ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA TRIBUTES

05 SEP 2026

Celebrating the appearance day of our beloved spiritual master

> “Guru’s task is very great responsibility. He has to guide the disciple to the perfect position, immortality, back to home, back to Godhead.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda lecture, *“What is a Guru?”*
22nd August 1973—London, UK

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA TRIBUTES



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05 SEP 2026

OṀ VIṢṆUPĀDA
PARAMAHAṀSA
PARIVRĀJAKĀCĀRYA
AṢṬOTTARA-ŚATA

ŚRĪ ŚRĪMAD
A. C.
BHAKTIVEDANTA
SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

FOUNDER-ĀCĀRYA OF
THE INTERNATIONAL
SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA
CONSCIOUSNESS

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA TRIBUTES

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CONTENTS

Contents

CONTENTS 5
INTRODUCTION 1
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 3
TRIBUTES
BY
SANNYASI
DISCIPLES 5

Umāpati Swami 7
Mukunda Goswami 10
Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami 10
Jayādvaita Swami 12
Jayapatākā Swami 13
Prahlādānanda Swami 16
Giriraj Swami 22
Hridayananda das Goswami 23
Danavir Goswami 24
Śacīnandana Swami 26
Kavicandra Swami 28
Smita Krishna Swami 32
Mahavishnu Swami 33
Subhag Swami 34
Bhaktivaibhava Swami 36
Bhakti Vighna Vinasana Narasimha Swami 36
Romapāda Swami 37

Bir Krishna Goswami 40
Ganapati Swami 42
Bhakti Gauravāṇī Goswami 43
Dhīraśānta dāsa Goswami 47
Krishna Kshetra Swami 48
Lokanath Swami 50
Radhanath Swami 57
Pārtha Sārathi Das Goswami 58
Candramauli Swami 59
Bhaktimarga Swami 61
Śivarāma Swami 62
Bhakti Caitanya Swami 67
Ramāi Swami 68
Varṣāṇa Swami 70
Devamrita Swami 76
Mahādyuti Swami 77
Dhaneśvara Dāsa Goswami 79
Nirañjana Swami 82
Bhakti Rāghava Swami 85
Dhanurdhara Swami 87
Guru Prasad Swami 88
Candraśekhara Swami 89
Vedavyāsapriya Swami 91

TRIBUTES BY INITIATED DISCIPLES 93

Mālatī Devī Dāsī 95
Dayānanda Dāsa 100
Hṛṣikeśānanda Dāsa 107
Kāñcanabālā Dāsī 109
Vāmanadev Dāsa 112
Bhūrijana Dāsa 113
Rukmiṇī Devī Dāsī 114
Arundhatī Devī Dāsī 117
Bhavānanda Dāsa 118
Trivikrama Dāsa 120
Cathurbhuj Dāsa 120
Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu Dāsa 123

Svarūpa Dāsa 124
Bhakta Dāsa 124
Mahatma Dāsa 126
Locanānanda Dāsa 127
Aditi Devī Dāsī 130
Nāgapatnī Devī Dāsī 132
Sarvamaṅgalā Devī Dāsī 134
Śatadhanya Dāsa 136
Jaya Jagadīśa Dāsa 139
Viṣṇu Dāsa 142
Nārāyaṇī Devī Dāsī 144
Mahāśinī Devī Dāsī 146
Sureśvara Dāsa 147
Somadās Dāsa 150
Pañcharatna Dāsa 151
Sukhadā Devī Dāsī 153
Viṣṇugadā Dāsa 155
Saṅkarṣaṇa Dāsa Adhikārī 157
Ātmānanda Dāsa 159
Jitāmitra Devī Dāsī 162
Meena Devī Dāsī 164
Mañjuālī Devī Dāsī 166
Bhavatāriṇī Dāsī 168
Gokulānanda Dāsa 169
Janakarāja Dāsa 169
Viśvadevī Dāsī 171
Pṛthu Dāsa 172
Vaiṣṇavānanda Dāsa 174
Ali Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī 176
Gauragopāla Dāsa 178
Janmanālaya Dāsa 181
Rādhāśyāma Dāsa 183
Sākṣī Gopāla Dāsa 184
Yogīndravandana Dāsa 192
Śukla Dāsī 193
Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Dāsa 194
Hṛmatī Dāsī 195
Bhṛgupati Dāsa 198
Jāgariṇī Devī Dāsī 199
Kālakaṇṭha Dāsa 200

Arjuna Dāsa (1973, LA) 201
Govardhan Dāsī 203
Ramyā Devī Dāsī 207
Bādarāyaṇa Dāsa 208
Rukmiṇī Priyā Dāsī 211
Praghoṣa Dāsa 212
Pṛthuśravā Dāsa 213
Varāha Mūrti Dāsa 214
Kadamba Devī Dāsī 216
Rāghava Dāsa 217
Pārtha Dāsa 218
Sarvadṛk Dāsa 219
Havi Dāsa 220
Jaya Bhadrā Dāsī 221
Uttamā Dāsī 223
Dravida Dāsa 224
Śeṣa Dāsa 225
Madhusevita Dāsa 226
Divyāṅga Dāsa 227
Ariṣṭahā Dāsa 228
Kṛṣṇāveśa Dāsī 229
Nirantara Dāsa 233
Nikuñjavāsinī Devī Dāsī 234
Yādavendra Dāsa 237
Tattvavit Dāsa 240
Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Dāsa 243
Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya Dāsa 244
Laṅgagaṇeśa Dāsa 245
Mahāmanā Dāsa 248
Kṛṣṇarūpa Devī Dāsī 249
Aja Dāsa 251
Viśvatomukha Dāsa 252
Bhīma Dāsa 256
Mahā Kartā Dāsa 258
Phalinī Devī Dāsī 259
Lalitā Devī Dāsī 261
Jagadvīra Dāsa 263
Gopīśa Dāsa 264
Tāraka Dāsa 265
Paratpara Devī Dāsī 272

Mṛtyuhara Dāsa 273
Nartaka Gopāla dāsī 275
Medhāvī Dāsa 277
Vimalā Dāsī 279
Caitanya Svarūpa Dāsa 281
Mokṣalakṣmī Devī Dāsī 282
Prassannātmā Dāsa 284
Ādikartā Dāsa 284
Sukhavāhā Dāsī 286
Sandāminī Devī Dāsī 288
Mahākāla Dāsa 289
Rāmānanda Dāsa 290
Samapriyā Devī Dāsī 293
Karṇapūra Dāsa 296
Nandapatnī Devī Dāsī 297
Vaiyāsaki Dāsa 298
Miśra Bhagavān Dāsa 299
Satyarāja Dāsa 301
Dayānidhi Dāsa 302
Tīrthakāra Dāsa 303
Ānandamaya Dāsa 304
Śrīniketana Dāsa 306
Mahāviṣṇupriyā dāsī 307
Narakāntaka Dāsa 310
Bhutiha Dāsa 314
Anuttama Dāsa (1976, Vrindavan) 315
Īśvarīpati Dāsa 317
Anīha Dāsa 318
Haridāsa Dāsa 320
Jagannātheśvarī Devī Dāsī 321
Jagatām Dāsī 322
Arjuna Dāsa (1976, Vrindavan) 323
Atītaguṇa Dāsī 326
Baḍa Haridās 328
Gaura Dāsa 330
Cakrī Dāsa 333
Bhaja Govinda Devī Dāsī 334
Jaya Mādhava Dāsa 335
Vaikuṇṭhadeva Dāsa 336
Jayagurudeva Dāsa 339

Gaura Keśava Dāsa 341
Ātmātma Dāsa 344
Jānakī Devī Dāsī 346
Yogīndra Dāsa 349
Varāharūpa Dāsa 351
Ātmārāma Dāsa 352
Nidrā Devī Dāsī 353
Tāmra Dāsī 354
Karuṇākṣī Dāsī 356
Kilimbā Dāsī 357
Manohāriṇī Devī Dāsī 358
Śyāmasundara Dāsa (1977, Māyāpur) 359
Nṛsiṁha Dāsa 363
Aṅkottha Dāsa 363
Jīva Pāvana Dāsa 365
Tattva Darśinī Devī Dāsī 366
Pañcagauḍa Dāsa 366
Matsya Avatār Dāsa 367
Gopīmātā Devī Dāsī 369
Nanda Kumār Dāsa 370
Prahlāda Bhakta Dāsa 371
Dhīra Dāsa 372
Krishna Nāmānanda Dāsa 373
Amṛtāṁśa Dāsa 374
Devadeva Dāsa 376
Krishna-kīrtana Devī Dāsī (1977, France) 377
Mahāpurāṇa Dāsa 377
Śārṅga Ṭhākur Dāsa 378

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 sannyāsīs first, and then those from Śrīla Prabhupāda's other disciples, all in order of seniority by initiation. We make no judgments about the āśrama status of our contributors. When a devotee signs his offering with a sannyāsī name, we publish it with the name submitted. 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 Kṛṣṇa.

Your servant,

Pradyumna Dāsa
Production Manager

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The cost of printing and distributing this year's Tributes book has been made possible by kind donations from:

- Our main donor from the UK, who wishes to remain anonymous and offers this service in loving memory of H.H. Bhakti Charu Maharaja
- We also have an anonymous sponsor from Africa
- ISKCON London, UK

The Tributes Team

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

Editorial and Production Advisor Jayādvaita Swami
Production Manager Pradyumna Dāsa
Submission Managers Harṣarāṇī Devī Dāsī
Editors Nimāi Devī Dāsī & Sureśvara Dāsa
Sanskrit Editor Rādheśa Dāsa
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Outreach Gaura Dāsa, Sevānanda Dāsa
Website Administrator Bina Soni
Designer Jagannāth Sharaṇ Dāsa

Thank you to Ānanda Tīrtha Dāsa and Kaiśorī Devī Dāsī for their editorial support, particularly with sharing offerings which also appear in the BBT *Vyasa-puja* book.

TRIBUTES BY SANNYASI DISCIPLES

SIXTY YEARS

A Tribute to Śrīla Prabhupāda

I'm in my room, sitting in front of my computer. I should be chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, but I'm looking out the window at the balconies on the apartment building across the way, letting my mind wander here and there.

Then I gently remember: I got an email today reminding me that it's been sixty years this year.

Sixty years, is it? I take a deep breath. Suddenly I'm back at 26 Second Avenue in Śrīla Prabhupāda's room with a few others. We didn't call him Prabhupāda then. We called him the Swami.

The summer sunlight shone through the little window, and the room had a faint smell of mustard oil. The Swami was softly chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

"Have there always been people?" someone asked.

I understood, then, that everything I thought I knew about the world would be shoved aside, starting with Darwin's Theory.

But why did I believe the Swami? I had only known him for a few weeks. How could I let him convince me that it was all wrong—everything I had learned in school and studied in books and picked up in conversations?

I had heard it all, that humans had only been around for the last 30 thousand years, that if you condensed all of history into one year, humans would only appear in the last 15 seconds. And who in the world didn't believe it?

How could I let this one gentleman — self-assured yet humble, small in size yet imposing — seize control of my mind and make me throw away all my meticulously acquired knowledge—the articles I had read, the lectures and classes I had heard, the facts poured into my ears by friends—all into the nearest garbage can?

But then… he could be right. And why did I have to believe Darwin, anyway? Darwin hadn't made me happy. Had he made anyone happy at all?

The Swami had something I wanted. He said it was Kṛṣṇa, though I wasn't sure who Kṛṣṇa was, but the only way I could get to Kṛṣṇa was to let the Swami be my ultimate teacher. And the Swami wanted nothing more than to give Kṛṣṇa to me.

I had been a rebel for years, thumbing my nose and smirking in the face of society's norms. Was this the end? My fellow rebels would whisper that I had ambled away from them. Rebels they were, but they had never stood up against Darwin and his theories. They swallowed it all.

Still, there was an upside. Now I could be a rebel against the rebels. Better yet, the Swami was offering me passage to Kṛṣṇa's world, where accepting could be more exciting than rebelling. Why not give it a chance?

But while I spent the days hemming and hawing and agonizing, the Swami just continued typing at his floor-level desk, sometimes looking up to smile at us, sometimes talking with us. He knew what he was doing. He was inviting me into a tradition older than the universe itself. But I couldn't understand. How could anyone in the world be as patient as he was with me?

People have always existed? All right. I'll try it on for size.

Suddenly a little crash comes from the kitchen. Someone has dropped something. My daydream breaks, and here I am, still looking at the balconies. A little laugh bubbles up in my chest.

I worried about believing Prabhupāda. But I've been believing him for sixty years now, and it hasn't broken a hair on my head. Let the rebels think I've gone conservative. Let the conservatives think I've gone rebel.

I don't care now. I've got my sparkling diamond. It's called Kṛṣṇa consciousness and Prabhupāda gave it to me. And yes, people have always existed.

It was Prabhupāda who gave me the guts to stand up to Darwin and all the scientists who follow him. They never got me to sing and dance on the street. Only Prabhupāda did that. I had heard the expression "jump with joy," but I never thought I would do it. Thank you, Prabhupāda.

I look up at the blue sky. And I'm back on Second Avenue, remembering how I watched the Swami go through his evening routine.

I was like a child, wide-eyed but not quite understanding, as he sat in front of his little altar and marked his forehead and upper body with a yellow clay he called tilaka. Would I be doing that too someday?

The Swami was a foreigner. Could I, a White American, stroll on the streets of New York with markings of yellow clay on my

forehead? Would I dare?

Then the Swami took a few turns of his sacred thread, a multi-strand of string he wore loose around his neck and right shoulder, and wrapped them around his right thumb. He moved his thumb over the insides of his fingers as he murmured some prayers.

Would I be doing this someday? I couldn't imagine it, but it might be fun to learn the Sanskrit prayers. But I had heard that it takes years to learn Sanskrit. Well, nothing good comes cheap. And the Swami had said that you didn't have to abandon your own inclinations, just engage them in the service of Kṛṣṇa. Then could I still be a hippie and attain mystical states?

Then the Swami unwrapped the sacred thread from his thumb. He lit a few sticks of incense and started waving them in a circular motion in front of the picture of Kṛṣṇa on the little altar. I could hear the prayers he was saying now, and I could hear the bright clear sound of the little handbell he was ringing in his left hand. The fragrance of incense filled the room.

I'm back in the present now, in 2026, looking at my computer and trying to comprehend how sixty years have passed without my even noticing. But it's been a great sixty years, thanks to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

I have my own sacred thread now, and I offer incense to Kṛṣṇa and ring a little bell. And whenever I'm in New York, I wear tilaka on the street.

How do people react? They say "Hare Kṛṣṇa." Yes. Prabhupāda was right all along. I smirk at my own self now when I think about how I gritted my teeth and clenched my fists at the thought of entering a new life.

But I saw something in the news just this morning. It said that after many years of imprisonment, a newly released person may feel some fear upon reentering a now unfamiliar world of freedom.

Afraid of freedom rediscovered? So maybe it's not strange that I pushed out my mental hands in self-defense as the Swami was undoing the shackles that had bound me for millions of lifetimes. He was setting me on the road back to Kṛṣṇa, back to the then forgotten world of freedom that is my eternal home.

Only Prabhupāda could do it. He didn't have to. I'm not worthy. But he did it.

Thank you, Prabhupāda. Thank you a million times.

But may I ask you for one more favor? I'm embarrassed to be so presumptuous, but I can't help asking. Sixty years have gone, and

the brash young hippie is a limping old man now. My time may come at any moment.

You left this world almost fifty years ago, but you still watch over me and guide me. Could I…Could I ask you for this one thing? When I have to leave, could I also continue to guide people? Could I continue to give Kṛṣṇa to them as you gave Kṛṣṇa to me? I can't think of a better way of remembering you and the days on Second Avenue sixty years ago.

