited. **Only a very expert personality, retired from the activities of material happiness, deserves to understand this knowledge of spiritual values.** Therefore those who are not so well situated, due to material attachment, should be shown the ways of transcendental realization, by Your Goodness, through descriptions of the transcendental activities of The Supreme Lord.

The above was spoken by the great sage Śrī Nārada Muni to Śrīla Vyāsadeva, as the latter was sitting by the bank of the River Sarasvatī and thinking, why even after all the contributions he made for the liberation of mankind from the material existence, he still felt incomplete in his work.

In the second half of the purport to this text 16, it is stated:

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the topmost theological science, and therefore it can react on the laymen as medicinal doses. Because it contains the transcendental activities of the Lord, there is no difference between the Lord and the literature. The literature is the factual literary incarnation of the Lord. So the laymen can hear the narration of the activities of the Lord. Thereby they are able to associate with the Lord and thus gradually become purified from material diseases. **The expert devotees can also discover novel ways and means to convert the non-devotees in terms of particular time and circumstances. Devotional service is dynamic activity, and the expert devotees can find out competent means to inject it into the dull brains of the materialistic population. Such transcendental activities of the devotees for the service of the Lord can bring a new order of life to the foolish society of materialistic men. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His subsequent followers exhibited expert dexterity in this connection. By following the same method, one can bring the materialistic men of this age of quarrel into order for peaceful life and transcendental realization.**

Śrīla Prabhupāda, upon reading this part of your purport, I now understand how you carried out what you were so persistently trying to accomplish. This part of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* was written by you in early 1960s. You had clearly thought of your methodology, that you would pursue the mission **“as an expert devotee, applying novel ways and means to convert the non-devotees in terms of particular time and circumstances.”** You were strong and fixed in your purpose but flexible in your methodology. Whatever possible you would undertake with whoever was ready to do it. You didn’t mind some mistakes committed by inexperienced followers. You were so kind and encouraging that even those who faced your chastising didn’t leave your association. In fact, those who left on their own, also came back to you.

Even in the beginning only with the three volumes of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (you brought from India) you made it a routine of daily morning *SB* class after the *japa* period. You instilled in the new followers, the key message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, hearing and glorifying Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, The Supreme Personality of Godhead. This became such a basic practice, that all the newcomers to the Movement all over the world were introduced to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, through the morning *SB* classes regularly. They benefited by listening to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and felt empowered to distribute them to the public.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you encouraged those with musical skills / inclinations, to learn how to chant the *mahā-mantra*, to lead the *kīrtanas* and to make musical records for distribution amongst the public. You encouraged the artists to make wonderful paintings of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, His dear associates, His transcendental abode, His pastimes, etc., later also to be used in your books. You encouraged all the devotees to go out for book distribution and street *saṅkīrtana*. You made capable individuals as leaders to open new temples in various parts of the world and others to carry out certain projects. You gave the devotees ideas to create and perform plays to impart the spiritual wisdom of Śrī *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The First American Theatre Ensemble (FATE) not only performed plays, the idea was extended also for making dioramas for public display.

You knew your Guru Mahārāja Śrī Śrīmad Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Gosvāmī Prabhupāda already used such a method successfully. You expanded this method of preaching. You often talked about cultural presentation of the values of *sanātana-dharma*. Now your

disciples and granddisciples are continuing your methodology through various avenues, whether separately or in conjunction with “Woodstock” style gatherings.

The Festival of India accompanying many Rathayātrās around the world is also very popular. Of course the idea of the Rathayātrā itself was introduced by you, having been inspired by the set of small Śrī Jagannātha, Śrī Baladeva and Śrīmatī Subhadrā Devī, sold as figurines in an art shop and brought to you by your dear servant Malati Mataji in San Francisco in 1967. Your methodology is followed by your disciples even to this day as a proven formula, successfully. They are also using the latest technological facilities in their devotional service, on the principle of *yukta vairāgya*, originally coming from Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda.

I was not there with those early devotees. Nonetheless I know that you are with us through your *vāñī*. I know individually I can't do much for ISKCON. I pray that your merciful glance will fall upon me, and inspire me to strive with faith and cooperate with your dedicated servants in the expansion of your society far and wide.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, out of your causeless 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,
tṛṇāpekhā ati hīna
sakala-sahane, bala diyā koro
nija māne sprhā hīna*

“Gurudeva, give to this servant just one drop of mercy. I am lower than a blade of grass. Give me all the help. Give me strength. Let me be as you are, without desires or aspirations.”

Your worthless humble servant,

Guruprasad Dasa

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Your fearless lotus feet can shelter the whole universe. By their sight, the mind and heart are satisfied beyond the range of intellect. Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Re!

By their gentle dancing, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* appeared on a multitude of tongues.

Though your two beautiful feet walked the Earth, they're actually a giant umbrella overhead. Without blocking the sun and moon rays, they rather surpass them.

Though the sun and moon give shelter, warmth, and nourishment to all living beings, they support existence in a world surrounded by death.

Your divine feet, being satellites of the original Gaura - Nityānanda sun and moon, shine in the sky at once nourishing all living beings. By their grace, anyone may be lifted out of birth and death and taken home where every step is a dance.

Your two soft feet cool the universe with the confidential message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* just like the moon that shines cooling rays on all regardless of past deeds. At the same time, with every step, your feet spread the teachings of *Bhagavad-gītā* with authority like the sun!

As parts and parcels of Kṛṣṇa, we are eternally pleasure-seeking but blind to where true happiness is. With perfect accuracy, your feet point the way to the nectar for which we are always anxious!

The dust of your feet spread the happiness of devotional service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa all over the world for the benefit of all.

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please keep me ever under your lotus feet shade and accept my childlike attempts to serve you. Knowing that I have no qualification at all, you lovingly accepted me. Please ever engage me in service at your lotus feet! Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Re!

Your eternal servant,

Tamra Dasi

Offering of heartfelt flower-like words in gratitude and prayer to Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

My eternal spiritual father, I offer prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet.

Remembering important reasons we are grateful to Śrī Gurudeva I first pour the emotions of gratitude from my heart into the perfect mold set by one among the glorious Six Gosvamis of Vṛndāvana you introduced us to, Śrīla Raghunāth dāsa Gosvāmī:

Nāma-śreṣṭham: You have given us the sound-vibration, the method and ecstatic worship and goal of purely serving the holy names, *Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare;* non-different from the Lord Himself, and also a form of personal loving guru to bring us closer to the Lord.

Manum api śacī-putram atra svarūpaṁ; Rūpaṁ tasyāgrajam: You've connected us with Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the son of Mother Śacī Devī, described best in the treasure you've given us known as *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, as well as the association therein of His closest associates, like Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī-pada, and his elder brother Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī.

Uru-purīm Māthurīm: You introduced and filled us with wonder through your revelatory narrations about the Lord's own abode on Earth, introducing and bringing us to Śrī Kṛṣṇa's own neighborhood of Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala Bhūmi Vṛndāvana, which is entered through Śrī Mathurā Purī where the Lord first appears.

Goṣṭhavātīm: You have pointed us towards the association of the genuine devotees of the Lord to keep us firm in our resolve on this sublime, moonlit path of loving devotional service to Śrī Hari.

Rādhā-kunḍam, Giri-varam: Within the soft-heart

of Śrī Vṛndāvana, you have brought us to Śrī Rādhā-Kuṇḍa, Śyāma-Kuṇḍa and to Śrī Girirāja Govardhana, the most intimate pastime places of the Lord that are brimming with sweetness and remembrance.

Aho! Rādhikā-Mādhavāsām: Oh, Śrīla Prabhupāda, through the merciful grace of your sublime teachings in the purports you have ecstatically given in *Bhagavad gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Kṛṣṇa Book*, and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* to us all over the world and now in every language. You have taught us of the Divine Love of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; how the Lord is one, but He is also two! And that He is most irresistibly drawn towards *bhakti*, which She personifies.

Prāpto yasya pratitha-kṛpayā, Śrī Guruṁ taṁ 'nato 'smi: I simply offer my unlimited obeisances at your lotus feet, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, and pray that birth after birth you keep me in the fold of your divine company and engage me in pure devotional service.

I pray for realization of the import of what you have graciously given for posterity in your purports, and to render pure service to the pure holy names, free from offence. Kindly increase my faith! May we always live in the rays of Your Divine Grace, contributing meaningfully towards the smile on your lotus face.

Jaya, Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda! All glories to Your Divine Grace and the teachings you have given, to the disciplic succession of spiritual masters you have connected us with, who are richly described in the songs and books you distributed to every town and village for the spiritual benefit of the entire world!

Your eternal servant,

Kilimba Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Please accept my most humble obeisance, again and yet again.

Since you are the love of my life, to glorify and appreciate you in less than 1500 words is a real challenge. I love everything about you – your wit, humor, intelligence, courage, charm, wisdom and your presentation of transcendental knowledge. Just as Rukmiṇī fell in love with Kṛṣṇa without ever meeting Him but by hearing about Him, the same has happened to me. Because like many of your *śiṣyas* who came later, I had only the most fleeting association with you.

I still remember that when I first got your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*; reading it was the last thing I did at night before putting it under my pillow and the first when I awoke. I would carry it with me wherever I went and read it while walking the sidewalks or crossing the street. I was that absorbed in what you were telling me through your writing. I still remember the exact spot where I was standing on Elm Street on the railway tracks when I stopped, turned over the *Gītā* and stared deeply into your photo and said to myself, “you are my real father because you have given me this knowledge.” And over the years the more I read your books the deeper that connection became.

But, even though I had read all your books several times it was not until I started to regularly listen to your recordings that I really began to appreciate all your adorable qualities. And, that is when the real attachment for you took place. I could just hear in the sound of your voice, turn of phrase and modulation, your deep love of Kṛṣṇa. Sometimes you are very grave about the terrible nature of material life, at others you are explaining intricate Vedic topics and at other times telling humorous stories about Kṛṣṇa with a certain mischievous lilt in your voice that is so captivating. I fell in love with you. And, if you are so captivating what then of your master Lord Kṛṣṇa? Through your character and devotion I can get a tiny glimpse of how truly lovable Kṛṣṇa is because you, His devotee, are so lovable.

We are all now (May 2020) living in unprecedented times of the Wuhan virus pandemic, and I can see that many people are in serious anxiety for their health, livelihood, political stability and general uncertain future. It is unnerving to see everything suddenly turned upside down everywhere so quickly. People are afraid for their lives. And, while I am writing this offering my own mother suddenly died. Since I am still on the bodily concept of life this also affects me to some extent. But as soon as I immerse myself in chanting, reading your books, hearing you sing and listening to you speak, that fear and anxiety goes to a distant place. This transcendental knowledge that you have given me, which drives away that terrible fear and instead brings peace, and joy – is the greatest possible gift.

My only sadness is that being an insignificant person of little means or intelligence that I do not know how to repay you for what you have given me. The great pains that you endured to come to the West. How will I repay that? The struggles you went through in the early days. How will I repay that? The nights you stayed up translating your books. How will I repay that?

In a small attempt to pay off some of the debt I owed you, over the years I have sponsored the distribution of your books. One time I sponsored the distribution of 2200 books. Navina Nirada Prabhu reported that after distributing a book to one young woman he later observed her intently reading the book and regularly kissing it out of her appreciation for the knowledge that you gave. Just hearing of that women's gesture of appreciation was worth the total cost of the books.

When I examine my life and character I see many faults. But, I also see that after my association with you through your books, recordings and sincere followers, that there have also been some improvements. Your mercy is all that I am made from. Any good qualities that I may possess are to your credit. The faults are my own.

My words fail to express how much you mean to me. As Lord Kṛṣṇa's ambassador, you are the be-all and end-all of my life. My only prayer is that somehow in some way I am able to please you. My only desire is to see you smile broadly when I come into your presence. When will I see you again?

Your insignificant and eternal servant,

Śyāmasundara Dāsa
(Jyotish sastri)

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*

With each passing year, I see how the truths you have spoken and written, about the living entities' state of existence in this material realm, are spot on. I have witnessed many dear and near godsiblings and family relatives leaving this mortal world to continue their respective paths of endeavor in situations invisible to my eyes. But the unfortunate thing is that even though I intellectually appreciate the analysis, I am still struggling to come to a solid realization of it. I am seeing how vast the gap is between my *jñāna* and *viññāna* – but without collapsing this gap the fruit of spiritual life will remain elusive.

You have given immensely of yourself to present the transcendental knowledge to all peoples of the world for their eternal benefit, exemplifying what your Guru Mahārāja used to say that he was willing to expend gallons of blood to help turn one soul towards Kṛṣṇa. At an advanced age, you forcefully entered the international stage and manifested your “aggressive grace” to make us all fortunate souls. You showed us by your crystal-clear example what it means to be fully surrendered to the will of guru and Kṛṣṇa and how to live a life of pure devotional service.

But because I am so thick-headed and mired in ignorance, my spiritual progress is embarrassingly slow. So today, on your glorious appearance day, I beg that you show some special mercy to this fallen soul. I so much want to please you and become a useful instrument in your hands but without your merciful glance, I am unable to see my way forward. I am your weak but willing servant so please bestow upon me the courage to continue in my devotional practices holding high above me your sterling instructions and swan-like example.

I beg to remain your eternal servant,

Ankotha Dasa

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda who personally saved me from the hellish conditions created by me by the misuse of my minute independence through the sojourn of my pathetic material existence throughout countless births and deaths.

I also offer countless *danḍavat praṇāms* unto all the Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord who have helped me in my spiritual life and who are selfless oceans of compassion towards all *jīvas*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thanks.

- Thank you for your direct physical association. I will always treasure those moments as the most important in my life.
- Thank you for your books and recorded words. They will always remain my reference point to distinguish reality from illusion.
- Thank you for the general association of devotees. I will always remember the ecstatic service rendered with them.
- Thank you for the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. It is now the constant vibration of my life and the heartbeat of my soul.
- Thank you for your guidance from within. By it I never feel alone.
- Thank you for sending really advanced devotees to hear from. I will always see them as your representatives.
- Thank you for saving me and guiding me to the ultimate goal of life. When I think of this I cry.

“If one gets a bona fide spiritual master and acts according to his direction, then his perfection of life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is guaranteed.” (Bg. 18.57, purport)

All glories to *Gaura-vāñī-pracāriṇe* Śrīla Prabhupāda!
Rādhe! Rādhe!

Dasanudas,
Jiva Pavana Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

I am forever in your debt for pulling me out of materialistic life and giving me the opportunity to practice the path of *bhakti*. I am grateful for so many things that you have given me to support my *bhakti* journey.

This year I want to thank you for your inspiring example of noticing and caring for every smallest living entity. I love the stories that your disciples tell of your kindness and mercy to insects.

Srutakirti Prabhu relates an incident that took place in Los Angeles April 29, 1973:

Śrīla Prabhupāda was in New Dwaraka in the spring of 1973. Hearing His Divine Grace ring his bell, I immediately went to his room and offered my obeisances. Pointing to the floor near my legs, he looked at me with wide eyes and great concern.

“Do you see that bug?” he asked. Looking around for a few moments, I finally spotted a small insect. I nodded.