Your lowly servant,

Umāpati Swami
Initiation: 1966, September—New York
Current location: China

Mukunda Goswami

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

In the Ganges River one sees big and small waves. When one first sees this great river, one tends to think *all* the waves are, metaphorically speaking, *all* great holy men, past and present. However, on mature reflection, one sees that you are the truly big wave, the unassailable, faultless big wave, the all-perfect sādhu, resident of Lord Kṛṣṇa's house, the worldwide influencer to accept the essence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness philosophy. Many, including Bhakti-bhūṣaṇa Mahārāja and myself, have reached this conclusion.

All glories to you who deserve this position, the biggest of the big waves.

Your servant eternally,

Mukunda Goswami
Initiation: 1966, September—New York, USA

Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you.

Pradyumna dāsa, the production manager of the *Tributes* book

series, who works under the inspiration of Jayādvaita Mahārāja (who is the one who conceived this whole project of a yearly *Tributes* book for all of Prabhupāda's initiated disciples—everyone who is initiated, no matter what their status) has invited me to contribute to this book. It's such a nice idea!

I noted in the invitation for this year's book that it will be a historic 60th anniversary edition recognizing 60 years since you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, founded ISKCON and began your extraordinary mission to share Kṛṣṇa consciousness with the world.I am fortunate to take part in this year's book and at the same time appear on "the number one podcast of ISKCON—the Nāmarasa/Vyeṅkaṭa Bhaṭṭa interview." In my case, I was picked up personally by you some 60 years ago (my initiation being September 23, 1966) from the gutter, a very fallen sinful-addicted wretch living in bad association in New York City's Lower East Side. The two podcasters invited me to their show in the beginning of 2026, and I was able to speak of my early memories of you, Swamiji, and this was much to the pleasure of thousands of devotees who had never been present or heard about these pastimes of yours, and how you struggled in the beginning, and how you gathered less than ten men (or boys as you called us), and with compassion, courage and unwavering devotion, raised us at first as a small family. To this present day I still recall those early days as my favorite because you, Prabhupāda, were so accessible to us. And for myself personally, I really needed special attention from you—and you gave it freely and saved me. I promise I will never forget your individual attention and kindness toward me, and I will never leave your feet or abandon your mission. I have an irresistible desire to remember the early days with you, but not at the cost of acknowledging how wonderfully you and your followers have expanded your desires and seen the movement grow, purify itself of its *anarthas*, become more and more potent and populated with sincere souls over the years and decades. Now it is 60 years since you began and since I joined also. And while I may have a special sentiment for the early days with you when you were so close to us, I don't do this by negating that you actually wanted your movement to grow bigger and bigger, and this has come about by your grace and by the potency you placed in the hearts of your initiated disciples. The Invitation to this year's Tributes book stated that last year 230 "heart-felt offerings" were submitted, with "each wondering if he was closer to Śrīla Prabhupāda." So, I hope many more than a

mere 230 people can take part in submitting homages to you. When anyone who was initiated can submit an homage, he doesn't have to be one who came in the very beginning, but he can be anyone who received the mercy of your dīkṣā during your līlā of manifested preaching in the world. Of course, you are continuing to be the pre-eminent guru for all the devotees in ISKCON. And devotees who only recently joined your movement are open to receiving the nectar and empowerment to preach just as much as the early ones received, if not more. I personally do not have so many years left to live in this body, since I'm already 86 and in failing health. I don't know what you have in store for me in the next life, but I pray that I may join with you and go back to Godhead, as you have hinted it is possible in one lifetime. If I have to come back many lifetimes, I still pray to be faithful to you. Let me not forget the wonderful early days, and let me not abandon you ever at any point but stay with you and help contribute to making ISKCON a greater and greater institution, an institution with heart and right behavior, and love for you, dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda. Hoping I may be with you on this earth for many more *Tributes* books, but when I have to go, I hope I will still be able to take part as your disciple and stay with you, either in this world or eventually making progress back to Godhead.

Yours in service, a fallen, faulty servant,

Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami
Initiation: 1966, September—New York, USA
Current location: New York, USA

Jayādvaita Swami

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

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

I hope that I may chant the holy name of Krishna with greater sincerity and attention, as you instructed. And I pray that I can ever increasingly take your instructions to heart, so that my heart may become free from offenses and I can be rightly engaged in service at

your lotus feet.

By your mercy you lifted me up, and I have tried to serve you. In whatever time is left, may I always think of myself as your eternal servant and remember you as my eternal master. May I never be envious or neglectful. May my efforts serve your desires and add to your glory, and may I always remember that whatever service I can offer is possible only because of you.

Initiation: 1968, March—New York, USA

Jayapatākā Swami

My dear spiritual father, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

On this most auspicious day of Your Divine Grace's Vyāsa-pūjā, I beg to offer my prostrate obeisances unlimited times.

Recently, I was reading your *Jaladuta Diary* again. Every time I read it, I am amazed. Almost seventy years old, suffering various problems, enduring seasickness and heart attacks – Your Divine Grace sacrificed so much. You went completely out of your comfort zone. At the age of 69 or 70, aboard an Indian cargo vessel, without any money – that is no small feat!

On coming close to the American coast, Your Divine Grace prayed to Lord Kṛṣṇa in a very humble and surrendered mood:

> How will I make them understand this message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness? I am very unfortunate, unqualified, and the most fallen. Therefore I am seeking Your benediction so that I can convince them, for I am powerless to do so on my own.
>
> Somehow or other, O Lord, You have brought me here to speak about You. Now, my Lord, it is up to You to make me a success or failure, as You like. (*Mārkine Bhāgavata-dharma,* written aboard the *Jaladuta* ship, 18 September 1965)

Your Divine Grace was so surrendered to Kṛṣṇa. Every time I read the *Jaladuta Diary,* I feel more and more indebted to you.

Your Divine Grace said that your books will be the lawbooks for the next ten thousand years. We have sufficient instructions through your books, your personal lectures, and your letters to understand what is required of us to satisfy your desires. Your Divine Grace has done so much for all of us. We should try to finish our business and not compel you to come again. Your instructions are our guiding light. They are our great inspiration.

The desires of Your Divine Grace should be our interest. We should not think about why we cannot do something, but rather how to do it, how to fulfill it. Where we have failed, we should ask how to not fail in the future and how to resolve the issues.

"Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and be happy" – this is what Your Divine Grace told us. Your desire was not only that devotees distribute your books; you also encouraged devotees to study your books and get the degrees. You said that everyone who takes second initiation, including those who have already taken it, should have the Bhakti-śāstrī degree. Everyone who takes sannyāsa should have Bhakti-vaibhava: "Anyone wishing to be initiated as a brahmana will have to pass the Bhakti Sastri exam and anyone wishing to take sannyasa will have to pass the Bhakti Vaibhava examination as well." (Letter to All Governing Body Commissioners, Nellore, South India, 6 January 1976, signed by Tamal Krishna Goswami and approved by Śrīla Prabhupāda)

And: "Sannyasis will be asked to sit for the Bhakti Vaibhava examination which will include the first six cantos of Bhagavatam." (Letter to Tusta Krishna, Bombay, 9 January 1976, signed by Tamal Krishna Goswami and approved by Śrīla Prabhupāda).

Your Divine Grace also said that all spiritual sons and daughters should become qualified and become gurus. You were saying we should have the Bhaktivedānta degree: "By 1975, all of those who have passed all of the above examinations will be specifically empowered to initiate and increase the number of the Krishna consciousness population." (Letter to Kirtanananda, 12 January 1968)

But Śrīla Prabhupāda, so far we have not instituted your programs. And as a result, we are lagging behind in fulfilling Lord Caitanya's predictions and vision. We have to establish your standards.

There are so many instructions you gave, and we need to see how we can implement them – not how we are not able to follow your

order. Because we failed, we are only progressing a little bit. If we could follow all your instructions, we could achieve Lord Caitanya's mission in the shortest possible time.

Romaharṣaṇa Sūta, the father of Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī, was half-*brāhmaṇa* and half-*śūdra*. He got liberation when Balarāma touched him with *kuśa* grass. I am born a pure *mleccha*. Only by your mercy did I become a Vaiṣṇava. My forefathers, my grandparents – every one was a *mleccha*. They believed in God – I can say that. But as *mlecchas* they were habituated to eating meat, taking intoxication, and so on. You graced us. You came to the West and taught us to be Vaiṣṇavas and Vaiṣṇavīs.

We cannot begin to estimate what you have done, how much we owe you, how much we need your mercy. Meditating on Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I came to realize that unless we follow your instructions, there is no way – no way – we can ever achieve success in this life.

> I want that all of my spiritual sons and daughters will inherit this title of Bhaktivedanta, so that the family transcendental diploma will continue through the generations. Those possessing the title of Bhaktivedanta will be allowed to initiate disciples. Maybe by 1975 all of my disciples will be allowed to initiate and increase the numbers of the generations. That is my program. So we should not simply publish these books for reading by the outsiders, but our students must be well versed in all of our books so that we can be prepared to defeat all opposing parties in the matter of self-realization. (Letter to Hamsaduta, 3 December 1968)

Please have your mercy on us. Please give us this blessing that we can follow your instructions and establish Lord Caitanya's dream and His prediction.

Your insignificant servant,

Jayapatākā Swami
Initiation: 1968, July—Montreal, Canada

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Since there are many statements and instructions of Śrīla Prabhupāda on guru-tattva and not all of them may be seen as consistent, it will take a concerted effort on the part of many senior devotees in ISKCON to assimilate them and arrive at a clear understanding of how to implement them.

Here are some of Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements and instructions about who should be an initiating guru in ISKCON and what their role should be.

In many places, Śrīla Prabhupāda states that one's shelter should be a completely pure devotee. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.5.32) Prahlāda Mahārāja says:

naiṣāṁ matis tāvad urukramāṅghriṁ
spṛśaty anarthāpagamo yad-arthaḥ
mahīyasāṁ pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekaṁ
niṣkiñcanānāṁ na vṛṇīta yāvat

"Unless they smear upon their bodies the dust of the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava completely freed from material contamination, persons very much inclined toward materialistic life cannot be attached to the lotus feet of the Lord, who is glorified for His uncommon activities. Only by becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious and taking shelter at the lotus feet of the Lord in this way can one be freed from material contamination."

Also, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in the Bhagavad-gītā (2.8, purport): "Therefore, the conclusion is that a spiritual master who is one hundred percent Kṛṣṇa conscious is the bona fide spiritual master, for he can solve the problems of life."

In his purport to verse 5 of *The Nectar of Instruction,* Śrīla Prabhupāda states that only a mahā-bhāgavata devotee should accept and utilize unsupervised contributions:

Indeed, the advanced uttama-adhikārī Vaiṣṇava devotee

should be accepted as a spiritual master. Everything one possesses should be offered to him, for it is enjoined that one should deliver whatever he has to the spiritual master. The *brahmacārī* in particular is supposed to beg alms from others and offer them to the spiritual master. However, one should not imitate the behavior of an advanced devotee or *mahā-bhāgavata* without being self-realized, for by such imitation one will eventually become degraded.

In his Declaration of Will (June 1977), Śrīla Prabhupāda grants only his appointed managers, such as temple presidents and the GBC, the authority to manage ISKCON's devotees and followers. He doesn't give such authority to anyone else, including *śikṣā* - or *dīkṣā-gurus:*

1. The Governing Body Commission (GBC) will be the ultimate managing authority of the entire International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

2. Each temple will be an ISKCON property and will be managed by three executive directors. The system of management will continue as it is now and there is no need of any change.

Now, we also find that others who are not on the perfectional level of Kṛṣṇa consciousness can also give initiation. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes (Letter to Janardana, New York, 26 April 1968):

The statements of Thakura Bhaktivinode are as good as scriptures because he is liberated person. Generally the spiritual master comes from the group of such eternal associates of the Lord; but anyone who follows the principles of such ever liberated persons is as good as one in the above mentioned group. The gurus from nature's study are accepted as such on the principle that an elevated person in Krishna Consciousness does not accept anyone as disciple, but he accepts everyone as expansion of his guru. That is very high position, called Maha-bhagavata. Just like Radharani, sometimes thinks a subordinate of hers as her teacher, to understand devotion of Kṛṣṇa. A person who is liberated acharya and guru cannot commit any mistake, but there are persons who are less qualified or not liberated, but still can act as guru and acharya by strictly following the disciplic succession.

In *The Nectar of Devotion* (chapter 3: "Eligibility of the Candidate for Accepting Devotional Service"), Śrīla Prabhupāda states that a devotee on the platform of *niṣṭhā* (liberated) is qualified to become a spiritual master, although he may not have obtained the higher stages of pure devotional service, such as ruci, āsakti, bhāva, or prema:

Devotees may be divided into three classes. The devotee in the first or uppermost class is described as follows. He is very expert in the study of relevant scriptures, and he is also expert in putting forward arguments in terms of those scriptures. He can very nicely present conclusions with perfect discretion and can consider the ways of devotional service in a decisive way. He understands perfectly that the ultimate goal of life is to attain to the transcendental loving service of Kṛṣṇa, and he knows that Kṛṣṇa is the only object of worship and love. This first-class devotee is one who has strictly followed the rules and regulations under the training of a bona fide spiritual master and has sincerely obeyed him in accord with revealed scriptures. Thus, being fully trained to preach and become a spiritual master himself, he is considered first class. The first-class devotee never deviates from the principles of higher authority, and he attains firm faith in the scriptures by understanding with all reason and arguments. When we speak of arguments and reason, it means arguments and reason on the basis of revealed scriptures. The first-class devotee is not interested in dry speculative methods meant for wasting time. In other words, one who has attained a mature determination in the matter of devotional service can be accepted as the first-class devotee.

In the following room conversation (Bombay, 22 April 1977), Śrīla Prabhupāda again emphasizes that, to become a spiritual master, one should be a "strict follower" (*niṣṭhā*):

> **Prabhupāda:** What is the use of producing some rascal guru?
>
> **Tamal Krishna:** Well, I have studied myself and all of your disciples, and it's clear fact that we are all conditioned souls, so we cannot be guru. Maybe one day it may be possible ...
>
> **Prabhupāda:** Hmm.
>
> **Tamal Krishna:** ... but not now.
>
> **Prabhupāda:** Yes. I shall choose some guru. I shall say, "Now you become *ācārya*. You become authorized." I am waiting for that. You become all *ācārya*. I retire completely. But the training must be complete.

Tamal Krishna: The process of purification must be there.

Prabhupāda: Oh, yes, must be there. Caitanya Mahāprabhu wants that. *Āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra' ei deśa* [Cc. *Madhya* 7.128]: ["Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as they are given in the Bhagavad-gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land."] "You become guru." [*laughs*] But be qualified. Little thing, strictly follower ...

Tamal Krishna: Not rubber stamp.

Prabhupāda: Then you'll not be effective. You can cheat, but it will not be effective. Just see our Gauḍīya Maṭha. Everyone wanted to become guru, and a small temple and "guru." What kind of guru? No publication, no preaching, simply bring some foodstuff.

Yet, in some places, Śrīla Prabhupāda also says that even on the neophyte stage, a devotee can give initiation. He further indicates that such a devotee, as well as one on the madhyama platform who gives initiation, will not be able to help the disciple advance very well toward the ultimate goal of life, because they are unable to provide sufficient guidance.