In a serious voice Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “I have been watching that bug for some time now and he has not moved. I think he is hungry. Get a *prasādam* flower and take him outside. Put him on a plant so he can get some nourishment.”

It was another wonderful occasion in which he revealed the indiscriminate mercy of a pure devotee. His Divine Grace didn’t feel it was a waste of time to mitigate the suffering of even the smallest of living entities. Now, just seeing a small insect, I am forced to think of my beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda. However insignificant we may be, if we are fortunate to get the glance of the *nitya-siddha*, our life will be immensely benefited.

Srutakirti tells another story in which you are demonstrating Kṛṣṇa’s teachings in *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.35. ‘When you have obtained real

knowledge from a self-realized soul, you will know that all living beings are but part of me, that they are in me, and are mine.’

In Māyāpur, Śrīla Prabhupāda lived in two rooms. One room was his sitting room where he translated and received guests. Next door was his bedroom. He also used it to honor *prasādam*, so there was a small marble *prasādam* table (*choki*) set against the wall to the right of his bed. June was generally very hot, so when Śrīla Prabhupāda took lunch *prasādam*, I sometimes fanned him with a peacock fan. It not only created a breeze, but also kept the flies away. However, when Śrīla Prabhupāda took his lunch, it immediately alerted the resident ant population. They always had scouts running along the walls and within minutes of putting his plate on the table, they called in the battalion.

In Los Angeles, Śrīla Prabhupāda told me to put turmeric where they entered. It had worked in Los Angeles. I suppose those ants were more materialistic. The ants in Māyāpur, however, could not be stopped. Obviously, they were spiritual entities who could not be discouraged from taking *mahā-prasādam* remnants from the plate of the pure devotee. I watched as hundreds of ants ascended the leg of the *choki*, circled his plate and finally descended upon his *prasādam*. They seemed to know when they were allowed on a certain preparation. Śrīla Prabhupāda ate in stages. First, he ate the vegetables and chapatis, then he added the rice, and finally he ate the sweets. The ants initially congregated around the plate. Gradually they worked their way onto the preparations that Śrīla Prabhupāda had finished. It seemed like the ants were a little courteous. Finally, Śrīla Prabhupāda ended his meal with a few sweets. He then got up to wash.

For the ants, the moment they had been waiting for had arrived. They now knew it was time to dive into the sweets. Incredibly, Śrīla Prabhupāda never said one word about them during this daily attack on his lunch. This was not an isolated incident. It happened with great regularity. There seemed to be an arrangement between the pure devotee and these tiny insects. He was free to take as much time

as he wanted and they were allowed to eat whatever he did not finish. I tried to take away the plates as quickly as possible so there was something left to distribute to his disciples. Referring to ants in Calcutta, Śrīla Prabhupāda once said, "It's all right, they don't eat very much."

Another devotee tells how he carefully cleaned your room in Vṛndāvana. He removed all the spiders and spider webs that were in a corner of the ceiling. When you returned you were not happy. You considered that these spiders were residents of the *dhāma* who had been there for generations and should not have been removed.

There are so many more stories of your consideration, kindness and mercy to living entities that are considered insignificant. I am grateful for these lessons. I remember them when I encounter insects and other living beings in small bodies. It also keeps my hope alive that you will be kind and merciful to me as well.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your servant,

Mahendrani Devi Dasi

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

I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, who has opened my eyes, which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance, with the torchlight of knowledge.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Please accept my humble obeisances! All glories to Your Divine Grace who has mercifully delivered tens of thousands of fallen souls like myself.

It seems like a miraculous feat to have achieved what you did in a few short years, but based on your purity it makes complete sense. When the coverings of the material being are put aside the original qualities of the soul shine bright. Nothing is impossible for the pure devotees of the Lord since they have the same qualities of the Lord.

*mūkaṁ karoti vācālaṁ
paṅguṁ laṅghayate girim
yat-kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande
śrī-gurum dīna-tāraṇam*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, the deliverer of the fallen souls. His mercy turns the dumb into eloquent speakers and enables the lame to cross mountains.”

So by your mercy and compassion, unqualified as we are, we are able to engage in the topmost levels of devotional life. Many have engaged in these elevated levels of *bhakti*, and are able to render wonderful services in assisting you to push on your mission for Lord Caitanya. Others are offering more simple but very necessary service in the temples around the world. In all cases this is offered to our Lord through Your Divine Grace.

In the absence of your physical presence we push on, albeit with a multitude of missteps and faults. We need to deepen our focus on the process that you gave us in order to purify our hearts and simply become instruments of Your Divine Grace.

For that we are going to need your blessings and guidance which, unless you come directly into our hearts, we will readily find in your books.

Having full faith that you are, in fact, still with us I turn to you on

a daily basis for guidance and direction. However, my mind is always in the way, since it is wild and generally out of control. Your books are therefore very important as you are without question present in your words. So we can test everything on the basis of your books.

So here I am, a product of your mercy. Pushing forward and still able, only by the mercy of your devotees, to do something in your service. And that service is so multifaceted that there is no end to what I can do on any level – be it a guard on a door or leading a discussion between a group of your leaders.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please keep me on your team in spite of all my shortcomings.

Your aspiring servant,

Naresvara Dasa
Māyāpur

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda, *jagad-guru*.

I grew up with the instructions and the words coming from his lotus-like mouth. Since I was a young boy, growing up in a remote corner of the world, I eagerly waited every week for the arrival from the Bhaktivedanta Tape Ministry, and I would listen to it again and again. When I finally was authorized by my family to join the Movement, I only dreamed about the time I would receive initiation. That moment arrived in March 1977, when I received my *japa* beads and name...that was the best moment of my life. I tried to be a worthy disciple, and still do today. Śrīla Prabhupāda was the beacon that guided my life, and forever will be.

My eternal obeisances to your lotus feet. Please forgive this fallen soul and keep me in your service.

Your servant,

Nrisimha Dasa

*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 humble obeisances. All glories to Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma!

By your blessings and kindness, we have this wonderful opportunity to serve you and try in some small way to assist you in spreading Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* mission of distributing the sublime message of Godhead and giving the souls of this world the beautiful *darśana* of Their Lordships, Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi, Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma, Śrī Śrī Rādhā Śyāmasundara.

There are many challenges and struggles living in this material world. You have given us the ticket and visa to get out of this repeated birth and death and have allured us to come home back to Goloka and return to our life in the eternal kingdom. Seeing how you have made tremendous sacrifices and tolerated all troubles and tribulations to carry out the order of your spiritual master, it is totally inspiring and a lesson that all of us should be full of gratitude, learn tolerance and have the determination to be an instrument in your service.

Everything that you have said in your lectures and written in your books is coming to pass. The material world is collapsing all around us, and there is great suffering and pain everywhere at the present time. Now, more than ever, we have to seriously take to this Kṛṣṇa consciousness with renewed determination, and as Śrīla Prahlāda Mahārāja showed us, we have to take shelter of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva and beg for His mercy and guidance. Kṛṣṇa Balarāma Mandir is situated in the spiritual world Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhām, the Lord's personal abode; we are blessed! We will continue to serve with determination, enthusiasm and patience, begging for your continued guidance, and empowerment that our words and deeds will give you pleasure and help in the mission of freeing all the suffering conditioned souls.

Jai Śrīla Prabhupāda! May your glories be sung all over the world, may the singing of the *mahā-mantra* purify everyone. All the devotees

are so happy that you gave us this topmost gift, the chanting of *Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare*. There is nothing in this world that will save us other than the holy name of the Lord. You are our lord and savior!

Your servant,

Pancagauda Dasa

Prahladanatha Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda! All glories to your service! To your love and dedication!

We live with you every day! We like to live in the present, and you are with us all the time and every day. We pray to thank you and humbly request that our memory stays with you.