> One should not become a spiritual master unless he has attained the platform of uttama-adhikārī. A neophyte Vaiṣṇava or a Vaiṣṇava situated on the intermediate platform can also accept disciples, but such disciples must be on the same platform, and it should be understood that they cannot advance very well toward the ultimate goal of life under his insufficient guidance. (*The Nectar of Instruction*, verse 5, purport)

However, Śrīla Prabhupāda also emphasizes that householders, in particular, should be initiated so that they can properly engage in Deity worship. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.3.22) states:

> Especially for the householder devotees, the path of Deity worship is strongly recommended. As far as possible, every householder, by the direction of the spiritual master,

> must install the Deity of Viṣṇu – forms like Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa or Sītā-Rāma especially, or any other form of the Lord, like Nṛsiṁha, Varāha, Gaura-Nitāi, Matsya, Kūrma, śālagrama-śilā and many other forms of Viṣṇu, like Trivikrama, Keśava, Acyuta, Vāsudeva, Nārāyaṇa and Dāmodara, as They are recommended in the *Vaiṣṇava-tantras* or *Purāṇas* – and one should worship the Deity with one's family, following the directions and regulations of arcana-vidhi. Any member of the family who is above twelve years of age should be initiated by a bona fide spiritual master, and all the members of the household should be engaged in the daily service of the Lord, beginning from morning (4 a.m.) till night (10 p.m.), by performing maṅgala-ārati, nīrājana, arcana, pūjā, kīrtana, śṛṅgāra, bhoga-vaikāli, sandhyā-ārati, pāṭha, bhoga (at night), śayana-ārati, etc. Engagement in such worship of the Deity, under the direction of a bona fide spiritual master, will greatly help the householders to purify their very existence and make rapid progress in spiritual knowledge. Simple theoretical book knowledge is not sufficient for a neophyte devotee. Book knowledge is theoretical, whereas the *arcana* process is practical. Spiritual knowledge must be developed by a combination of theoretical and practical knowledge, and that is the guaranteed way for attainment of spiritual perfection.

For ISKCON to function effectively, all its members should have clear roles and shared goals. Understanding the role of a temple president and a GBC member in ISKCON is important. Equally important is understanding the role of a spiritual master in ISKCON.

In his purport to verse 5 of *The Nectar of Instruction*, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

> One should not become a spiritual master unless he has attained the platform of *uttama-adhikārī*. A neophyte Vaiṣṇava or a Vaiṣṇava situated on the intermediate platform can also accept disciples, but such disciples must be on the same platform, and it should be understood that they cannot advance very well toward the ultimate goal of life under his insufficient guidance. Therefore a disciple should be careful to

accept an *uttama-adhikārī* as a spiritual master.

Still, Śrīla Prabhupāda trained his disciples to become spiritual masters, both initiating and instructing. But the natural conclusion is that, in directing the spiritual lives of disciples, the role of a spiritual master who is not on the highest platform of either bhāva-bhakti or prema-bhakti (uttama-adhikārī Vaiṣṇava) should differ from that of a spiritual master who is an uttama-adhikārī Vaiṣṇava.

Whatever that role may be, it should not include acting as the proprietor or controller of ISKCON's assets, whether in terms of manpower or finances.

> Indeed, the advanced *uttama-adhikārī* Vaiṣṇava devotee should be accepted as a spiritual master. Everything one possesses should be offered to him, for it is enjoined that one should deliver whatever he has to the spiritual master. The *brahmacārī* in particular is supposed to beg alms from others and offer them to the spiritual master. However, one should not imitate the behavior of an advanced devotee or *mahā-bhāgavata* without being self-realized, for by such imitation one will eventually become degraded. (*The Nectar of Instruction*, verse 5)

Still, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes that initiation is generally essential for a devotee's spiritual advancement:

> Therefore, mental speculation or dry arguments cannot help lead one to the right path. Nor by independent study of books of knowledge can one progress in spiritual life. One has to approach a bona fide spiritual master to receive the knowledge. Such a spiritual master should be accepted in full surrender, and one should serve the spiritual master like a menial servant, without false prestige. Satisfaction of the self-realized spiritual master is the secret of advancement in spiritual life. (Gītā 4.34)

Will Śrīla Prabhupāda, as a self-realized spiritual master, be satisfied if his disciples who are not fully self-realized give initiation?

Your servant,

Prahlādānanda Swami
Initiation: 1969, February—Buffalo, New York, USA

Giriraj Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Each year on Śrīla Prabhupāda's Vyāsa-pūjā day, we remember him, hear about him, and talk about him, and by doing so, we keep him present in our lives.

I first saw Śrīla Prabhupāda in the spring of 1969 at Brandeis University, in Boston, where he had just concluded a program. I had come too late to hear him, but the next day I visited the storefront ISKCON temple on Glenville Avenue, where he was scheduled to speak. When I arrived, the room was already packed, and when Śrīla Prabhupāda began speaking I had difficulty understanding him – I wasn't used to his Bengali accent, and the philosophy was new to me. Still, I did hear him say that out of many thousands of men, one would seek perfection. And I thought, "That's *me*!"

When Śrīla Prabhupāda asked for questions, I raised my hand. "There are so many swamis and gurus," I began, "and each one recommends a different method of self-realization and says that his is the best. How do I know which is actually best?"

"What is your goal?" Śrīla Prabhupāda replied. "Do you want to *serve* God, or do you want to *become* God? If you want to *become* God, it means that you are not God now. And how can not-God become God? God is God. The real guru teaches that God is in your heart and that you can become godly – but that you cannot become God."

As Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke, I got the distinct impression that he knew everything about me and was seeing right into my apartment, right to the sign on my wall, on which I had engraved in ornate lettering: "You are God."

"What do you think?" he asked. "Do you want to serve God or do you want to become God?"

I said, "I want to serve God, but I realize that actually, I wanted to become God."

Prabhupāda was emphatic in his affirmation: "Yes!"

I immediately offered my obeisances. I had found my

spiritual master.

From that first meeting, my whole life's purpose became bringing people to Śrīla Prabhupāda. I was able to do that for many years, but when Prabhupāda passed away, I wondered, "What will my service be now?"

Now I understand that Śrīla Prabhupāda is always present, and that by speaking of him, hearing about him, remembering him, and most significantly, by studying his books, we can experience his presence. So I can continue doing what I was doing when he was personally present – introducing souls to Śrīla Prabhupāda. That is what I feel natural doing. And I know that somehow or other, if someone comes in touch with Śrīla Prabhupāda, his or her life will be successful.

Praying to continue serving Śrīla Prabhupāda perpetually,

Giriraj Swami
Initiation: 1969, July—Boston, USA

Hridayananda das Goswami

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

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

Even after many decades of service to Prabhupāda, we can learn more about his extraordinary Krishna consciousness. I have been reading *Chasing Rhinos with the Swami*, a trilogy by my senior godbrother Śyāmasundara Prabhu. Therein he describes in amazing detail how Prabhupāda worked tirelessly to expand his mission from a small center in New York, to a few branches in North America, and then suddenly to a worldwide movement.

With his tireless, powerful, strategic leadership, acting as Lord Kṛṣṇa's pure instrument, Prabhupāda personally engineered the Hare Kṛṣṇa Explosion. And he did so, as he often noted, at an age when people normally retire and "take it easy."

Our duty is not merely to admire Prabhupāda. We must follow his example to the best of our ability. Kṛṣṇa famously reciprocates

with His devotees, as He states in Bhagavad-gītā 4.11. Empowerment is available to all who sincerely seek it in Prabhupāda's service.

Prabhupāda's disciples should not be known as the generation that mostly retired from helping Prabhupāda at the very age in which he was redoubling his efforts to save us, and the world.

Retiring to a spiritual place is admirable. Staying on the battlefield, as Prabhupāda did, is far more admirable.

In Prabhupāda's service,

Hridayananda Das Goswami
Initiation: 1970, February—Los Angeles, California, USA
Current location: Florida, USA

Danavir Goswami

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

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

Today marks the 130th anniversary of the appearance of my beloved Gurudeva, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. I am honored to write this Vyāsa-pūjā offering for my spiritual master's glorification. It is not possible for a disciple to repay the debt to the spiritual master, still the disciple tries by preaching vigorously.

The guru wishes to see that his disciples continue to follow the regulative principles that they promised to keep. In addition to keeping my promises, I am also endeavoring to encourage the worldwide distribution of my Gurudeva's literature.

The most advantageous methods available for preaching are being used, namely writing. In particular, we are focusing on publishing books, and we have now completed a 30-volume set of *Śrī Garga-saṁhitā* with commentary, that is dedicated to His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda.

The first duty of a person in the renounced order of life is to contribute some literary work for the benefit of the human being in order to give him realized direction toward self-realization.

(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.2.5 Purport)

Though one may ask, "Who is this Dānavīr, and what is he doing writing commentary on the *Śrī Garga-saṁhitā*?" Be that as it may, I have humbly taken up this writing as an opportunity to employ what I have learned from Śrīla Prabhupāda. Why was there a need for a commentary to be written? I certainly agree that the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the topmost authority on Vedic literature, and this is in no way an attempt to surpass or equal it. Rather—we hope—that it augments and supplements it.

And we are trying to use the internet in a most effective way for spreading Krishna consciousness. We have a cinematography-rich series based on the *Śrī Garga-saṁhitā*, which will present the topics in a manner that is believable, attractive, and accurate.

Śrīla Prabhupāda has given me more in every field than I could ever imagine. I could not even think of asking for such mercy, but he has given me every possible thing that I wanted in life. In a way, it is far beyond my imagination. So I thank him on this day and pray to always remain his servant, and to associate with his sincere followers, so that I can go on serving in whatever capacity he and Lord Caitanya feel is best for me.

In the meantime, I will stay here and continue working, preaching through different methods. All the means are available. And if I am able to assist in any way in the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium, I am available for that.

In conclusion I commit myself to ISKCON, and I will continue to encourage everyone else to do so as well.

Your eternal servant,

Danavir Goswami

Initiation: 1971, February—Los Angeles, California, USA

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you.

Please allow me to glorify you on your appearance day in two ways: 1) in a general way, and 2) in a personal way.

Your Unexcelled Glories

You are actually the fulfiller of the ancient prophecy made by Nārada Muni. After he had recited the *Bhāgavatam* to the two sons of Bhakti – *jñāna* and *vairāgya* – and revived them from their life-threatening coma, he encouraged Bhakti Devī herself by giving a solemn promise:

kālīnā sadṛśaḥ ko 'pi
yugo nāsti varānane
tasmins tvam stapayisyami
gehe gehe jane jane

"O charming Bhakti Devī! There is no other age that can compare to the Kali-yuga. In this age, I will personally establish you in each and every home and within each and every heart."

anya dharmāns tiraskṛtya
puraskṛtya mahotsavān
tadā nāhaṁ harer dāso
loke tvam na pravartaye

"O Bhakti Devī! Neglecting all other paths of religiosity, if I do not propagate you all around the world in the Kali-yuga by organizing various devotional festivals, then I shall no longer be known as a servant of Lord Hari." (*Śrīmad-bhāgavata-māhātmyam* 2.13–14)

If you would not have taken this vow to heart and would not have preached far and wide and so vigorously, then Bhakti Devī would not have been established in "*gehe gehe jane jane*" – in every home and heart. Clearly it is you who fulfilled Nārada's vow. It is you who took Bhakti out of India and brought her to the most

remote places on the planet.

Clearly, the tenets of devotion including the *yuga-dharma* (*kīrtana* of the holy names) are made widely known by you, and your followers who derive all their strength and knowledge from you. This is what is in plain sight of everyone who is willing to investigate impartially without envy.

But there is something more I wish to say:

Your Ongoing Mercy in my Life

Were it not for you and your most merciful and continuous investment in our relationship, I would be lost.

In July 1969, you expressed your 100% acceptance of all your disciples from the time of initiation to eternity, a relationship that can never be broken. This letter reveals what you feel for each and every one of us.

> So far as I am concerned, I have accepted you as my disciple and you have accepted me as your spiritual father. This relationship cannot be ended anymore. It is eternal. So it will be my duty always to pray to Krishna for your further and further improvement in Krishna Consciousness, so you should go on serving this movement to your best capacity. (Letter to Rayarama, July 8th, 1969, Los Angeles)

In this world we often hear of relationships that are terminated. Friends become estranged and go their own ways; married people divorce; teachers and students abolish their relationship…. A firm long-term commitment to a relationship is rarely seen.

You however take it as your personal responsibility to help your disciples and get all of them back to Krishna. For all time. You do not give up on any of us. (By the way, I think Śrīla Prabhupāda's commitment is there to all those who seriously take his shelter, not just his initiated disciples.)

In a very moving letter to Umāpati Prabhu, you spoke of your firm commitment to this transcendental connection:

> Any good soul who approaches me once for spiritual enlightenment is supposed to be depending on my responsibility to get him back to Krishna, back to home. The disciple may misunderstand a bona fide spiritual master being obliged to do so under pressure of Maya's influence. But a bona fide spiritual master never lets go a devotee once accepted. When a disciple misunderstands a bona

fide spiritual master, the master regrets for his inability to protect the disciple and sometimes he cries with tears in the eyes. (Letter to Umāpati, Calcutta, November 23rd, 1967)

Statements such as the above two are greatly inspiring me to keep on endeavouring with all I have because I know you will always be with me and you will never "let me go." These are not empty words: I can actually feel your presence and how you are watching over me like the lion mother over her young and sometimes foolish cub.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I never want to take your kindness for granted and see it as a free pass for becoming careless and forget my responsibility in our relationship. To sincerely give my best, to follow and serve you always is my life breath that helps me to continue living.

On this day of your divine appearance, I fall at your lotus feet in great gratitude. Again and again please accept my prostrated obeisances.

Your humble servant,

Śacīnandana Swami
Initiation: 1971, February—Hamburg, Germany

Kavicandra Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

"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?"

vande 'ham śrī-guroḥ śrī-yuta-pada-kamalaṁ śrī-
gurūn vaiṣṇavāṁś ca

śrī -rūpaṁ sāgrajātaṁ saha-gaṇa-raghunāthānvitaṁ taṁ sa-jīvam
sādvaitaṁ sāvadhūtaṁ parijana-sahitaṁ kṛṣṇa-caitanya-devaṁ
śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pādān saha-gaṇa-lalitā-śrī-viśākhānvitāṁś ca

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

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

You not only told us what to do, you showed us the perfect example of a Vaiṣṇava.

titikṣavaḥ kāruṇikāḥ
suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām
ajāta-śatravaḥ śāntāḥ
sādhavaḥ sādhu-bhūṣaṇāḥ

The symptoms of a *sādhu* are that he is tolerant, merciful, and friendly to all living entities. He has no enemies, he is peaceful, he abides by the scriptures, and all his characteristics are sublime. (Bhāgavatam 3.25.21)

When I first joined your society, we were told not to write to you so as not to disturb your translating work. Now I still hesitate when the time comes around to write an offering for your Vyāsa-pūjā.

In recent times we've been hearing much about the glories of your disciples, since many are leaving this world. Hearing the wonderful services of your disciples says so much about your character and influence. We must thank you for creating and maintaining such a wonderful society of devotees.

Today is Nṛsiṁha Caturdaśi. You embody the mood and spirit of Prahlāda.

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

"My dear Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva, I see that there are many saintly persons indeed, but they are interested only in their own deliverance. Not caring for the big cities and towns, they go to the Himalayas or the forest to meditate with vows of silence [*mauna-vrata*]. They are not interested in delivering others. As for me, however, I do not wish to be liberated alone, leaving aside all these poor fools and rascals.

I know that without Kṛṣṇa consciousness, without taking shelter of Your lotus feet, one cannot be happy. Therefore I wish to bring them back to shelter at Your lotus feet." (Bhāgavatam 7.9.44)

In your purport you write: "This is the decision of the Vaiṣṇava, the pure devotee of the Lord. For himself he has no problems, even if he has to stay in this material world, because his only business is to remain in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. (Bhāgavatam 7.9.44, purport)

When Hiraṇyakaśipu raised his eyebrows, the demigods would be fearful and take his orders. When you raised your eyebrows, thousands of devotees would rush out to distribute your books and the holy names, and the demons would flee. Due to that, now your granddisciples and great-granddisciples are doing even more amazing things.

Hanumān crossed the ocean to rescue Sītā from Rāvaṇa. He overcame many obstacles in the process. With great endeavor and perseverance, you crossed the ocean. You created a "monkey army" and brought *lakṣmī* to India. When Hanumān pushed his feet down to leap across the ocean, many things popped out from the earth. When he flew off, the suction behind him caused many trees to follow. When you touched your feet to the ground in the USA, a great disturbance started. Your dancing shook the ground, and your forceful movement pulled many to follow you. You told us to go in like a needle. You showed us how to do that. No one knew for sure if you were coming. You had no money, no reputation, and did not know anyone. Of course, you knew Lord Kṛṣṇa and were fearless.

I pray that I can become truly grateful and try to repay you for all that you have given. I wish to give up testing your tolerance and forgiveness and to get serious about serving your lotus feet.

pañca-tattva avatīrṇa caitanyera saṅge
pañca-tattva lañā karena saṅkīrtana raṅge

"These five *tattvas* incarnate with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and thus the Lord executes His *saṅkīrtana* movement with great pleasure." (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* Ādi 7.4)

In your purport to this verse you write:

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.32) there is the following statement regarding Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu:

kṛṣṇa-varṇaṁ tviṣākṛṣṇaṁ sāṅgopāṅgāstra-pārṣadam
yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi su-medhasaḥ

"In the Age of Kali, people who are endowed with sufficient intelligence will worship the Lord, who is accompanied by His associates, by performance of the *saṅkīrtana-yajña*." Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is always accompanied by His plenary expansion Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu, His incarnation Śrī Advaita Prabhu, His internal potency Śrī Gadādhara Prabhu and His marginal potency Śrīvāsa Prabhu. He is in the midst of them as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. One should know that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is always accompanied by these other *tattvas*. Therefore our obeisances to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are complete when we say *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda.*

As preachers of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, we first offer our obeisances to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by chanting this Pañca-tattva mantra; then we say Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. There are ten offenses in the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra,* but these are not considered in the chanting of the Pañca-tattva mantra, namely, *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is *known as mahā-vadānyāvatāra, the most magnanimous incarnation,* for He does not consider the offenses of the fallen souls. Thus to derive the full benefit of the chanting of the *mahā-mantra* (Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare), we must first take shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, learn the Pañca-tattva *mahā-mantra,* and then chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. That will be very effective.

Taking advantage of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, many unscrupulous devotees manufacture a *mahā-mantra* of their own. Sometimes they sing *bhaja nitāi gaura rādhe śyāma hare kṛṣṇa hare rāma* or *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda hare kṛṣṇa hare rāma śrī-rādhe govinda.*

Actually, however, one should chant the names of the full Pañca-tattva (*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*) and then the sixteen words Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. But these unscrupulous, less intelligent men confuse the entire process. Of course, since they are also devotees they can express their feelings in that way, but the method prescribed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's pure devotees is to first chant the full Pañca-tattva mantra and then chant the *mahā-mantra*

– Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Aspiring for your service,

Kavicandra Swami
Initiation: 1971, June—Tuscon, Arizona, USA

Smita Krishna Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my humble obeisances!

Thank you, my dear Śrīla Prabhupāda. This is Smita Krishna Swami calling for grace. My hope or happiness is I am still part of your world, preaching around the world. We are disciples – sannyāsīs or not, it does not matter. The essential is to be a living part of Śrīla Prabhupāda's movement, caring for the movement's well-being. It may not be longer within my power to be outspoken but now just "let the elephant pass by". We are a living part of your movement, and I hope and pray that you are positively aware of my existence.

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare /
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

My godbrothers, godsisters, and others are quickly departing, not what it was yesterday. Thank you for smiling with a kind eye at me.

Your servant,

Smita Krishna Swami
Initiation: August, 1971 - Hamburg, Germany
Current location: ISKCON Almviks Gard
Contact: Swedenskswami54@gmail.com

Submitted on Gaurpūrṇimā 2026, the 40th anniversary
Smita Krishna Swami's sannyāsa initiation on
Gaurpūrṇimā, 1986 in Śrī Dhām Māyāpura

Mahavishnu Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, my eternal father,

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

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

Please try and excuse me for not writing my Vyāsa-pūjā offerings the last few years. It is no real excuse, but as my body and mind began to creak more and more in old age (now my body is 81 years old), I couldn't keep up whilst traveling enthusiastically with our version of your World Samkirtan Party, your "long-cherished idea" you wished to see fulfilled (as per your letter to Tamal Krishna, 18 October 1969).

In your Bhāgavatam purport to 6.5.43, you said that the angry parents of your disciples had cursed you to not stay in one place to do your service of writing books. You said you wanted your *sannyāsīs* to relieve you of that curse by traveling worldwide. I have been blessed with that curse, and since 2016 have been traveling around the world annually with the multinational, multiguru, and multigenerational Harinama Ruci party led by His Grace Viṣṇujana Prabhu from Slovakia.

Whichever nation and city we are welcomed into, we stay for a few days, go out with the local devotees into the city centers, and perform *harināma,* trying to actively engage the public in blissfully chanting the holy names and taking your books.

To please you, I have over the years since your departure, also become responsible to help develop the expansion of ISKCON in Nepal, DR Congo, and parts of East Africa.

You closed your own *vapuḥ* pastimes when your body was 81. Mine is now also 81. By Kṛṣṇa's grace, if it pleases you, I may be able to squeeze some more useful years out of this mortal British dress.

Now I want to improve the quality of my slipshod service and somehow please you more. Please give your glance of mercy to this struggling soul who is arriving at the scrap heap of this body. Please bless me to make the best use of my dwindling bad bargain.

How can I – or anyone – find the words to express what incomparable glorious service you have done and are still doing for

Lord Caitanya's mission and all spirit souls on this polluted Kali-yuga planet? Let us all therefore cooperate with one another to fulfill your desires as ISKCON's founder-*ācārya* and the *jagat-guru*.

Trailing clouds of Kṛṣṇa's glories – the holy names and your transcendental words and example – you and your beloved messengers came from afar to drag me and countless others, past, present, and future, from the darkness of animal-like ignorance to the light of eternal Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Thank you!

I am always unable to repay your divine gift of a new life when you revealed to me in your introduction to Bhagavad-gītā As It Is that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In this regard, as you wrote to praise your own Guru Mahārāja, so I praise you: "Absolute is sentient thou has proved / impersonal calamity thou has moved." (Vyāsa-pūjā offering to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī)

Please kindly cast a special glance on me to keep me, till my dying breath, always enthusiastic to find nectarean new ways to engage people in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In this regard, I again use the words you used to praise your own Guru Mahārāja:

Wonder thy ways
To turn our face,
Adore thy feet
Your Divine Grace.
Śrī kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam kī, jaya!

Your fallen, struggling, sannyāsī servant,

Mahavishnu Swami
Initiation: 1971, August—London, UK

Subhag Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to your lotus feet.

This Krishna consciousness movement that you have given us is meant to spread the mercy of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu to every town and village. We are trying to expand this movement more and more. Again and again, you have emphasised that if we truly want to please you, we should distribute your books.

You also shared how your guru mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, expressed his desire when there was quarrelling among his disciples over the use of rooms at the Bagh Bazaar Gauḍīya Maṭha. He said it would be better to break the marble from the temple, sell it, and use the money to print and distribute books. In this way, he showed us that the real purpose is not comfortable living, but spreading transcendental knowledge. Thus, the spirit of book distribution comes directly from your guru mahārāja's instruction.

Therefore, the topmost priority is to print books in as many languages as possible and distribute them profusely. This is truly a book distribution movement, preaching through the *bṛhat-mṛdaṅga*, the printing press. You said, "I will live on forever if you distribute my books," and that when you hear encouraging reports of book distribution, you feel like a young man. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura predicted that this movement will continue for 10,000 years, and you confirmed this process.

So, Śrīla Prabhupāda, according to your mood, as I have understood it, we are trying to carry out this instruction in different parts of India and around the world. Wherever our devotees are — *gṛhasthas*, *brahmacārīs*, *saṅkīrtana* groups, and *mātājīs*, we are trying to ensure that your books are always being distributed.

In various parts of Indonesia, many devotees are actively engaged in book distribution and organising Rathayātrā festivals. In Bangladesh, although conditions are not always favourable, devotees are sincerely endeavouring to distribute your books for your pleasure. We are also receiving a very encouraging response from college and university preaching, especially in India. Many of the best students from top institutions are coming forward. Even PhD students and highly qualified individuals are showing genuine interest in your books and are becoming devotees.

We are encouraging everyone to take part while maintaining strong *sādhana*. As you instructed, attending *maṅgala-ārati* and strictly following the four regulative principles is essential.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I apologise for the challenges that arise as I get older. From time to time, my health creates difficulties, and I can feel danger coming. Still, I am trying my best to do what you have asked me to do. As you have instructed me, I am trying my best to go to Bangladesh and do whatever I can there to spread your teachings. Please empower and bless me so that I may serve you in a way that is pleasing to you by always following your instructions.

Your servant,

Śrīmat Subhag
Initiation: 1971, September—London, UK

Bhaktivaibhava Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Due to my serious health condition, this year I am being restricted in so many ways. This reminds me of what Śrīla Prabhupāda must have gone through when he arrived in America. But despite his severe health crisis, he performed his sādhana, gave classes, led kirtans, and spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness far and wide with the utmost personal possible sacrifice. At the same time, he translated and published volumes of books with his invaluable Bhaktivedanta purports. The entire world is indebted to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

I pray that the generations of devotees in ISKCON will keep Śrīla Prabhupāda always strongly in the center. This will make the future of ISKCON bright and successful.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's humble servant,

Bhaktivaibhava Swami
Initiation: 1971—Germany

Bhakti Vighna Vinasana Narasimha Swami

Dear spiritual father,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace. All glories to your ISKCON society. All glories to your Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. And all glories to all the devotees who faithfully serve you throughout their lives.

It was my great fortune to receive spiritual initiation from Your Divine Grace. I was certainly unworthy, and I doubted if you would accept such an unqualified person as myself. I watched as the first candidate came forward and offered his obeisances, as you sat on the vyāsāsana, which we had only recently completed.

First, you told him to say your praṇāma-mantras out loud to show that he had memorized them. Then Your Divine Grace asked him what the four regulative principles are, and then you asked, "And how many rounds are you going to chant daily?" The young man answered with confidence, and Your Divine Grace smiled with satisfaction, then looked at him and said, "Your name is Mahā-Viṣṇu Dāsa." You then handed him some *japa* beads.

I was relieved that the guru's questions were not difficult, and I could answer them without any trouble. I got ready to take the plunge into serious spiritual practice.

I was next on the roster of twelve young British men all waiting to get the most valuable link with the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* and my birth in spiritual life. I had no real appreciation of what was taking place, nor did I consider how much this was going to play a major role in my life. Deep within myself I could sense that this is something very special and rare, and I certainly did not want to miss the opportunity to be accepted as a disciple of an Indian Swami.

Over the years since my initiation, I have come to appreciate the causeless mercy of Your Divine Grace. Your determination, patience, tolerance, and so many other qualities that show your divine nature. I can never hope to display such features in my own self, but I continue to be inspired by your example and pray that one day, in the course of my many births, I will be a worthy child of Your Divine Grace and bring some credit to your mission.

Taking a straw between my teeth and falling at your feet, I am your most unworthy son, now known as Tridaṇḍi Swami Bhakti Vighna Vinasana Narasimha

Initiation: 1971—London, UK

Romapāda Swami

My dear and most respected spiritual master and eternal father,

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

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

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

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

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

To whom shall we express our deepest heartfelt gratitude for your presence in our life? Without your personal sacrifice, bold and fearless risk-taking, with obedience to your Guru Mahārāja's request for service, countless souls like me – wandering aimlessly in abject ignorance in the darkness of material existence – would remain hopelessly lost.

The bhakti-śakti and intense love for Kṛṣṇa that you carried and liberally disseminated has captured my heart, irrevocably – both in this life and forever.

As an ideal follower of Rūpa Gosvāmī, the foremost Gauḍīya authority on bhakti-rasa, you held profound love for him and his Deity, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. This was exhibited when the queen of Jaipur, Mahārāṇī Gāyatrī Devī, so moved by your devotion and to show her appreciation, gifted you a pair of large marble Deities of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, similar to the original Rādhā-Govindajī Deities. After shipping Them to New York, you installed Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda as the presiding Deity at the Henry Street temple in Brooklyn.

While the magnitude of your love for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda was not always on public display, at times you could not conceal it:

- In the summer of 1974, you were in New York to give association to disciples and other devotees from all over the East Coast who had assembled to be in your presence. Following the Sunday evening *ārati,* the Henry Street temple room was packed to capacity, awaiting your arrival and your Sunday Feast lecture. Coming in front of the altar, standing before the Deities with hands folded in supplication, you prepared to offer prostrated obeisances to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. While extending your body before the Deities, a large gush of tears streamed from your eyes like a syringe! Those seated before you, to the right side of the altar, were literally splashed with your profuse stream of tears. Those seated there turned to Rukmiṇī Dāsī, who was standing hidden behind a curtain on the left side of the altar, to see

if she had tossed *mahā*-water remnants from the *ārati* that had just been completed. Instantly, Rukmiṇī Dāsī and a dear friend of hers understood what had just happened. She descended from the sightly raised altar and together they quickly gathered the spiritual remnants from your exhibition of loving ecstasy through your eyes. You then glided slowly to the back of the room to deliver your Sunday feast class as if nothing had happened.

- Similar public exhibitions of syringe-like ecstatic symptoms, displaying to the public your intense innermost elevated prema-bhakti, were exhibited in Atlanta and Mayapur.

While clearly on the platform of *uttama-bhakti,* you came before us with Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's sublime message, teaching your followers by your personal example the standards of a fearless madhyama preacher.

All qualified Vaiṣṇavas give full credit for their spiritual attainment to their predecessors, as did you; empowerment comes down to a recipient of mercy by way of the disciplic succession. Naturally, on the occasion of his Vyāsa-pūjā in March 1952, in choice poetry you graciously gave all credit to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī as the champion of the highest stages of bhakti, a conclusion echoed by thousands of cheering mouths through the passage of time. In choice poetry, you expressed awe at the erudition of Śrīla Siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī, acknowledging his gift to you, which you so liberally passed on to all of us.

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

In a similar fashion, like rivers flowing to the sea,
abundant mercy descends through our awesome disciplic succession, commencing from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and descending through His empowered followers.

Yet *you* accepted the specific mandate to flood the world outside of Bhārata-bhūmi, carrying in your heart the simple wish for everyone to be truly transcendentally happy: *sarve sukhino bhavantu*.

Receiving this gift from you with profound gratitude – the very seed of love – your many followers in turn have received the same mandate. May you become pleased with us as we strive to expand, preserve, and protect the purity and integrity of your mood and mission.

Our shortcomings are abundant. Please protect us and cleanse us from *anarthas*, thereby instead allowing us to become your true and faithful followers.

I beg to remain your eternal servant!

Romapāda Swami
Initiation: 1971—Boston, USA

Bir Krishna Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā*, Chapter 7, texts 18–19, we find a profound indication of your exalted identity as an internal devotee and eternal associate of the Lord:

yāṅ-sabā lañā prabhura nitya vihara
yāṅ-sabā lañā prabhura kīrtana-pracāra
yāṅ-sabā lañā karena prema āsvādana
yāṅ-sabā lañā dāna kare prema-dhana

"The internal devotees or potencies are all eternal associates in the pastimes of the Lord. Only in their company does the Lord descend to propagate the *saṅkīrtana* movement; only with them does He relish the mellows of divine love; and only with them does He freely distribute that same love of God to all living beings."

The position of such exalted devotees is further illuminated in subsequent verses of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* where it is revealed that personalities like yourself assist the Pañca-tattva in breaking open the long-sealed storehouse of love of God. You did not pause to calculate who was qualified or unqualified; nor did you restrict the flow of mercy. Rather, you extended Lord Kṛṣṇa's grace and Śrī Caitanya's boundless compassion without discrimination, without hesitation, and without limit.

You firmly rejected those who sought to obstruct this divine outpouring, declaring:

> These foolish arguments are sometimes raised by envious rascals, but Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees do not care about them. We strictly follow the principles set down by the Pañca-tattva. (*Cc. Ādi* 7.23, purport)

Your divine ingenuity in devising ever-fresh strategies to distribute the contents of that storehouse of love of Godhead unmistakably establishes you as a great *ācārya* in the line of Lord Caitanya. This is affirmed in *Cc. Ādi* 7.31–32, wherein Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu reveals His compassionate resolve:

> Seeing that the Māyāvādīs and others were fleeing, Lord Caitanya thought, 'I wanted everyone to be immersed in this inundation of love of Godhead, but some have escaped. Therefore, I shall devise a trick to drown them also.'