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet!

Your servant,

Prahladanatha Dasa

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

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

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

My dear Gurudeva, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet.

On this most auspicious Vyāsa-pūjā day, I beg to glorify Your Divine Grace, although I am most unqualified to do so.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have taught us that serving the instruction of the spiritual master, his *vāñī*, is more important than serving his physical body, his *vapuḥ*. I never could serve you directly when you were physically present, nor could I even speak to you personally. Yet I remain fully confident and convinced that you are my eternal spiritual father and that all your instructions are meant for my gradual advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I simply pray on this auspicious Vyāsa-pūjā day, please bless me to serve the Deities wherever I am, and always be in Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout my entire life.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your servant,

Sudhir Krishna Dasa

Dallas

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. Thank you for the opportunity to gather under your shelter on your Vyāsa-pūjā day to express our love for you.

This year I come before you exceedingly grateful. Because of you, and your love for us, our lives have become fortunate in every way. You have made our good fortune, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and request us to do the same for others.

After a lifetime in preparation, and a most difficult sea voyage to America, you wrote a heartfelt poem, “Prayer unto the Lotus Feet of Kṛṣṇa,” that encapsulates your mission and glorifies your spiritual master (excerpt follows):

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura,
who is very dear to Lord Gaurāṅga, the son of
mother Śacī, is unparalleled in his service to the
Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He is that great saintly
spiritual master who bestows intense devotion to
Kṛṣṇa at different places throughout the world.

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.

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

Although my Guru Mahārāja ordered me to accomplish
this mission, I am not worthy or fit to do it. I am very
fallen and insignificant. Therefore, O Lord, now I am
begging for Your mercy so that I may become worthy,
for You are the wisest and most experienced of all.

If You bestow Your power, by serving the spiritual master
one attains the Absolute Truth—one’s life becomes

successful. If that service is obtained, then one becomes happy and gets Your association due to good fortune.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, this beautiful poem of yours is my life's anthem. It re-inspires me day after day, year after year, to push on against all obstacles on the path of *sādhana-bhakti*, and continue to serve you and Lord Gaurāṅga.

Please smile your oceanic smile at each of us today and offer your kind, fatherly words of encouragement. Assure us this lifetime of separation will be over soon, and you are waiting for us to dance with you in Lord Caitanya's eternal *saṅkīrtana-līlā*.

Your faithful servant,

Kosarupa Dasi

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most respectful obeisances at 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*

In Delhi, 44 years ago, that most blessed day on which I met you for the first time and, by the grace of God, you provided me with your first *darśana*; the first conversation you had with me and that I still vividly recall. You said:

“People are unhappy. They suffer because they have waged a war on Nature.”

After a short pause, with a serious gaze, you asked me: “do you believe in God?”

Absorbed in reflection following that statement you had just made, I was startled by your question and responded with a nod.

You proceeded and, with a solemn expression, you calmly explained that this cruel attack on nature would give way to a global catastrophe, one whose consequences would mainly impact the human race that had provoked it.

Your facial expression, your voice and your gaze were full of intense compassion. I welcomed your teachings as a unique, immeasurable gift. I cherished and cultivated them within my memory and they have illuminated my life in every way.

I am writing to you as the coronavirus covid-19 pandemic unfolds and people, confined to their homes since a month now, live in anguish and fear for themselves and their loved ones. After more than 70 years, Italy, a country that thought it had achieved solid levels of development and well-being in a permanent way, is unexpectedly forced to face the precarious state of its achievements in various areas, even in fundamental ones such as civil rights, healthcare,

social services and independence in regard to food security. It only took a virus to shake this fragile socio-economic foundation built upon a distorted vision of reality. This distortion is essentially due to having adopted an egotistical way of being, one that is materialistic and nihilistic towards life: a vision similar to a predator in relation to its prey. Modern man, in the name of science and economic progress, treats nature and all of its beings with predatory violence.

In the name of science, for the purpose of scientism, he has created a greedy economic system with no consideration for life and all of its beings, acting with the arrogance of a mad demiurge (*asura*), placing himself in the position of God with a sense of superiority towards everyone and everything. He is dragging humanity towards its most disastrous demise: its dehumanization and the progressive destruction of biodiversity on the planet.

All that you spoke to me about that day, did indeed happen, and now the human race is suffering the terrible consequences.

You also said and wrote more than once: without religion, science becomes inhumane; without science, religion becomes sentimentalism.

You then continued discoursing and asked me to be part of the solution. You asked me to become a Kṛṣṇa devotee, to chant His sacred name, to study the *Bhagavad-gītā* and to serve Him by speaking of Him to everyone I would meet.

Within my power and with enthusiasm and faith, I accepted your invitation. From that blessed day on which I met you, through yours and Kṛṣṇa's mercy, I was able to transform my life thanks to your teachings.

Miraculously and with immense gratitude, until today, I hold in my heart the immeasurable spiritual gift you've given me and strive to share it with as many people as possible even amidst the tragic circumstances in which we all find ourselves now.

Deeply aware of how much I am in your debt and wanting to demonstrate my immense gratitude, I ask you to please continue to illuminate me, inspire me and always grant me new opportunities to serve you, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the world and all of its beings.

Without your blessings, I could but only cry without any hope of truly living.

With my heart, with increasing devotion, your grateful servant,

Matsya Avatar Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

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

I was eight when they asked me to stand before you, your entourage and the entire school to offer the Sanskrit, English and a few words commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* verse: 5:29. Then some *gurukulis* chanted verses – an entire chapter from the *Gītā*. Others offered the Sanskrit to English word for word. I was chosen to offer the ‘lecture’ summary. You looked at me. Everyone else disappeared from my mind and eyes. “This is real education,” you began. I don’t remember the exact reason you gave, but it has stayed with me as the premise of all that I hold as my paradigm in life:

bhoktāraṁ (you enjoy) *yajña* (sacrifice) *tapasāṁ* (austerity)
sarva (all) *loka* (planets) *maheśvaran* (supreme controller of)
suhṛdaṁ (friend of) *sarva* (all) *bhūtānāṁ* (living beings)
jñātvā (knowing this) *māṁ* (about me)
śāntim (peaceful) *ṛcchati* (achieves)

To defer to the faith that Kṛṣṇa is controlling everything is a refuge in our darkest hour. To hold that the Lord is in fact our friend is to look for the reason behind hardships and recognize blessings as His reward. To present our hardships as a sacrifice for his pleasure is to find value in horrific losses. Hence, you called it the Peace Formula. One of many of such formulas from you I hope to share with loved ones and the world at large.

Your servant,

Raghunatha Anudasa
(Raghu Giuffre)

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Thank you for allowing me to try to be your disciple. Each year of this life, my amazement of how fortunate you have made us increases.

Each time a universe is born from Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu, it remains manifest for one lifetime of Lord Brahmā. Each lifetime of Lord Brahmā consists of 100 years. Each of his years consists of 360 days. Within each of his days, there are 1000 *Mahā* yugas, each consisting of 4,320,000 of our years. Lord Kṛṣṇa visits us once in a day of Lord Brahmā. So, only 5000 years after Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance, and only 500 years after Lord Caitanya's appearance, out of the millions of people inhabiting this planet at that time, a few of us had the good fortune of hearing from His pure devotee. Because of your purity and strong intention, this message continues to spread around the planet, even in unfavorable circumstances.

Because you are Kṛṣṇa's friend, there is a real possibility that I can also become his friend, even though it may take some time to become free from the modes of material nature.

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

So somehow or other, we must become profoundly serious to execute your mission. Sometimes people ask, "We are so small, and God is so great, so how will it be possible that He would notice me, or that I could ever be qualified to reach Him?" You have explained that Kṛṣṇa is omnipotent and unlimitedly compassionate. He is completely capable of solving our problems. Yet, He wants to see that we are qualified, that we have the humility to listen to and the enthusiasm to try to apply the teachings of His pure devotee.

It is easy to get side-tracked by our independent nature, thinking that perhaps I can figure this out on my own. I may make so many

plans to move forward, but here you clarify that the method for success is simply to make our desire one with yours. Then, by making an honest effort to please you, it is a spiritual success whether we appear to have succeeded or not.

So, each one of us disciples are trying and stumbling, trying, and stumbling. By making mistakes we learn, and through the process, our appreciation for you grows more and more.

Now that we see the suffering of humanity intensifying, our appreciation for what we have learned is deepening more than ever. Your heart cries for the world's suffering, and you have asked us to join your inspired effort to help them to also become fortunate. We are seeing how the gullible people of Kali-yuga are ready to accept any nonsense propaganda that they hear on the media. There is so much conflicting propaganda now, that it is driving people crazy and filling them with paranoia and setting them apart even more.

May we take the opportunity to spread propaganda of Kṛṣṇa's plan to come back to a consciousness that fully satisfies the hungry soul. May we take shelter of your divine instructions to solve our big problem – separation from the Lord of our heart.

Your aspiring servant,

Gopimata Devi Dasi

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humblest of obeisances. All glories to you on this most auspicious day of your appearance.

Your appearance is such mercy to all the conditioned souls, as you came to fulfill the great mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, to spread the holy names to every town and village. You accepted as your guru Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and followed his direct instruction to spread the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the West.

How could one septuagenarian gentleman from India possibly travel to America with seven dollars to his name, establish a worldwide movement, an International Society for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, in a few short years? May I be so bold as to answer that question? You were able to do this because you are completely, cent-percent faithful and surrendered to Kṛṣṇa and the orders of your guru, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Mahārāja. You told us, you showed us, that surrendering to the will and taking the mercy of guru and Kṛṣṇa can make the impossible possible. You were empowered to transform hippies into Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord, teaching them to chant the *mahā-mantra*. You translated into English, and published through your BBT, dozens of transcendental volumes of historic Vaiṣṇava literature, which were also then translated into many languages and distributed extensively throughout the world. You were given the strength, despite your advanced age and deteriorating physical health, to circle the globe multiple times, preaching in cities, towns, and villages to fulfill your guru's request.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, it is your words, your instructions, and your unalloyed devotion that are responsible for the ever-increasing spreading of the holy names. You are responsible for engaging people of all races, languages, colors, and creeds in the chanting of the *mahā-mantra* as their personal *japa*, and together as *harināma śaṅkīrtana*. In these ways, you also engaged your disciples, through

your perfect example and instructions, in spreading Vaisnavism throughout the world.

On this day, the celebration of your most important appearance, I have a humble request. May your works of devotion not be hampered or hindered by our material addiction to “change.” You instructed that it is the disciples’ duty to repeat what you have given us, unchanged, in order to successfully help the conditioned souls to escape the clutches of *māyā*. In this way, may we all be able to become guru too, by simply repeating your words and teachings unchanged to everyone we meet. May we hear, and repeat, without deviation or alteration, what you have taught. I believe that will be our greatest service to you.

I beg for your mercy and your help in my endeavor to follow your instructions, unadulterated by my own mental speculation.

Praying to be in your service for eternity,

Saṅkīrtana Dāśī

The Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement

The Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement is based on the ancient Vedic scriptures of India. There is much scholarly difference of opinion upon the history of when these blessed writings manifested. However, there is little disagreement upon the history of the language in which these ancient texts are written. Sanskrit is acknowledged to be one of the oldest, if not the oldest, written language on our planet.

Just like there is no Jewish tradition without Moses, Christian tradition without Jesus or Islamic tradition without Muhammad, there is no Vedic tradition without Kṛṣṇa. And, as the aforementioned personalities are historical individuals, we who participate in the Hare Kṛṣṇa tradition, accept Kṛṣṇa as a historical individual. The most unique and important point of our faith tradition, is that Kṛṣṇa Himself is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, or more succinctly, God. This faith is based upon the Vedic literatures mentioned above.

The *Bhagavad-gītā* is part of the great spiritual epic known as the *Mahābhārata*, which is a most important Vedic literature. The name *Bhagavad-gītā*, translates as *Bhagavad*: God, and *Gītā*: song. It is known all over the world as *The Song of God*. For example, the great American transcendentalists Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman, of the 19th century AD, were all avid readers of this song, this poem, this sacred conversation between two persons: Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. I would like to make an important statement about our faith tradition, by pointing out that the *Gītā* has been translated into most of the languages extant on this Earth. And along with translation, comes some kind of interpretation. It is this aspect of interpretation that I would like to focus on a little, to make a very important distinction about our faith tradition.

My dear teacher (guru), His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda, has informed me, that there are basically two most prominent traditions of interpretation of the *Gītā*: the personal and the impersonal. My guru is the 10th teacher down from a great spiritual teacher named Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who appeared in Bengal, India, in 1486. In contrast to the great teacher Śaṅkarācārya, who re-established the authority of the Vedic literatures in India, beginning in the 7th century AD (it had fallen due to the great influence of the Buddha), Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya established

the personal interpretation, as the essence of the Vedic literatures and hence of the *Gītā*. Prabhupāda named his translation of the great Song of God, “*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.” He did this to emphasize that our faith tradition, coming down from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, accepts the personalist translation of the *Gītā*, as the most accurate.

Śrī Caitanya taught the chanting the great chant for deliverance, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*: *Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare / Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare*, as a simple and sublime process for achieving self-realization in this Age of Kali, the Age of Iron, the Age of Fear, Hypocrisy and Quarrel. Our tradition is non-sectarian in that, for example, Lord Caitanya had discussions with a Muhammadan leader of His times, in which he said one can chant the name of God, Allah, if chanted with faith, to achieve the goal of life: to discover oneself as an eternal servant and lover of the one Supreme Being Who has, naturally, unlimited holy and all-powerful names.

In conclusion, Jesus teaches that the goal of life is to love God with all one’s heart and to love one’s neighbor as one’s self. *Bhakti-yoga*, the technical name of the yoga we practice in our faith tradition, is living the lifestyle based on, very precisely the same thing. I call myself a Methodist Hare Kṛṣṇa, often.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. The above essay entitled, “*The Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement*,” was written by my lowly self as a description of our faith tradition which I read at a meeting of the Detroit Interfaith Outreach Network a few years ago. By Your Divine Grace, I have been able to participate in the above organization since its inception in 2012. Thousands of souls have heard the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* through our humble efforts, all made possible by you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. One year a program was held at very large synagogue in the Detroit Metro area. As a member of DION I was allowed to speak to over a thousand souls, from many different faiths, about Lord Caitanya and His teaching, to chant names of God for self-realization in this Age of Kali. I put my arms up and asked the audience to do the same. in the name of glorifying our common Supreme Lord. Then I chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* once. Then I asked the people in the audience to chant the *mantra* with me. Hundreds did.

Today Śrīla Prabhupāda, the world needs Your Divine Grace more than ever. Kṛṣṇa is directing the material nature to confuse this

planet's population like never before. We appear to have entered a part of history here in the earlier part of the 21st century in which only the message of Lord Caitanya can save us from utter chaos. Please O great Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura Śrīla Prabhupāda, help us work together to help you spread the eternal salve of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to heal the broken hearts of countless of souls, suffering the pangs of material existence, especially now, here on the planet Earth. Help us realize just how fortunate we are, your disciples, to be able to try to please you, by our humble efforts, to fall in love with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and to help as many other souls as we can to do the same. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

*With as much appreciation as I can muster,
Your worthless servant,*

Antariksa Dasa

Because I did not have the good fortune to experience Śrīla Prabhupāda's *vapuḥ* before he left us, my offering to him is by way of the opportunity he gave me to associate with those early *saṅkīrtana* devotees. Those who went out day-after-day to towns and villages distributing his books and liberating *laxmi* in order to expand his movement, despite constant harassment from the media, the public, and the police.