In the word-for-word meanings to this verse, we perceive Śrī Caitanya's solemn determination – that all living beings be submerged in divine love. Yet, perceiving the possibility that some might evade this mercy, He resolves to employ transcendental "tricks," divine strategies, to fulfill His promise.

In your purport, you reveal that this dynamic adaptability is the very hallmark of a true *ācārya:*

> 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.

You further explain that your own presentation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness – perfectly aligned with time, place, and circumstance – faithfully follows in the footsteps of the Pañca-tattva: "Therefore, what we are doing is perfect by the grace of Lord

Caitanya Mahāprabhu, for it is He who proposed to invent a way to capture those who strayed from Kṛṣṇa consciousness." (*Cc. Ādi* 7.31–32, purport)

Fully cognizant of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's innermost intention, you remained undisturbed by the criticisms of those attached to rigid and stereotyped modes of presentation. Instead, you carried forward His mission with boldness, creativity, and unwavering fidelity.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I beg for your causeless mercy – that life after life I may remain engaged as an instrument in your divine mission of delivering the conditioned souls. Kindly allow me to assist, in however small a way, in the ongoing work of opening that storehouse of love of Godhead for the benefit of all.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your eternal servant,

Bir Krishna Goswami
Initiation: 1972, January—Dallas, Texas, USA

Ganapati Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

As I am your initiated disciple and you are my (now physically-unmanifest) representation of Paramātmā, I have always taken it for granted that you are naturally aware of my intentions and activities. But since my practical service is presently so meager, I have begun to question my ability to draw your attention. I am however confident that you will attend to the sincere offerings of your more devoted and productive followers and, in this way, you may kindly also take notice of mine by association.

kāmādīnāṁ kati na katidhā pālitā durnideśās
teṣāṁ jātā mayi na karuṇā na trapā nopaśāntiḥ
utsṛjyaitān atha yadu-pate sāmprataṁ labdha-buddhis
tvām āyātaḥ śaraṇam abhayaṁ māṁ niyuṅkṣvātma-dāsye

"O my Lord, there is no limit to the unwanted orders of lusty desires. Although I have rendered these desires so much service, they have

not shown any mercy to me. I have not been ashamed to serve them, nor have I even desired to give them up. O my Lord, O head of the Yadu dynasty, recently, however, my intelligence has been awakened, and now I am giving them up. Due to transcendental intelligence, I now refuse to obey the unwanted orders of these desires, and I now come to You to surrender myself at Your fearless lotus feet. Kindly engage me in Your personal service and save me."

I am very weary of being in a material body that obstructs my every effort to render devotional service, coupled with a stubborn mind stuck in deep ruts from countless lifetimes. I would therefore like to beg a fervent request of Your Divine Grace: Please petition our Lord to cleanse my consciousness and fashion me as an instrument in carrying out His mission to redirect this hell-bent society. You have given me so much and, although I am neither an orator nor a scholar, I do have an aptitude and apparent ability as a "reading leader" for *sadhakas*, as well as a distributor of your gifts to the public. Please engage me by your transcendental "power of attorney".

Initiation: 1972, April—Los Angeles, California, USA

Bhakti Gauravāṇī Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

On this sacred day of your appearance, I approach you with a heart full of gratitude. You came into this world to deliver the powerful medicine of nāma-saṅkīrtana, and by your inconceivable mercy the holy name has spread to every corner of the Earth. Temples have arisen in cities where once no one had heard the name of Kṛṣṇa. Books carrying the timeless message of bhagavad-dharma are read in languages you never personally spoke. The kīrtana you brought across the oceans now echoes in lands that once seemed spiritually barren.

But my heart is also full of uncertainty and concern. You had a dream: You envisioned America to spearhead a global cultural revolution. During a morning walk in Los Angeles in 1973, you revealed your plan to your disciples:

I want to begin a revolution—against their godless civilization. That is my ambition. The Americans will be the best persons to be

educated in this line and to lead, to become the leaders. They're already leaders, but they must be real leaders now, so that the whole world may be happy. That I can give direction. If the topmost American gentlemen come to me, I can give them direction how they can become the world leaders. Actual leaders. Actual leaders, not bogus leaders. Because God has favored them with so many things. And this movement has been started from America. I started this movement from New York. So it should be taken very seriously by the government.

Today, many decades later, the full realization of that vision still seems distant. The topmost leaders in America appear to be less qualified than ever to be the world leaders you hoped they would become. Many observers have concluded that the former superpower is losing its leading position in the world. We therefore sometimes wonder how the cultural revolution mentioned in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam will come about? In the purport to that verse, where Nārada Muni encourages Vyāsadeva to compile literature which is full of transcendental words directed toward bringing about a revolution in the impious lives of this world's misdirected civilization, you refer to the Sino-Indian War that took place at the end of 1962:

> While preparing this commentation on this particular stanza of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we have a crisis before us. Our neighboring friend China has attacked the border of India with a militaristic spirit. We have practically no business in the political field, yet we see that previously there were both China and India, and they both lived peacefully for centuries without ill feeling. The reason is that they lived those days in an atmosphere of God consciousness, and every country, over the surface of the world, was God-fearing, pure-hearted and simple, and there was no question of political diplomacy. There is no cause of quarrel between the two countries China and India over land which is not very suitable for habitation, and certainly there is no cause for fighting on this issue. But due to the age of quarrel, Kali, which we have discussed, there is always a chance of quarrel on slight provocation. This is due not to the issue in question, but to the polluted atmosphere of this age: systematically there is propaganda by a section of people to stop glorification of the name and

> fame of the Supreme Lord. Therefore, there is a great need for disseminating the message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* all over the world. It is the duty of every responsible Indian to broadcast the transcendental message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* throughout the world to do all the supermost good as well as to bring about the desired peace in the world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, when you formed ISKCON 60 years ago, part of your mission was to take up the duty that every responsible Indian was meant to fulfill but did not. As you pointed out later in that same purport, because India had failed in her duty to spread the message of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, there was so much quarrel and trouble all over the world. Therefore, you entrusted us with this monumental task. You envisioned the Krishna consciousness movement to fulfill that duty and shine like a beacon of hope—a spiritual family united beyond the temporary designations of gender, race, nationality, and political ideology. And in many ways, it did and still does. Millions of people have heard and chanted and still chant the holy name because of you. Your books continue to transform hearts.

And yet, even within the house you built, there are signs of fissures. Increasing tensions cause many of your followers great concern. During your lifetime, you warned us about the danger of factions. You emphasized again and again that the real principle of unity is cooperation for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa. You asked us not to quarrel over temporary differences but to remain united under your instructions and the common purpose of spreading the message of Lord Caitanya to every town and village. You established systems of management not so that power struggles might arise, but so that the preaching mission could expand harmoniously.

Still, as time has passed since your physical departure, disagreements have grown sharper. Some of your followers identify themselves as defenders of tradition. They fear that in the attempt to adapt to a rapidly changing world, the purity of your teachings may be compromised. They worry that contemporary cultural trends could weaken the philosophical clarity that you fought so hard to establish. To them, fidelity to your instructions means preserving the forms, standards, and interpretations exactly as they understand you to have given them.

Others, however, feel a different urgency. They believe that in order for your mission to reach new generations, it must speak in ways that people can understand and accept. They argue that, just as you

made adjustments 50 years ago, a constantly changing environment is calling for further adjustments so that your message may remain relevant and accessible. To them, the spirit of your mission lies in dynamic preaching, not merely in preserving external forms.

Each side sincerely claims loyalty to you.

Each side believes it is protecting your legacy.

Each side accuses the other of having deviated and contributed to a drift from the mission.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, the prospect of a fractured mission causes deep pain in the hearts of many who love you. For you did not come to create another sect competing with other sects. You came to give the universal science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You showed by your own example that the essence of spiritual life is humility, service, and cooperation.

Sometimes I wonder what you would say if you were physically present today. Would you chastise us for our lack of humility? Would you remind us again that cooperation is the real test of love for you? Or would you simply encourage us to chant sincerely and engage ourselves fully in spreading the holy name?

Perhaps you would do all of these things.

The world desperately needs the message you gave. Humanity stands at a crossroads. Material progress has brought extraordinary technological power, yet it has not brought peace. Instead, anxiety is increasing relentlessly, both on an individual and a societal level. Relationships are more fragile than ever, and people struggle to find meaning in their lives.

We may not always agree on every detail of management or interpretation. Diversity of perspective may even be inevitable in a global movement that now spans continents and cultures. Yet if we can remember that we are united in service to you and to Kṛṣṇa, those differences need not become causes of division.

Instead, they can become opportunities for deeper dialogue, deeper reflection, deeper realization, and ultimately deeper cooperation.

On this Vyāsa-pūjā day, therefore, I pray at your lotus feet for guidance.

Please help us remember the essence of your mission.

Please help us see one another not as rivals in ideological battles, but as fellow servants trying, however imperfectly, to carry forward the work you began.

If we can do that, then the fears of division may gradually fade, and the movement you founded will continue to flourish for generations to come.

You crossed oceans alone in old age to bring the mercy of Lord Caitanya to the world. Compared to that heroic sacrifice, our present difficulties are small. Yet even small difficulties can grow large if we forget the spiritual vision you taught us.

Therefore, on this sacred day, I renew my prayer to serve your mission to the best of my ability.

May your followers always remember that we belong to you.

May we never forget that the real victory is not winning arguments, but awakening love for Kṛṣṇa in the hearts of all living beings.

And may we always remain, despite our imperfections, united in glorifying your extraordinary life and eternal teachings.

Your insignificant servant,
aspiring to follow in your footsteps,

Bhakti Gauravāṇī Goswami
Initiation: 1972, July—Paris, France

Dhīraśānta dāsa Goswami

If not for you

If not for you, I wouldn't know who I am. Eternally part of Krishna's plan, I would still be a number-one fool, wouldn't know what to do, not even have a clue, and not know that God has a blue hue.

If not for you, I would still be turning on the big wheel in different species of life, like a hamster in his cage trying to get his fill, with no direction in sight, putting up an impressive fight, but with no direction in sight. You opened my door and gave me the will; otherwise, I would still be on the mill.

If not for you, the *bhakti* seed would not have sprouted, with transcendental knowledge forming the basis of elevation and satisfaction. From muddy waters to blooming flowers, I was surprised how quickly I towered.

If not for you, the holy name wouldn't have entered my heart, allowing me a brand-new start, independently vibrating my tongue, and in disbelief, I also sang.

If not for you, I wouldn't have tasted *samosās* and *kachorīs* cooked in ghee. The only fee was to chant 'Hare Krishna,' be happy, and be free.

If not for you, I wouldn't climb so high, reaching for the spiritual sky. You have comforted me to try, and try. I am convinced it is not a lie, and all I need to do is comply.

Bhakti relationship is based on pure love; only then will Krishna welcome you into his home with an enchanting smile and a big hug. Love seems to be the hardest to will; therefore, please drag me home to Rādhā and Krishna in whichever way you feel.

Your servant

Dhīraśānta dāsa Goswami
Initiation: 1972, July—London, UK

Krishna Kshetra Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I take this occasion of again celebrating your blessed appearance in our midst as an opportunity to offer prostrated, heartfelt obeisance to your lotus-like feet and to submit this reflective attempt to offer you praise.

While reading your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.9.36—the last of the four verses on "the mystery of all inquiries" identified by our *ācāryas* as the *catur-ślokī-bhāgavatam* (the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in four verses)—I appreciate your clarity in identifying the core motivation of worldly life, namely, "sense gratification." English language historians tell us that the word "gratify" in earlier times had the positive sense of showing grace or favor on someone, suggesting a spirit of goodwill toward that person, whereas now (since the eighteenth century) it indicates personal satisfaction or indulgence of one's own desires. Your intended meaning of "gratification" is surely associated with the word's later usage, characterized by the "me first" mentality. You have written,

The whole material existence has sprung up because of sense gratification, desires based principally on the sex desire, and the result is that in spite of all advancement of knowledge, the final goal of all the activities of the living entities is sense gratification.

By this simple analysis you, in effect, deconstruct and dismantle the entire edifice of "modern" and "postmodern" philosophical

thought. More strongly put, you have *gutted* the edifice by your encompassing frame of "the whole material existence."

The intellectual world—mainly in the decades following your presence among us—has seen the rise to prominence of ideas bundled as "postmodernity." J. A. J. Storm explains that five themes are typically bundled together under the term "postmodernism":

(1) Antirealism; (2) an emphasis on endings, which have often included disciplinary autocritique; (3) an extreme version of the linguistic turn that characterizes the world in terms of texts; (4) a broad climate of skepticism; and (5) ethical relativism (sometimes called "ethical nihilism").

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, have anticipated challenged all five of these features of postmodernism in the course of your writings and talks, but in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.9.36 you hint at addressing the second feature, namely, the emphasis on endings, as you note that,

> [A]ll advancement of knowledge in the present context of things is being misused by cats and dogs fighting with one another for sense gratification, and all acquisition of knowledge in science, philosophy, fine arts, nationalism, economic development, religion and great activities are being spoiled by being used as dresses for dead men.

To describe "all acquisition of knowledge" as "being used as dresses for dead men" is an expression in your characteristically rhetorical style of condemnation and dismissal of any and all philosophical ventures as so many dead ends, so long as they fall short of minimally acknowledging the existence of a supreme being. I find another striking example of your rhetorical style two verses previous (2.9.34). In your purport you use the word "sane" five times: The "sane man" is "enlightened in the disciplic succession;" "the sane man... accepts this statement of the Lord [*ahaṁ sarvasya prabhavo...*]; "[t]he sane man... knows [that the "Lord is the original source of all emanations..."]; "... the sane person knows clearly that the Lord can act, even from far, far beyond our vision..."; and "... the sane person knows *prakṛti* as the illusory energy of the Lord." A critic would likely insist that your use of the word "sane," implies censure of all persons who don't fit your criteria of sanity, as necessarily "insane." They would accuse you of implying—if not directly making—ad hominem arguments, a type of logical fallacy that works rhetorically

by the social force of shaming. To this I would reply that your aim is not to gain points in the halls of the logicians; rather, your aim is clearly to open minds to a most radical proposition, namely, as you write in your purport to the first of these four essential verses (2.9.33), "... one should aspire for personal realization of the Lord..." Here is the full context of this last exhortation by you:

> Even in the impersonal existence of the Lord, as it is in the material creation, one should aspire for personal realization of the Lord, and that is the meaning of *paścād ahaṁ yad etac ca so 'vaśiṣyeta so 'smy aham*."

My prayer to you is that I may fully imbibe this—your thoroughly deconstructive vision of this world as the product of sense gratification, and your striking reconstruction of this world's apparent impersonhood—as an opportunity to have personal realization of the Lord. May I, by the power of your words and the profound care they carry, cherish the vision you offer through apparent rhetorical flourish. And may I thus be able to reach beyond the manifold worldly insanity that passes as "modern" or "postmodern" reasoning, to deepen my aspiration for personal realization of the Lord, under your able and challenging guidance.

Always your servant,

Krishna Kshetra Swami
Initiation: 1972, July—Paris, France

Lokanath Swami

My Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

During a recent gathering in Pandharpur with my senior disciples, managers, and leaders we reflected deeply on the various instructions you gave me throughout my life, including how I endeavored to execute them, what still remains unfinished, and how many services, departments, projects, and preaching initiatives developed from those instructions. A major focus of our deliberations was the future: how these services and responsibilities would continue after my physical departure, and how they could be

preserved, expanded, and carried forward into future generations.