Śrīla Prabhupāda would have been familiar with the works of Shakespeare as part of his liberal education at Scottish Churches College; perhaps he would have been familiar with the oft quoted speech of King Henry V before the Battle of Agincourt. I have adapted it as an offering to him.

Scene: Sankirtan Van, Winter 1977. (A time of public disapproval and police harassment)

Bhakta Chad: (Mumbling to himself): "Oh if only there were a few more devotees here today prepared to go out on *saṅkīrtana* with us."

Saṅkīrtana Leader: "Who wishes that? No Prabhuji. If we few here are to go out on the streets every day for the next 10 years, then so be it. Moreover if it is an offence to be greedy for the honor of serving Śrīla Prabhupāda in this way, then I am prepared to be the greatest offender. There may be others who do not seek that mercy, but I do not wish to be counted amongst them. Instead let us celebrate that today we have this unique opportunity to be able to serve his mission."

"And for those of us who are still alive in years to come, we will gather together each year on Śrīla Prabhupāda's Vyāsa-pūjā day and get a chance to compare the interesting effects of old age. Yes, we may become senile and forget most things from the past, but ever fresh in our memories will be the names of those book distributor *mahārathīs*, whose association we were privileged to have: Tripurari Mahārāja from Chicago, Pragosa from New York, Rohini Suta from Zurich, Gopinatha

Acharya from Melbourne. Names and deeds that will be recorded in the annals of ISKCON's history".

"And we, in this Saṅkīrtana Van today, who are privileged in some small way, to share their association will be remembered by Śrīla Prabhupāda till the end of time. We few, we fortunate few, we band of godbrothers and godsisters who have had this honor to serve him in this way."

"So once more into the van prabhus, and on to victory for Śrīla Prabhupāda and his mission, *kī jaya!*"

Prahlada Bhakta Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

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

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

In this year of 2020, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am writing my Vyāsa-pūjā homage to you while the entire world is in the midst of the crisis brought on by the Covid-19 virus. The threat of the spread of this disease has caused practically the entire world to adapt to a new way of living under a strict lockdown. Most non-essential businesses have either closed or drastically changed the way they do business. Many people are living in fear. Fear of contagion, fear of shortages of food supply, fear of loss of income, fear of the uncertainty of what life will be like going forward, and fear of death. Whereas these dangers have always been and always will be present in this material world, it has taken a crisis in the form of this worldwide pandemic to make people more aware of them. Aware to such a degree that many people are feeling helpless and hopeless.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, it is times such as these that help us to realize the extent to which we depend on your mercy and your guidance. Serious situations, such as this one that we now face, require us to take shelter of your instructions. You have given us everything we need to push on your Movement. All we really need do is to more seriously analyze the volumes of mercy that you have left us in your books, your classes, your discussions, and your letters.

On 27 March 1972, you wrote the following in a letter to your disciple Jagadisa Dasa:

If we simply repeat this philosophy exactly as it is, without any misrepresentation or adulteration, then this movement will never be checked, and we will conquer the world. So please train up all these boys and girls in the philosophy and brahminical culture and they will become useful tools in the hands of Lord Kṛṣṇa for saving all the fallen souls in this Age.

You have made it clear, again and again, that your mission for us is to “conquer the world” by spreading this Krishna Consciousness Movement to the fallen, conditioned souls who are trapped here in the grip of *māyā*. This grip of *māyā* is manifest in the conception that one can derive some happiness, security, and shelter while attempting to enjoy this temporary, material world, separate from Kṛṣṇa.

In order for us to be successful in your mission and “never be checked” we must always follow these two instructions. Give to the world the philosophy that you have given to us “exactly as it is, without any misrepresentation or adulteration”, and train up an army of preachers in this philosophy so that “they will become useful tools in the hands of Lord Kṛṣṇa for saving all the fallen souls in this Age.”

At this time in history, the true nature of this material world is being revealed. It is easier for people to see this world as a place of suffering though repeated birth, disease, old age and eventually death. We now have a grand opportunity to educate society at large to the fact that this world is not the place to find safety, security, and happiness. Now, while the people of this world are in such a state of fear and uncertainty, is a very good time to deploy your army of preachers to deliver this philosophy, as it is, and conquer the illusion of the fallen souls.

When times appear to be good, people seem to have little reason to turn to God except to request Him to supply them with resources for sense gratification. It is in times like these that some people will actually turn to God to save them from peril. At present, many people seem to be concerned more and more with safety and security. Now is an excellent time to give the world what you have so mercifully given to us; safety and security in the consciousness of our eternal, loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa as His beloved servants.

The confidence in the material world as a safe and secure place has come into question. Personal association and isolation have become prominent and even mandated by many world governments. To take advantage of this situation many of your army of preachers are attempting to spread your merciful message through preaching online to those who seem to be concerned their destiny in this world. We are finding that many of those who are taking advantage of this “virtual” association with your preachers are taking your message very seriously. We are attempting to repeat your message exactly as you gave it to us through the resource of this internet technology. We

therefore request that you continue to empower us to spread your mercy. If we do not depend completely on your empowerment and somehow misrepresent or adulterate your preaching, we will fail to serve your mission.

This world crisis is surely a test, but also a great opportunity, as well, for all of us to preach more effectively. Kṛṣṇa seems to be testing our faith, our resolve, and our surrender. It has been said that the true strength of a thing is established when it is placed under stress. Without exposure to stress, the true strength of a community, a relationship, or a mission cannot be truly demonstrated. Therefore, we should embrace this stress and utilize it to strengthen our resolve, as well as our faith, and ultimately come closer to you.

I am grateful to you Śrīla Prabhupāda. Grateful that you have allowed me to play some small part in your mission. I see the need to constantly increase the number of spiritual soldiers in your army of preachers. On your instruction, I have finally made this my life's work and full-time engagement. I beg you to please eternally keep me engaged in your service in this way. Please continue to empower me with whatever resources I may need to serve you in whatever capacity you may desire. Please continue to empower us all to save the world.

Your aspiring servant,

Jivananda Dasa Vanacari
Tucson, Arizona, USA

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances on this most auspicious day.

Recently I was watching a live broadcast of one of my dear friends cooking for her Deities. It is a young lady, Rādhā, who has grown up in the Movement from the very early days of Dallas gurukula – she is a second generation devotee. It was most inspiring to not only see her expertise in the art of preparing *prasādam* but also to hear the entertaining and inspiring dialogue of her journey in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, her realisations and all the mentors who have inspired and nurtured her on the path. As I looked over her shoulder I saw that most famous photo of you cooking on the three-tiered cooker that you brought with you to America. I commented on the photo to Rādhā, and she said that she is able to do what she does because you are always there with her looking over her, protecting and uplifting her. I remember her telling me that whatever difficult challenges she went through as a child and growing up in ISKCON (and there were many!) didn't compare to what she has been given by you – the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness – and that moved me very much.

Reading Yamuna's account of preparing the wedding feast with you for her sister Janaki and soon to be husband Mukunda struck me with great amazement and wonder!