From these reflections emerged a clearer understanding of the legacy projects and initiatives that, by your mercy, have been established and brought to maturity as direct offerings of service to your instructions. This reflection on the legacy created in your service forms the essence of this Vyāsa-pūjā offering. I humbly pray that my followers, particularly those entrusted with leadership and managerial responsibilities, will protect, nurture, and perpetuate these legacy services, for your continued pleasure.

The single most inspiring instruction of my life began on Rādhāṣṭamī, during a room conversation, on 1 September 1976, at Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Pārthasārathi Mandir in ISKCON Delhi: "You don't need to travel on the bus in India. You can go by bullock cart." You mercifully instructed me to begin the bullock cart *saṅkīrtana* preaching program (Padayātrā). Later, during the inaugural gathering in Vrindavan on 12 September 1976, you again instructed me, concluding with the words: "*Yāre dekha tāre kaha 'hare kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa*."

I always felt this was a personal and custom-made instruction for me. Ordinarily, the phrase is *kṛṣṇa-upadeśa,* but you specifically said *hare kṛṣṇa-upadeśa.* I understood from this that you were directing me to dedicate my life to propagating the holy name everywhere through Padayātrā.

These instructions, repeated through correspondence and personal encounters, became the sole direction and purpose of my life. You encouraged me:

> Yes. Go from village to village. It is a very noble attempt. And if you sincerely preach, Kṛṣṇa will … *buddhi-yogaṁ dadāmi taṁ yena mām upayānti te.* There is no doubt. (Vrindavan, September 12, 1976)

What began as a single bullock cart gradually expanded into a worldwide movement of *harināma-saṅkīrtana*. On 16 March 1977 you wrote, "We can introduce many millions of such carts all over the world."

In 1991, the ISKCON GBC formally recognized Padayātrā's global mission: "To bring the congregational chanting of the holy name to every town and village of the world through organized Padayātrā festivals." Your desire continues to unfold. During your Centennial celebrations, Śrīla Prabhupāda, Padayātrās were conducted in more than one hundred countries. Collectively, they have now traveled

over 400,000 kilometers, equivalent to circumambulating the earth sixteen times.

Prasāda distribution and chanting and book distribution is sufficient for your program. (Letter, 23 December 1976)

Eight Indian states now conduct their own Padayātrās, which continue to be a leading contributor to book distribution, just as you instructed. As a service to your instruction, it is my earnest desire to see the Padayātrā movement carried forward for the next ten thousand years, until the chanting of the holy name reaches every town and every village.

For more than forty years, devotees from around the world have participated in the Kārttika Vraja-maṇḍala Parikramā. experiencing spiritual rejuvenation through thirty days of immersion in the holy *dhāma*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you established the great Mayapur and Vrindavan festivals, and parikramā has always been an integral part of these sacred festivals. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself performed this parikramā, and your Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, organized Vraja parikramā in 1932, in which Your Divine Grace participated.

To help pilgrims understand the spiritual significance of each sacred place, I compiled *Vraja-maṇḍala Darśana,* a book that has now been translated into at least seven languages (and counting). Following your example and the tradition you upheld, I strongly feel that every single devotee should perform Vraja-maṇḍala parikramā at least once in their lifetime, and I pray that by your mercy, this tradition continues for thousands of years to come.

> The whole of India and specifically your Maharashtra are enthused with Krishna. Now you have to revive their Krishna consciousness … So revive them by the process of the sankirtana movement. (Letter, 30 July 1977)

Inspired by this instruction, I initiated systematic preaching in Maharashtra, establishing temples and overseeing Deity installations so that devotees could have stable centers for sādhana, kirtan, preaching, education, festivals, and community life. You wrote:

Organize very solidly and thus increase the number of books distributed, the numbers of devotees made, and develop centers of Krishna consciousness everywhere. (Letter, 30 July 1977)

Centers are flourishing in Maharashtra: Solapur (Śrī Śrī

Rādhā-Dāmodara); Beed (Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda-deva); Latur and Pachora (Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā); Ichalkaranji (Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara); and Amravati (Śrī Śrī Rukmiṇī-Dvārakādhiśa). These are the principal temples, alongside dozens of extension centers and preaching outposts.

In Gautam Buddha Nagar District, now known as Greater Delhi State, we have many temple projects – Noida, Greater Noida, and Jewa, to name a few. The opening of Noida International Airport has brought greater importance to our temple projects in the zone.

You wrote: "You should train the one farmer from your native village so that he can actually become an ISKCON representative there." (Letter, 30 July 1977) The entire region has been spiritually elevated. Aravade, my birthplace, has become enthused with Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopāla has become a cherished place of pilgrimage and worship.

All these temples, projects, and initiatives have been developed in accordance with your vision – keeping a succession plan and the next generation of devotees in mind. The foundation has now been laid, and I look to the Regional Secretary assistants, leaders, and managers to carry this legacy forward to expand and maintain these efforts and "to revive Krishna consciousness by the process of the sankirtana movement."

In the early 1970s, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you returned to India with your Western disciples. Looking at the map of India, you began identifying key locations for establishing centers of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You put your finger on the map to indicate Nagpur, marked by the historic Zero Mile of India.

Recognizing its central position, you expressed your desire that a grand temple be established there. This instruction has taken form today as the beautiful lotus-shaped International Vedic Cultural Centre (IVCC), a majestic temple and cultural palace of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha, a living embodiment of your wish and will.

Your affectionate statement, "Our Lokanath Swami is just like Saint Tukaram," deeply connected me with Pandharpur and my traditional spiritual roots. Pandharpur is the spiritual capital of Maharashtra and the abode of Lord Viṭṭhala, and under your encouragement I began my preaching career there.

Pandharpur also has a strong Gauḍīya connection – Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's eleven-day visit there, Lord Nityānanda Prabhu's initiation there by Lakṣmīpati Tīrtha, and Viśvarūpa winding up

His pastimes and departing for the spiritual world from there.

The highlights of the new Bhūvaikuṇṭha Temple project include the iconic Prabhupāda Ghat, a magnificent temple, a Prabhupāda museum, exhibition galleries, a gośālā, international-standard guesthouses, restaurants, extensive pilgrim services, the Rūpānuga Vidyāpīṭha (educational facilities), Bhaktivedanta Hospital, and a residential devotee community.

I pray that by your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the new Bhūvaikuṇṭha in Pandharpur will develop into a grand international spiritual and cultural hub, becoming well known throughout India and worldwide, revealing its spiritual glory to pilgrims and future generations.

Near Nagpur, in Maharashtra, lies Kaundanyapur, the birthplace of Śrīmatī Rukmiṇī Devī, a sacred dhāma deserving of global recognition. This holy *dhāma* is directly connected to one of the most beautiful pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa: the "kidnapping" pastime of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His accepting Rukmiṇī Devī as His eternal queen.

Our temple project, currently under development, stands on the site where Lord Kṛṣṇa's chariot stood during the divine pastime. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava heritage, along with the importance of this holy place, call for it to be properly established, preserved, and revealed, so that it may become a recognized place of pilgrimage for Vaiṣṇavas worldwide. By your mercy and guidance, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and through my humble service, I aspire to see this sacred *dhāma* properly developed and revealed to the world.

In 2018, I established Zoom Harināma Mandir to ensure that devotees, especially initiated disciples, chant their rounds in the morning. Of course, it is open to all your followers and the disciples of my godbrothers, some of whom have been joining. Also, several of my godbrothers give *japa* talks. Now, seven years later, around two thousand devotees from across the world gather daily, and the initiative has been recognized by the *World Book of Records* for three consecutive years of uninterrupted global mantra meditation. I pray this nonsectarian online *mandira* continues long beyond my personal presence.

"There is need of making more Indian devotees. We have to make more men like you." (Room conversation, Bombay, 1975) By your own example, you taught us that spiritual leadership means caring for people, shaping character, and cultivating devotion. You wrote: "Train them according to your needs. Krishna has given you

and your companions a very nice responsibility. If you like you can go all over India and make it more and more in that way." (Letter, 14 December 1976)

More than ten thousand of my disciples, and of course they are your granddisciples, in over fifty-five countries are now serving your mission. Initiation was only the beginning. I have endeavored to train, encourage, and gradually prepare them for meaningful service so they become spiritually strong, philosophically grounded, responsible, competent, cooperative gentlemen and capable of serving with maturity and integrity.

"Keep your behavior right to the point, set a very good example and others will follow. Yes, I want you to concentrate on preaching." (Letter, 23 December 1976) Devotees learn not only through instruction, but through association, conduct, standards, and personal example. I have especially encouraged simplicity, humility, *sādhana,* Vaiṣṇava behavior, preaching spirit, and loyalty to ISKCON. My aim is to cultivate future servants, teachers, leaders, and caretakers of your movement. I am dependent mostly on them to continue, to maintain what has been created and, of course, further expand these programs and projects, Padayātrās and publications.

"Although it may take long to master Sanskrit, once it is learned, the student passes through 'the gateway to education.'" (*Cc,* Ādi 15.5 purport) Through your books, you carefully preserved Sanskrit Devanāgarī, transliteration, word-by-word meanings, translations, and introduced morning and evening recitations of the Gītā and Bhāgavatam so that devotees everywhere could gradually hear, read, pronounce, study, and appreciate the language of the Vedic literature. I want to encourage Sanskrit learning within ISKCON – academically, devotionally, and practically – so devotees may develop deeper appreciation and understanding of your books, prayers, mantras, and the original śāstric tradition.

You repeatedly emphasized the importance of proper pronunciation: "Every mantra of the Bhagavad-gita and Srimad-Bhagavatam is sabda-brahma … If the mantra is poorly articulated, then the sound form of the Lord is disfigured." (Letter, 5 April 1970) With this inspiration, I also prepared a Sanskrit pronunciation guide to help devotees properly articulate Sanskrit sounds, chant verses carefully, sing prayers correctly, and gain confidence in approaching Sanskrit study. We humbly seek your blessings for this initiative to promote learning Sanskrit, including its correct pronunciation,

so the devotees can better understand scripture. A selected group of learned ISKCON Sanskrit scholars will work with ISKCON's Education Ministry to promote and propagate Sanskrit only to those who are voluntarily willing and competent to learn.

"The business of advanced and empowered devotees is to write books, publish them, and distribute them widely." (*Cc,* Madhya 19.132) I have authored about a dozen books and have many more writing projects in the pipeline. Śrīla Prabhupāda, only you could simultaneously write and translate books while traveling and managing ISKCON's affairs worldwide. You instructed, "You do as I did," but I am certainly not able to do as you did. Yours was an amazing and almost inconceivable feat. During the last leg of my journey, I am trying to hand over my managerial responsibilities so that I may find time for writing. I have established a publishing house called ISKCON Padayatra Press. I once again beg your blessings for success with this herculean task. Books are a very special significant part of a legacy. The physical body may leave, but one stays behind in the form of one's books.

You had personally witnessed what happened after the departure of your own spiritual master. You clearly wrote: "Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, at the time of his departure, requested all his disciples to form a governing body and conduct missionary activities cooperatively. He did not instruct a particular man to become the next *ācārya*." (*Cc,* Ādi 12.8, purport)

You did not want individual gurus to assume the position of independent ācāryas and ultimate managers, thereby fragmenting the institution into competing factions. You clearly foresaw the dangers of guru groupism, and therefore to fulfill your spiritual master's instruction and protect ISKCON, you established the Governing Body Commission. In your final will, you stated: "The Governing Body Commission (GBC) will be the ultimate managing authority."

I have personally endeavored to take practical and deliberate steps so that guru groupism and the Zonal Ācārya Syndrome may be checked and gradually eradicated, especially within ISKCON in India, where guru groupism still prevails. During the recent ISKCON India Bureau meeting, I put forward a proposal in this regard, which was accepted. It was resolved "that the ISKCON Bureau constitutes ISKCON India Guru and Sannyasa Services Committee to process, coordinate, and monitor the guru/sannyāsa candidates and gurus/sannyāsa," of which I am a member. The essential aim is for many

gurus, many leaders, and many services, but one heart and one unified mission under the GBC, as you envisaged.

On the occasion of your 130th Vyāsa-pūjā, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I humbly offer this account of my imperfect efforts to serve your instructions. Many of these initiatives are still developing and have not yet matured. I therefore beg your blessings for strength, intelligence, and purity for myself and for those who will carry these efforts forward for your pleasure.

Your servant always,

Lokanath Swami
Initiation: 1972, October—Vrindavan, India

Radhanath Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On the sacred day of Vyāsa-pūjā, I offer my body, mind, and life at your lotus feet in heartfelt obeisances.

Your compassion upon all beings is an emanation of your pure, ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. The philosophy, practice, and experience of *kṛṣṇa-prema* is the essence of life. On behalf of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the exalted *ācāryas* of our *sampradāya,* you are blessing us with this rarest gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Every soul's search for true happiness can be realized when we come into the spiritual reality of God's personal love. The love of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vrindavan is forever the most inclusive and intimate revelation in the abode of God's love. You have revealed to us the pathway into the eternal service of Their love. It is this treasure that you are entrusting to your sincere followers.

As the years pass, your original disciples are physically aging. More and more we must endure the heartbreak of departing Vaiṣṇavas. In the tears we may shed in separation from your beloved devotees, we may celebrate your love for them and their love for you. This appreciation among devotees is at the heart of our society.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, it is in your divine grace that we are blessed with the shelter of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, in both the brightest and the darkest of times. Your life, teachings and mission are our supreme fortune. With each coming day is a precious opportunity to reciprocate, to serve you and to please you. I pray that

my every breath may become an offering of gratitude in your service.

In 1896, 130 years ago, you appeared in the world under a jackfruit tree in the Tollygunge section of Calcutta. In 1966, sixty years ago, you established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in a small storefront at 26 Second Avenue in New York City. This year, in 2026, your devotees performed the groundbreaking ceremony for a memorial to be built at your birthplace under the jackfruit tree in Calcutta, and this year, along with many celebrations, was the opening of a newly renovated pilgrimage site at 26 Second Avenue, in New York.

In 1881, 145 years ago, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, along with his family, including his seven-year-old son, who later became your Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, established their family home, temple, preaching center, and printing press at the Bhakti Bhavan in Calcutta. Here, on the rooftop, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda built a *bhajana-kuṭira* where Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja would reside. This year, Śrīla Prabhupāda, as an offering of gratitude to you, the Bhakti Bhavan has been for the first time acquired, renovated, and inaugurated by your devotees and for your devotees.

It is our prayer that you may be pleased with our aspiration to become the servants of the servants of your illustrious legacy of love.

Your servant,

Radhanath Swami

Initiation: 1973, February—New Vrindaban, West Virginia, USA

Pārtha Sārathi Das Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

In your purport to the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā, Chapter 17, text 1, you write: "Everywhere people express this astonishment, and we take great pride in the transcendental behavior of our students. Such wonders are possible, however, only by the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. They are not ordinary or mundane."

I humbly pray that I can continue to serve you under your guidance and the guidance of the disciplic succession. Please allow

me to always remember you in your sādhaka form, and one day, if I am so fortunate, in your *siddha* form. I place my head millions of times at the lotus feet of your disciples, granddisciples, and followers.

jagāi mādhāi haite muñi se pāpiṣṭha purīṣera kīṭa haite muñi se laghiṣṭha

"I am more sinful than Jagāi and Mādhāi and even lower than the worms in the stool." (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi-līlā, Chapter 5, Text 205)

The goal is vraja-bhakti, and you are distributing this. Please allow me to assist you in this endeavour.

I remain, Your servant,

Pārtha Sārathi Das Goswami
Initiation: 1973, May—London, U.K.

Candramauli Swami

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

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

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

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

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

I offer 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.

Dearmost Śrīla Prabhupāda,

A bright light within the dense darkness of chasing illusionary happiness became the cause of our ultimate good fortune. As the pure devotee representative of the compassionate Supreme Personality of

Godhead you brought hope for a better life along with a halt to our aimless wanderings filled with despair and disappointment. You gave us what we unknowingly were looking for in life, the happiness of service to the Lord of all the worlds, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Your words about the real purpose of human life carried hope for something better, something sublime, came in the form of sacred books, spiritual discourses and instructive lessons on the nature of the Absolute Truth and our eternal relationship with Him. It cut through our ignorance about life's purpose, lifting our hearts up as refreshing as a discovery of crystal clear water to a weary desert traveler. These words nourished our mind and gave life to our soul while cutting away the ignorance accumulated for countless births in a seemingly never ceasing cycle of birth and death.