I soon found out that my cooking duty for the entire day was to make something called "aloo kachori" a fried potato pastry which is a staple of festive occasions and as anyone who has made them knows one of the more difficult savouries to master. Swamiji then showed me how to shape and stuff the kachoris, and from 11 am to 5 pm I sat in the room making this one preparation. During that time Swāmījī routinely and effortlessly swept into the room with about 13 cooked preparations for at least 100 persons that he single-handedly made in his narrow, sauna-like apartment kitchen.

When I read this I was completely dumbfounded – not only that a *sannyāsī* renunciate who has dedicated his life to his family, work,

studying, translating and commenting on *Śāstra* was able to produce such an incredibly grand feast single handedly, but that it was done in the simplest of facilities! Śrīla Prabhupāda also took great care to serve the feast and Yamuna even commented that she thought he must be superhuman. Beginning from your instructions and chastisements of Mother Yamuna on that wedding day you have inspired legendary ISKCON cooks and preachers throughout the world in *prasādam sevā* – through Food for All, restaurants, catering businesses, award winning recipe books and legendary Sunday feasts!

You are not only the most expert cook but you have imparted in us the pure joy and bliss of the art of preparing *prasādam*, honouring it, relishing it and of course in distributing it!! You have instilled in us an understanding that this is a sacred act a part of our meditation, purification and redemption.

The spiritual master is always offering Kṛṣṇa four kinds of delicious food (analysed as that which is licked, chewed, drunk and sucked). When the spiritual master sees that the devotees are satisfied by eating *bhagavat-prasādam*, he is satisfied. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master.
– Śrī Guroṣṭakam

So a massive thank you for nourishing us in so many diverse and wonderful ways – but especially for *prasādam* which is a lifeline!

Speaking to Rādhā also gave me some appreciation for the incredible way in which your Movement has grown over the last 50+ years. There are now second, third and even some fourth generation devotees. With each generation that emerges we would hope to see a greater purity and commitment to the spiritual path. It is happening slowly but surely. My generation of your disciples here to assist you in your mission is declining with old age, but you will be pleased to hear that there are many of your grand disciples and great grand disciples who are showing so much leadership, strength, inspiration, innovation, creativity in distributing and sharing the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness far and wide. It's all because of you as the root of our ISKCON tree! So many wonderful flowers and fruits are blossoming and this gives great hope for the future of our society and indeed the world as we face greater and greater challenges in these unsettled times. The Movement that you began

under that single elm tree in Tompkins Square Park...will continue to grow and touch hearts, and with it so much kinship, fellowship, healthy dialogue, expertise, practical support and relevance to the society at large.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for continuing to radiate and empower us in our attempts to support your mission.

Your still aspiring servant,

Guru Carana Padma Dasi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet on your appearance day.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!!

Your unlimited glories cannot be measured even if one keeps glorifying for thousands of years. Among all your glories, by your blessings I am trying to glorify you on this special occasion.

You are the real saviour for all humankind all over the world. Through your books, you are entering every devotee's life as their pre-eminent *śikṣā guru*. Your books are so authentic that even if by any means one comes into contact with them, his life becomes blissful. To write these books, you sacrificed your sleep, sacrificed your health and invested lots of time. This is your causeless mercy to us.

You are the dearest representative of Lord Śrī Caitanya. As Śrīla Bhaktinoda Ṭhākura said, Lord Chaitanya's commander has taken birth. You took birth to deliver all fallen souls. You made it happen, "*pṛthivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma, sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma.*" Now we can see in every village and town, Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is chanted. Many yogis and big famous gurus went to the Western countries, but could not find success. But you became totally successful. When you founded your International Society for Krishna Consciousness, you coined the word, 'Kṛṣṇa consciousness' even though you were asked by many yogis and gurus in the West to say as 'God consciousness'. But you were very clear about spreading Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* all over the world.

You are very humble and give all credit to your guru and your disciples. You say that your guru, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda has sent these disciples to help you. Your firm faith in your guru's words is exemplary. You have mentioned in many conversations that this is the key to your success. In many lectures, you mentioned that one must consider his guru as his worshipable deity and his very life and soul (*Guru Devatā Ātmā*). Your lectures and letters are full of instructions to the coming generations. By following those we can become successful.

You constantly worked day and night to distribute *harināma* all over the world. You are capable to do all works perfectly: Preaching, writing books, managing more than 100 temples, cooking *prasādam* and distributing, replying to each letter from your disciples in your

busy schedule. So, today I beg at your lotus feet that somehow or other please make me a tool in your hands so that I can preach on your behalf the way you were desiring. My wife Amrita Keli is also tirelessly travelling with me to spread your message. This is your causeless mercy that you instructed me to become a preacher and preach to Indians in Toronto. So, I am trying to follow your instruction as much as possible.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the real ambassador of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and by establishing ISKCON you facilitated many souls to perform *bhakti-yoga*. You said that how much we love you will be proved after your departure as to how we cooperate with each other and help in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. So, I am submitting myself to you for this cause that somehow or other I can follow your instructions for loving, trusting and cooperating with my godbrothers and devotees in ISKCON at large. Even if they would put me on a bed of arrows still I would not abandon. Please grant me the boon that I would never leave your ISKCON, your GBC and keep serving as a humble menial servant in ISKCON.

You had established eternal spiritual principles, that we are spirit souls and our primary duty is to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa, and in this way we can awaken our love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. So please make me as an instrument to preach this message – love of Godhead, love of Kṛṣṇa. You built 108 different temples, farm communities, Gurukulas, restaurants, conducted huge festivals etc., and in so many ways you had established your ISKCON to save the world. So please grant me that without any expectation I can serve your mission throughout my life. Please grant me a boon that I can become your best disciple by jumping into your *sevā* without your asking me or expecting me. A good disciple is what I want to become. Please grant me this boon that I can causelessly serve you life after life.

Thank you very much, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Hare Kṛṣṇa! All glories to Prabhupāda. Haribol.

Your servant,

Kratu Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Let me try to glorify Your Divine Grace on the day of your Vyāsa-pūjā.

Your deeds are extraordinary. You became the one who fulfilled the desire of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Your compassion for all conditioned souls has no limits!

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have accepted the order of your spiritual master to spread the mission of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu throughout the world, and you have created ISKCON. You made ISKCON continue to develop after you left this planet. ISKCON attracts people like a magnet because of the purity that you put into it.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, now your dreams are becoming reality: the Vedic Planetarium Temple will be built soon. Devotees from all over the world live in Māyāpur, and many people come to visit. Jayapātaka Mahārāja is developing a Nāma Haṭṭa program all over the world, and particularly in Bengal thousands of people have become devotees.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, by your mercy, I am in Māyāpur Dhām. I pray for Your blessing to always be in the *dhāma* in the dust of your lotus feet. I want to develop my Kṛṣṇa consciousness by your mercy in this life.

Your humble disciple,

Krishna Namananda Dasa

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. Let that be my permanent position.

When I first saw Your Divine Grace I was 18 years old and immediately the holy name of Kṛṣṇa began to arise in my heart. Because of a tiny drop of your merciful association I cannot give up this chanting, and I have no other shelter nor do I care for any other process. And because of Your Divine Grace, I know how to recognize a Vaiṣṇava and how to properly serve. Such a rare opportunity I found in serving your many disciples in your manifest pastimes, and even in your absence I served your well-wishing godbrother Śrīla B.R. Śrīdhara Mahārāja and his disciple Govinda Mahārāja as my fortune allowed. These two things; chanting always *hari-nāma* and *vaiṣṇava-sevā*, these alone can satisfy the heart and I consider these the essence of your vast instruction. My heart burns and yearns for your mercy. I am in no way qualified for the transcendental service you offer, in fact I am disqualified, yet I can aspire for nothing else but your kindness to allow me to always go on with this faith which you have implanted in my heart. You are always transcendently beautiful, decorated with all the highest qualities and thus you are the personification of Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

*akṣṇoḥ phalaṁ tvādṛṣa-darśanaṁ hi
tanoḥ phalaṁ tvādṛṣa-gātra-saṅgaḥ
jihvā-phalaṁ tvādṛṣa-kīrtanam hi
sudurlabhā bhāgavatā hi loka*

“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. 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.”