Those who heard your words filled with deep realizations of how to achieve the ultimate goal while simultaneously dismissing any other idea for happiness and success other than devotional service to the Lord of our life Śrī Kṛṣṇa were most fortunate.

Contrarily were those who received your message yet could not understand or take advantage of these immortal words. They are compared to children who, being immersed in playing were unable to take advantage of their loving mother who is calling them to enjoy a nourishing, tasty meal. Most unfortunate. For the doubting soul there is neither happiness in this life or the next.

Even more unfortunate are those who rejected your instructions, benevolent guidance and words of transcendental knowledge and were eager to broadcast their ignorance openly. Like having come across a great treasure and seeing it as broken pieces of glass.

Yet those who continuously hear your words filled with realization of the Absolute Truth and adopt them as the guide in life and their ultimate treasure are most fortunate for they will receive the full mercy of the Supreme Lord Personality of Godhead and qualify to again receive your divine association never ending.

I sincerely pray that every conditioned soul will have the opportunity to come in contact with your immortal teachings filled with love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa and make their life perfect.

With your mercy what is the use of others, and without your mercy what is the use of others. For your mercy enclosed in your divine words is the means to achieve life's ultimate goal. Premā Pum-artho Mahān, love of God.

We are eternally indebted, eager to try to repay the un-repayable

gift of eternal life, knowledge and bliss.

Your eternally grateful disciple,

Candramauli Swami
Initiation: 1973, August—New Vrindaban, West Virginia, USA

Bhaktimarga Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

I was there in the crowd in Atlanta
You were everything to us
There was that walk in the park
I tried to catch any word of yours
But I just did not succeed
Your assistants surrounded you
It was not at all audible
And I was a shy guy

In Detroit you were very happy
The Fisher Mansion had become ours
The walk was not possible
Rain made it so restrictive
It became a drive through Belle Isle
In those days I drove, so I was behind
The back of your head was visible
For the absolute whole time

Then, there was a morning in Chicago
At a park by Lake Michigan
You trekked the trail gracefully
There was an entourage that followed
Then Viśākhā held up her camera
You posed, devotees fussed with your shawl

I heard you loud and clear
"You cannot satisfy all of the people all of the time"

In my hometown, Toronto
We had acquired that big church
You sent a telegram – "Great triumph!"
Then you came to personally see
Were taken to Taylor Creek Park
Water flowed, all was green – serene
You spoke some words – out of earshot
But I was so glad you came

People are surprised I never spoke to you
I am your student, but no exchange
What would I say? I was a shy guy
But I heard your classes
And I was there to see you walk
I sleep in the room where you slept
My best sleep comes when I hear a recording
I am blessed like anything

Your servant,

Bhaktimarga Swami
Initiation: 1973, September—Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Current location: Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Śivarāma Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

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

This year I would like to glorify you by recounting an event from my early days in Montreal.

It was the winter of 1975, and we had moved into the Boulevard Pie-IX temple about six months earlier, just in time to receive Your Divine Grace for a brief same-day visit of only a few hours before you hastily flew to New Delhi to meet Indira Gandhi.

As always, the Montreal winter was cold, and newly fallen snow

had blanketed the streets. As saṅkīrtana leader, I left the temple a little after all the others, carrying three boxes of the *Kṛṣṇa* Book trilogy in my arms, each stacked lengthwise upon the other—Volume One, Two, and Three. The *saṅkīrtana* van had broken down, so I walked the 200 metres to the bus stop and rode as far as the next Metro station. The subway was crowded, and I received a few stares; people curious to know what treasures I was hugging to my chest. Little did they know!

I got off at Place Bonaventure, already perspiring from both exertion and my winter wear. From there I walked underground to the CN train station where I opened a storage locker for 25 cents and packed in all the books, bar those that fitted into my book bag. It was 10 a.m.

The morning rush had passed and so the station was calm. I sat down upon the nearest bench to catch my breath and took two sets out of my bag, opening a Volume One to the introductory letter by George Harrison. It was the letter that would sell the books. I had to have it ready for customers.

Just then, a well-dressed gentleman sat down on the other end of the bench and nodded to me,

"Bonjour."

"Bonjour Monsieur," I replied.

The man recognised my accent and so continued in English, "Are you from Montreal?"

I rested my arm on the back of the bench, "Yes Sir! And you?"

"No! I'm from Quebec City. I am just waiting for my train."

I moved a little closer and asked, "Do you know the Beatles?"

He smiled at me, "Who doesn't?"

I put Volume One of *Kṛṣṇa* Book in his hand, open at the letter from George.

"This is a letter from George Harrison, who sponsored this book on *yoga* and meditation."

He looked at the letter and turned to the cover. *"Kṛṣṇa, The Supreme Personality of Godhead."*

He paused and looked straight at me. "So this book is about Kṛṣṇa!"

It was a statement. I hesitated a minute. I didn't know if he was deterred by what he saw. But there was nothing else to do but acknowledge that a book called *Kṛṣṇa* was indeed about Kṛṣṇa.

"It certainly is. It is about his life and teachings."

The man now turned the book to the back cover and the picture of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. "And is this your *guru*?"

"Yes! His name is A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda."

The gentleman made no move to leave, and he appeared comfortable with our exchange. I moved closer and placed the other two books in his hand. "It is a set, a trilogy."

"Are you selling these books?"

"We pass the books out and ask people for donations. Please give as much as you can."

He put the books down to his right side in an undefined gesture. I couldn't tell if he would take them. He asked, "Have you read the book?"

I wasn't certain whether he was distracting me from a sale, but I felt encouraged; "I have read it multiple times."

He raised his eyebrows, impressed. "Then tell me a little more about it."

At this point I hesitated. People who wanted to converse were rarely interested in books, and I certainly wasn't keen on getting anchored before I had even started the day. But then he had placed the whole set on his far side, a gesture that may have indicated interest in a purchase. Or did it? Sometimes our phrase "We pass the books out" was taken as a license to take books for free. But he didn't look the type. And he certainly had money. His eyes questioned, "Tell me a little more about it."

At this point, a memory surfaced in my mind. It was the memory of a letter you had written a few years earlier; a letter that still hung on the saṅkīrtana bulletin board which read:

> I am convinced that if you simply glorify Kṛṣṇa and our books in the best descriptive manner, that anyone and everyone, no matter even atheist or otherwise, they can be convinced to purchase. Of course that is a great art and not everyone can do it, but gradually by practice of preaching in this way, striving to so much present a wonderful picture of our books to the people, gradually you will master the trick how to do it. (Letter to Bali Mardana, 72.12.31)

I listened to your advice!

What followed was a lovely exchange that lasted almost twenty minutes: Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord who appears in the world to remove burdens created by gross materialists, but more importantly,

to reveal his eternal sports in his eternal abode. He was calling us back to our original home; the place of no suffering, the place of unending happiness. This world is full of unavoidable suffering, and yet we continue to attempt to avoid it and seek happiness. It is a fruitless struggle. But if we hear about Kṛṣṇa from these books, and if we chant his names, we can end all that and return to him. And more…!

I took another Volume One out of my bag and pointed to the picture of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the oval frame. "Wouldn't you like to be there, with them?"

At this question, something moved in my customer and a few tears gathered in his eyes. He did not say anything but continued to look and listen. I asked again, "Wouldn't you like to be there?"

He nodded silently. And perhaps I saw a tear roll down his cheek. At least I thought I did.

Now he placed the stack of three books in his lap and looked away from me, and at them. He looked hard and long.

This would be the moment of truth.

Just then the PA system announced the express train to Quebec City. My heart skipped a beat as the gentleman looked towards the escalator that led down to the platform.

There was silence, but it was clear that the message I had left him with had created a bond between us. He still wouldn't look at me, perhaps to hide his tears. Clearing his voice, he said:

"How much would you like for the books?"

I was elated, but tried to control myself. It would be another year before I developed the confidence to ask for large donations, at O'Hare Airport. So I gave the standard answer; "The books cost $5 to print, but some people even give $20." Very few people gave that.

He turned a book to the back cover and looked at you. The PA called a second time for the QC Express. He reached inside his coat, took out his wallet and fingered bills I could not see. Then he handed me $40.

Now I was speechless.

He said, "I will read these books. They are what I have been looking for."

He stood to leave, replaced his wallet, put the books in his briefcase, and extended his arm. We shook hands and smiled at each other. I said, "Thank you."

He stopped me with a gesture; "No, I thank you. You have given

me a wonderful gift."

He turned to leave and then again turned back. His eyes were still moist. "Your *guru* is a great man. Continue to serve him by selling these books. It is the best thing you can do."

I was caught off guard and just watched as he stepped on to the escalator, soon to be lost from view. No one had ever told me to keep selling books, never mind that this is the best thing I could be doing. Usually, people told me to get a job. I looked at the $40 in my hand and put the bills in my pocket. It was a good start to the day. But I wasn't ready yet. I sat down again on the bench and looked intently at your picture.

Now tears came to my eyes. I could barely make out your features. And I prayed softly under my breath:

"Śrīla Prabhupāda. What a wonderful gift you have given me in the form of distributing your books."

I sobbed a little.

"Let my life be dedicated to your book distribution."

After a few minutes I began my service. But that day I was surcharged. It seemed that whoever I approached took a set. I walked around CN until the transport police motioned for me to leave. I followed my usual rounds to Place Ville Marie and then out on to St Catherine Street. That day, I did not feel the cold; I just felt the bliss of serving my glorious spiritual master, whom even strangers could recognise as a great man. It was a memorable day that is still etched in my memory, over fifty years on.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the exchange in the CN Station was one of many miracles I witnessed while distributing your books. I can't say that all customers were as positive, or that I was equally convincing, but whenever I kept your words in mind, somehow people took and gave.

> I am convinced that if you simply glorify Kṛṣṇa and our books in the best descriptive manner, that anyone and everyone, no matter even atheist or otherwise, they can be convinced to purchase.

That morning I too became convinced. I still am.

Your servant,

Śivarāma Swami
Initiation: 1973, September—Montreal, Canada

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you, the savior of the whole world and of me.

I have been thinking a lot about your position as founder-ācārya of your International Society for Krishna Consciousness. It is such a profound position, and as we know very well, one that you insisted on being recognized as.

A founder-ācārya is, among other things, someone who takes one or some important aspects of the functions and gifts of a sampradāya and gives them special emphasis, in this way having a particularly dynamic effect on the line and its place in the world at large. There is absolutely no doubt that you have done this, Śrīla Prabhupāda, in a number of ways.

In a sense, Lord Caitanya was also something like a founder-ācārya in that He took such an important activity of the sampradāya – the chanting of the holy names, and particularly, the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra itself – and practiced it and emphasized it greatly. What an impact He had, particularly in India!

It is interesting that when Īśvara Purī initiated Lord Caitanya, he specifically emphasized to the Lord the chanting of the holy names as opposed to study of Vedānta philosophy, and after being instructed in this way, Lord Caitanya absorbed Himself in chanting and spreading the chanting, often to the exclusion of other Kṛṣṇa conscious activities. In this way, he had such an unprecedented impact on the world in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Similarly, you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for our preaching, emphasized chanting, but then, after some time, focused on the mass distribution of transcendental literature. I remember how, when I joined the temple in Bury Place, London, in January 1973, all we did every day was go on *harināma* up and down Oxford Street, the main street of the city. But then some time in the summer, we received an instruction from you to now focus on book distribution.

This is certainly one of your main contributions to the sampradāya, and it has had, and continues to have, such a massive impact on the whole world. How many millions of conditioned souls have now had contact with Kṛṣṇa consciousness through the distribution of your books?

So on this basis alone, you are clearly a founder-ācārya and

not simply another "regular" ācārya who was giving Kṛṣṇa consciousness to people.

And I was one of those many, many people who first got one of those books and had his life changed irrevocably by you. You saved me from a fate worse than death, and I owe you everything for that, eternally.

Please grant me a place at your lotus feet, forever.

Your ever grateful servant,

Bhakti Caitanya Swami
Initiation: 1973, September—London, UK

Ramāi Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

One time you said that to preach to people, there is an art, like karate. You knew how to push on the person's weak point until they died. This was specifically in reference to atheists, material scientists, and Māyāvādīs.

Another time a devotee asked you if the spiritual master is present in the heart of the disciple, and you replied "Yes, if you let me enter."

To get your mercy we must allow you to come fully into our hearts and to follow your instructions and example implicitly. We need to be humble and overcome our stubbornness, pride, and false ego. We must be willing to hear and learn from you every day of our lives. We should be active and not lazy.

In this regard you told a story about two men who applied for a job. One came in and left the door open. Then the second man came in and closed the door. The boss decided to give the second man the job, as even though he was not so expert, he felt he could learn well because he had closed the door. He felt that because the first man had left the door open, he was lazy.

There is so much to do in service to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Your

disciples don't have many years left in this life. I pray that in my last few years I can do something that is meaningful and worthwhile, although I am not very qualified to do so.

By your presence *māyā* was cast away
And our love for you grew every day
Never before had we met one so divine
Whose glories would be sung till the end of time

You traveled a lot in such a short while
Astounded us all with your courage and style
How could a person so advanced in age
Journey the world to bring a spiritual change

Like the Gaṅgā famous for her purifying effect
You gave everyone a chance to become perfect
One scholar said you were the greatest of gurus
What was the need to accept others to choose

A *jagat-guru* at whose feet all masters should sit
Those who were sincere came forward to commit
Why waste their life struggling with endless sorrow
They realized there was a much brighter tomorrow

We became devotees who chanted and danced
To the Lord's holy names, we became entranced
Your instructions were to spread this everywhere
So, we took the transcendental sound into the air

Many joined in kirtan and you led the way
To show by example the best way to pray
For the Lord's mercy is not easy to attain
Unless one follows a pure devotee to gain

The path to eternity that is a road which is high
While in this world one must endeavor and try
What was formerly foreign and seemed impossible
By Śrīla Prabhupāda's grace it became probable

Perhaps in the future if more people took it up
Yamarāja would have less work and be wonderstruck

Lord Caitanya said take it to every town and village
By your grace we now have got this great privilege

Your insignificant servant,

Ramāi Swami
Initiation: 1973—Melbourne, Australia

Varṣāṇa Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

The deadline for submitting Vyāsa-pūjā offerings finds us composing our contributions toward the close of winter. This morning, in the early hour of brāhma-muhūrta, dark storm clouds block the moonlight while the howling winds of an Arctic vortex pile snow into drifts around my cabin.

Within this sanctuary, as the golden luster of flickering flames dances over glowing embers in the fireplace, I find a perfect opportunity to turn inward before writing to you. The potency of sacred remembrance – *smaraṇam* – gently transports me into another dimension, awakening a range of devotional sentiments. From this interior warmth, a living memory draws me into the embrace of a pleasant afternoon sun bathing a verdant New Vrindaban meadow in comforting rays.

As remembrance deepens, your pastimes and precepts come into focus, assembling themselves into my Vyāsa-pūjā offering, blending past recollections with future expectations. In this convergence, the treasure of your enduring association is revitalized.

It is from this contemplative space that my intention arises – not to remind you of what you already know, but to share the ongoing fruits of a precious lesson you once emphasized to the pioneers of this community. It is a topic worthy of deep consideration in celebrating Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā.

Since that lesson took root, I have returned to it repeatedly as a daily practice. I now see how profoundly it shapes all aspects of my service to you. That sunny afternoon was in June 1976.

Your vyāsāsana is being decorated with fragrant flowers gathered from nearby bushes and vines. My youthful godbrothers and godsisters wait in eager anticipation of your blessed darshan.