You are even more than a Vaiṣṇava. You are easily seen as an

āveśa of direct empowerment of Kṛṣṇa, specifically as an agent of Śrīla Nityānanda Prabhu to distribute the holy name and the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya all over the world. How else could you do what you have done?

Though you now manifest in a suitable spiritual body to serve Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda in Gokula Vṛndāvana, may I always recognize you and serve eternally under your direction in our real home with Kṛṣṇa as the center of all our activities.

Your aspiring servant,

Dayalu Dulal Dasa

Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!
“We had no position, no power, no use,
until Śrīla Prabhupāda joined us to him”
Rasananda Dasa. Disc 1, *Following Śrīla Prabhupāda*

Every Day in Every Way

Kṛṣṇa’s ambassador has come!
He continues to spread the cure
for *māyā*’s fever of illusion
all over the world.

He is here and accessible,
now, and into the future.
I can continue to deepen my relationship
with him on a daily basis.

I listen to his voice every day,
trying to imbibe his instructions,
and feel the magic of his personality
and sweetness of his character.

He fortifies me with sublime knowledge,
that gives me the foundation and vision,
to live the spiritual life of a disciple.

He inspires me to stretch
beyond my comfort zone,
and empowers me to venture
past self-imposed limits.

He welcomes me into his *darśana*,
as I bow down, and offer
my humble obeisances at his lotus feet.
I am thrilled to be with devotees in his presence.

I see him on morning walks, and gather
in the glow of his smile, with other devotees.
I relish his quick replies, and perfect answers
to age-old questions.

He sweetens the message as he delivers it,
in ways that we can understand.
He is our divine Bhaktivedanta,
expressing realizations from his heart,
directly given by Kṛṣṇa,

He represents the absolute authority
and disciplic succession
from Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya,
knowledge that frees the soul from *saṁsāra*.

We are eternally indebted and enthused,
to share his glories with others,
introducing them to the swan-like *paramaharisa*,
who still travels the globe,
to deliver the fallen
from the present infection of Kali-yuga.

All glories to our beloved
Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,
the Founder-*Ācārya* of the International
Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Praying to continue serving the followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Sarnga Thakura Dasa

I came to know about Śrīla Prabhupāda after emigrating to America from India. I was living in a hostel in the Upper West Side which had a common kitchen for all the residents and met an Indian gentleman who told me about a temple in Brooklyn. I grew up in a Vaiṣṇava family and my father was a devotee of Lord Rāma. I didn't know of any temple in New York, so when this person told me about the Henry Street Temple, I was excited.

That Saturday evening, I took the train and went there. Although in a brownstone, the temple had a very peaceful and spiritual atmosphere. I liked it very much. One of the devotees told me about the Sunday Love Feast and asked me to attend. On Sunday, I went to the program and met even more devotees. I purchased *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* and started reading it. When I got back to my place, I could not stop reading. It was just perfect and introduced me to Lord Caitanya. The author, Śrīla Prabhupāda, explained everything very clearly. His writing was genuine and straightforward. As a result, I went every Sunday to the temple. On one occasion, I learned about the Life Membership program which was recently started by Śrīla Prabhupāda. Knowing he would be pleased, I immediately signed up, giving \$300. I was chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa regularly, reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, and now a Life Member of ISKCON. What I still desired, was to see him and meet him.

In 1975, the temple moved to 340 West 55th St. Because it was now in Manhattan, and on my way to work, I would regularly go to the temple in the morning and evening with the hope of seeing Śrīla Prabhupāda. One day, I was fortunate to find out that Śrīla Prabhupāda was coming to New York and will be giving *Bhāgavatam* class. That next morning, I came to the temple around 6 am and saw devotees lined up in the lobby waiting to greet Śrīla Prabhupāda who was about return from his morning walk. I pushed my way through and was able to get to the front just in time to see Śrīla Prabhupāda walk into the building. We all showered flowers on him and paid obeisances to him. He walked past us into the temple room where he paid obeisances to the three altars of Gaura Nitāi, Rādhā Govinda, and Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā. He then sat on the *vyāsāsana* and was offered *guru-pūjā*. Everyone then had the opportunity to offer flowers. When it was my turn, I went up to him, offered my flowers, and paid my obeisances. I then reached to touch

his lotus feet. Two devotees who were sitting by his side attempted to stop me saying it was forbidden. However, it was too late. I touched his feet, looking at Śrīla Prabhupāda and he smiled back at me.

Some days later, on a Sunday evening, Śrīla Prabhupāda called for a meeting with all the life members in his room on the 11th floor. This meeting lasted more than two hours with a lot of questions and answers. We asked what the process was to take initiation from him. He said we should ask one of his senior disciples who will guide us.

In 1976, Śrīla Prabhupāda achieved one of his desires to have Rathayātrā down 5th Avenue. He joined the parade at 34th Street and 5th Avenue and took his seat on Śrīmatī Subhadrā Devī's car. Luckily, I was there to pull the chariot rope. Seeing his enthusiasm and joy was incredible. He was encouraging everyone to sing and dance with the *kīrtana*, even telling the *sannyāsīs* to jump. At the festival site in Washington Square Park, he addressed the crowd, explaining the origin of the Rathayātrā festival, the significance of Lord Jagannātha, and the importance of becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious.

If I had not met Śrīla Prabhupāda, then my life would not have been the same today. In my advanced aged, these memories of Śrīla Prabhupāda and the early days of ISKCON remain fresh in my mind, and I am forever grateful.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Please forgive our offenses in the discharge of devotional service in your ISKCON and allow us to express our gratitude for the causeless mercy you bestow upon us despite all our faults.

We are grateful for the sacrifices you performed to give us Kṛṣṇa consciousness on your guru's order and for our benefit only. Even though we are so disqualified as Westerners in a woman's body, you patiently engage us in assisting you serving the mission of the whole *paramparā*.

You mercifully overcame all obstacles and difficulties to help us move from ignorance and passion to pure goodness and reinstate us in our original position as servitor Godhead in this very lifetime.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for setting such an edifying example in your environment, among your family members, friends, authorities, congregation members, leaders of the world and personal disciples.

We never stop learning from your teachings, your senior disciples and the Lord in the heart to improve our behavior and character and follow in your footsteps for your pleasure and humanity's benefit at large.

We humbly beg to be empowered to, in turn, assist others coming in contact with your lotus feet and relish your association through your books, various recordings, testimonies and evidence.

We remain your humble servant in your international association and under your protection.

Kṛṣṇa-kīrtana Devī Dāsī
France

Mahapurana Dasa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most respectful obeisances.

Calm and restrained, you refrain from hearing the appeals of unbridled mind debris.

You are free from one who claims your friendship and yet behaves like your enemy.

Calm and restrained, you refrain from hatred and rancor, as you have dropped your anchor into the ocean of transcendence.

Calm and restrained, you refrain from the relish of fleeting mundane joys and cast them off like broken nursery toys from infancy.

Your mood is ecstatic. You are neither gritting your teeth nor struggling to fight off the fire of desire.

You are savoring the flavor of a higher taste, and no time is wasted on anything outside of Kṛṣṇa *sevā*.

Please continue to give me shelter under the umbrella of your lotus feet.

Your servant,

Mahapurana Dasa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,
I bow down at your lotus feet.
I only want to serve you birth after birth.

Your humble servant,
Haridāsa Ṭhākura Dāsa

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