You emerge from a nearby residence into this idyllic setting. The devotees bow down and make way as you approach the elevated seat of Vyāsa to preside over the assembly. We are unaware that this would be among the last darshans with you during your mortal presence.

The meeting begins with questions from disciples, as is customary. Our godbrother Taru Dāsa, seated at your feet, asks how we should respond when neighboring farmers repeatedly reply to our preaching efforts with, "We, as farmers, have no time for Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

In response, you defer the question to His Holiness Dhṛṣṭadyumna Mahārāja, who is on your right side, fanning you with a *cāmara*. Being very *pukka,* and following the strict protocol you established, he begins to respond by citing scripture.

No sooner have the words, "According to the *Bhagavad-gītā*" left his lips, then you become very animated, thrusting your hand in front of him, gesturing for him to stop. You admonish him with the most unexpected words: "Don't bring the *Bhagavad-gītā* into this conversation!"

The effect is immediate. The devotees, surprised, wonder why you would alter the protocol of verifying every statement with a scriptural citation.

Without pausing, you turn to His Holiness Puṣṭa Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja, who is waving a peacock fan on your other side, and ask: "How would you answer that question?"

Mahārāja begins, "Kṛṣṇa says …"

Again you raise your hand and stop him firmly. "Don't bring Kṛṣṇa into this conversation!"

Now the devotees are utterly perplexed. Sensing that you are on the verge of emphasizing a crucial lesson, we are fully attentive.

Leaning forward toward Taru, you address the skeptical farmers he represents with a sharp and unforgettable chastisement. "Rascal! Can you make the sun rise or the rain fall? As farmers, you are completely dependent on Kṛṣṇa. Could you at least offer Him

your gratitude?"

As suddenly as it arose, your spirited intensity softens into a naturally serene and peaceful countenance. You gently ask: "Any further questions?"

The devotees are delighted by the uplifting interaction. It takes years for the deeper effects of the exchange to unfold.

By that time, your dictations of the Bhaktivedanta purports have gone silent, leaving us dependent on your feature as *caitya-guru* for continued guidance.

One morning, recognizing your voice while acknowledging your internal presence as *caitya-guru*, I am drawn to a purport on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.35 found in the *Sārārtha-darśinī.* It's commenting on Lord Brahmā's eloquent prayers to Lord Gopāla at the conclusion of the *brahma-vimohana-līlā*. Although Śrī Gopāla remains outwardly silent as He hears Brahmājī's praise, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura suggests an internal dialogue takes place between them, in which the Lord reveals:

> Others may be grateful for gifts that have already been given, but I am grateful for gifts that will be given in the future, and I reciprocate with these gifts even before they are given.

Here, gratitude is reframed – expanded beyond a gracious response to what has already been granted, evolving into a spiritual orientation toward blessings assured by providential grace. In this way, thanksgiving serves as both the mirror of divine consciousness as well as the portal through which the conditioned soul begins the process of reconditioning.

Through this insight, yet another dimension emerges, revealing a defining aspect of the Lord's inner disposition.

What is unveiled in the Lord's deep and mysterious heart is invited to awaken within His servants. As gratitude echoes in our individual consciousness, a sacred space opens within, unlocking the future by honoring the present.

From this awakening, gratitude draws our attention to even the simplest of occurrences. Included are those most essential necessities often taken for granted precisely because they are so readily available. Every breath, every heartbeat, every sunrise, and most tragically, so many of the utterances of the holy name. Thankfulness counteracts indifference toward the touchstone of Śrī Nāma.

The call to be grateful *in* everything does not imply appreciation *for* anything that displeases Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga. This distinction is essential. Through proper appreciation, our past regrets and future fears dissolve into present service opportunities. As we give Kṛṣṇa our intentional presence, we feel His reciprocation in advance for services yet to be offered.

This includes the way He helps us to unlearn both the patterns forged by conditioned memories and mental projections thrust upon events yet to come. These loops inhibit the development of a renewed mind suitable for devotional life. When Śrī Nāma purifies the mirror of the heart, we are left with a clean slate to contemplate bhakti and rewrite our inner script. Therein we find the ability to fulfill Kṛṣṇa's request that we always think of Him (Bg. 18.65) and know Him in truth (Bg. 4.9).

Whether in seasons of joy or times of challenge, our God-given free will lets us choose gratitude for experiences that cultivate inner strength, self-acceptance, and eagerness for the long, adventurous journey ahead.

Within a devotional community such as New Vrindaban, expressing thanks for the residents' gifts, talents, and contributions encourages loving relationships. Spiritual camaraderie naturally follows, nourishing the Brajabasi spirit and fortifying your mission in this world.

As your disciples, we are called to serve others selflessly and carry on the responsibilities of your movement. In so doing we often set our own needs aside and forget that we, too, must receive in order to continue giving. Our inner sense of unworthiness so often becomes an obstacle to completing the sacrament of loving exchange.

Gratitude encourages self-worth, allowing us to humbly accept the support, kindness, and goodness that life offers. When we trust the perfect and wholesome nature of blessings themselves, we are freed from the need to know what will come next.

From such acceptance emerges a feeling of wholeness. The mind no longer chases what it imagines to be lacking as the abundance intrinsically present is revealed. Even when worries attempt to resurface, we need only look to the peace and fullness already within us.

With this clarity, gratitude becomes a feature of spiritual vision. Every experience is welcomed – whether the highest ecstasy or deepest disappointment – as a gift of grace.

We traverse seasons when Kṛṣṇa showers down such undeserved goodness to encourage us. These are complemented by episodes when His reciprocation seems withheld, as if to test our patience. These alternating experiences strengthen our faith, develop our perseverance, forge our character, and fortify our hope.

Whenever darkness gathers and life seems overwhelming, we are invited to rediscover the deep peace within our souls. This inner life is a gift from you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Gratitude transforms our inner realm which, in turn, shapes our outer landscape. As we embody it, our consciousness becomes inclined toward bhakti. Tensions melt away as we remember that every morning offers a new beginning, rich with opportunity to commune with you. By reconnecting to the heart and quieting the mind, we enter a reality where life grows brighter each day, revealing a higher truth and deeper perspective.

Though the distance is vast between where we are and where we long to be, a bridge is built with consistent gratitude. This practice connects us to what is not yet ours through an energetic signature which allows us to draw emotionally from, and resonate spiritually with, a divine account, to which we have a claim, even while full access to it depends upon our reaching spiritual maturity.

A perfectly enlightened Kṛṣṇa conscious soul resonates with the pulse of gratitude, harmonizes with the mellows of Vrindavan, and attunes to Kṛṣṇa's heart. Such is the nature of devotees following in your footsteps, leading us back to home, back to Godhead.

When we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, assured that it will bring perfection, we might initially be surprised to discover that we are, in truth, asking Kṛṣṇa to take away the very attachments we hold so dear. As our false self hides behind the mask of self-deception, the soul comes to realize gradually how Kṛṣṇa answers our prayers by relieving us from the anxiety and labor of defending an artificial facade. We then come to see how heavily we are burdened with pride, pretense, misdirected plans, and excessive comforts. How wonderful are Kṛṣṇa's arrangements to set us free! How perfectly He prepares us to enter our own unique and special role in fulfilling His purpose.

The devotees' joyful praise of the Lord, even as He dismantles their material prospects, serves among the finest testimonials of practicing what one preaches and embodying what one believes. With every loss, disappointment, heartbreak, and betrayal, we are being lovingly tested. Will we choose resentment, which hardens

the heart, or gratitude, which softens it? If we truly desire to please and serve the Lord in a substantial manner, we will rejoice in the personal involvement of our most loving Deity as He prepares us to serve as instruments of His mercy.

You so masterfully planted the seed of gratitude within our consciousness during that most exceptional darshan, entrusting the tender creeper to our care. In retrospect, I see your response to the neighboring farmers as a suitable parable for us – a spiritual message cloaked within an agricultural context. What a perfect lesson for your pioneers on the spiritual frontier.

This pastime has helped us develop the proper consciousness required for undergoing the challenging paradigm shift that accompanies a second birth. To navigate such a metamorphosis, we are wholly dependent on the illumination dawning in your darshan, further nourished by the purifying shower of your divine grace.

The innermost lesson of brahma-vimohana-līlā has descended intact through the paramparā to be personally conveyed to us by you. Whenever I feel the need for additional inspiration, I simply return to that unforgettable darshan.

We have come to see gratitude as greater than thought and more dynamic than feeling. It is, in truth, a sublime potency accessible through personal choice. Its effect is evident in how it opens a space within that invites grace to blossom.

The gratitude that fructified in Brahmā following his internal dialogue with Śrī Gopāla catalyzed his appearance as Haridāsa Ṭhākura. As the nāmācārya, he perfectly embodies the ripened fruit of gratefulness, facilitating the will of the Golden Avatar.

With you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, Lord Caitanya's līlā blooms abundantly, dancing joyfully to the breath of life, the treasure of Vrindavan – the *mahā-mantra* – received through your saṅkīrtana mission. Your message has awakened countless sleeping souls with the timeless hymn of the holy names as you sang them to this world.

And so, uplifted by the most confidential hymn of Vṛndā's forest, we experience renewed communion with you every time we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. In following the sacred path you revealed, while aspiring to reach the final destination where you now await, your darshan grows brighter and clearer with every passing year.

Even while everything in this mortal world fades away, we cherish your enduring, vibrant shelter in the golden warmth of vāṇī-sevā. Through your pastimes and precepts, we become active

participants in Lord Caitanya's līlā, revealing the supreme abode and goal of life, continuing to expand through your enduring influence – *living still in sound*.

Your eternally grateful servant,

Varṣāṇa Swami
Initiation: 1973—New Vrindaban, West Virginia, USA

Devamrita Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please allow me to offer my prostrated obeisances at your divine lotus feet.

Garlanding the world with Śrī Gaurāṅga's mercy, you circled this planet fourteen times in twelve years, gracing every habitable continent. The histories and diaries of your miraculous travels will enthrall devotee-readers for generations far into the future. More striking than even the fascinating details are the transformative impacts.

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 9.360) gives a glimpse of the peak possibilities of that transcendent outcome on the devoted heart. Recounting Mahāprabhu's travels, especially Lord Caitanya's movements throughout South India, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī proclaims: "Whoever hears of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's pilgrimage to various holy places attains the riches of very deep ecstatic love."

As the pure servitor of Śrī Gaurāṅga, you are of the same quality as Him, due to your one-hundred-percent surrender to Him. Therefore, who can calculate the spiritual effect of absorbed, dedicated hearing of your activities? May I always meditate on your ocean of loving devotional service as you unflaggingly traversed the globe at such an advanced age.

> The more one hears the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu with faith, analytically studying them, the more one attains the ecstatic riches of love of Godhead. (*Cc* Madhya 9.364)

Let us endlessly analyze your years physically manifest with us as we strive to study your instructions, your goals, your perseverance.

In your books you have presented such an astonishing standard

of pure bhakti – a touchstone that you not only advocated but also personally demonstrated: "'My dear Lord, I am fully satisfied with whatever You have given me or not given me. I have nothing to ask from You, for I am fully satisfied to be engaged in Your service.' This is the mentality of a pure devotee, who does not want anything, material or spiritual, from the Personality of Godhead . . . One who is absorbed in *kṛṣṇa-bhāvanāmṛta* has no material benefits to ask from Kṛṣṇa. Instead, such a person prays to the Lord for the benediction of being able to spread His glories all over the world. *Mama janmani janmanīśvare bhavatād bhaktir ahaitukī tvayi.* A Kṛṣṇa conscious person does not even want to stop his cycle of birth and death. He simply prays, 'I may take birth as You like, but my only prayer is that I may be engaged in Your service.'" (*SB* 9.9.45, purport)

In your closing words to chapter 9 of the *Madhya-līlā,* you write: "As usual the author concludes the chapter by reciting the names of Rūpa and Raghunātha and reinstating himself at their lotus feet."

Every year a Vyāsa-pūjā offering to you is an opportunity to reinstate myself at your lotus feet. I beg you to continue accepting my attempts at service.

Aspiring to be your qualified servant,

Devamrita Swami
Initiation: 1974, January—New York, USA

Mahādyuti Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

Your glories, of course, are unlimited, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Yet for this homage I'll comment briefly on only one outstanding feature of your transcendentally genius vision – a feature that may be unknown to many of your followers.

Śrutakīrti Dāsa told me that you mentioned to him that you were

successful because you made "the adjustment" to allow women to live in the temples. What a bold and revolutionary departure from the culture from which you came! And what a startling assertion that this adjustment was integral to your success!

Though certainly you respected Vedic culture and tradition, and though you were keen on establishing *varṇāśrama-dharma,* you were obviously much more concerned with whatever was most effective for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the prime necessity for every human being.

In your purport to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta,* Madhya 23.105, you write, "What is possible in one country may not be possible in another. The *ācārya's* duty is to accept the essence of devotional service." That, indeed, is the duty you accepted, Śrīla Prabhupāda – according to time, place, and circumstance – in American, European, Australian, and other societies, where men and women tend to mix freely.

Besides allowing women to live in the temples, you engaged them in the same activities in which you engaged the men – especially in preaching. Sometimes you insisted on their lecturing and leading kirtans, even in the presence of *sannyāsīs,* and even in India, where the audience sometimes numbered in the thousands.

"Women in our movement can also preach very nicely," you wrote to Mālatī Devī Dāsī on 25 December 1974. "Actually male and female bodies, these are just outward designations.… The qualification for leading class is how much one understands about Krsna and surrendering to the process. Not whether one is male or female."

You clearly affirmed that "these women are not ordinary women. They are preachers. They are preachers. They are Vaiṣṇava. By their association, one becomes a Vaiṣṇava." (Morning walk, Bombay, 27 March 1974)

And Mādhavānanda Dāsa recalls that at the end of a morning walk in Calcutta in 1972, when some *brahmacārīs* had been complaining about the presence of women in the temple, you corrected them, saying, "If you associate with these women, you will go back to Godhead."

Your consistent care and respect for these ladies spurred them to perform colossal amounts of high-quality service for your movement. They often endured severe austerities, such as traveling in vans in freezing weather and tolerating the abuse of lusty men, just to distribute your books. They also, most unfortunately, had to endure, contrary to your wishes, disrespect from and marginalizing

by many of your male disciples.

As your godbrothers criticized you for allowing ladies to live in the temples, some of my godbrothers will surely criticize me for making this topic the focus of my homage to you. I take solace, however, in your well-known instruction: "Do as I do." I am simply trying to follow in your footsteps, which I am absolutely certain are progressing in the right direction and in the most effective and blissful way.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and all your transcendentally genius preaching "adjustments"!

Your faithful disciple,

Mahādyuti Swami
Initiation: 1974, January—Puerto Rico

Dhaneśvara Dāsa Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer ten million *praṇāms* at your lotus feet.

Only by your mercy and divine grace, this entire world will soon blossom into a mini Golden Age, an age where spirituality is the focus of every person's life. I can see it coming now, just as I had imagined it when I first joined your movement. I remember thinking that our society was so wonderful and joyful that soon nobody could resist being drawn into the circle of bliss, and that our Krishna consciousness movement would just keep growing and growing.

And it will, despite the almost 50 year pause, I can see it in the not too distant future, the same way that you could see it in the future 70 years ago.

Due to the strong senses of our youth, and inexperience in life, we wanted to enjoy this world, unable to see it as it actually is. But, as a loving father, you taught us to see this world clearly through your eyes, and through the eyes of *śāstra*, our youthful impulses tempered by our commitments to you.

By dint of your position as an exalted devotee of Lord Krishna, you could see this world as it is. And, by your grace, from your purports and writing, we also learned to see this world *as it is*, both in terms of its dangers, and *as it should be*, with everything used in the service of Lord Śrī Krishna.

Exactly 70 years ago this month, in 1956, in your *Back to Godhead* magazine, you published a very prescient article titled '*Godless Civilization*,' from which I would like to quote a short excerpt:

> When the basic principle of human civilization is lost sight of by the **Naṣṭātmanas**, the whole campaign of advancement of learning becomes a colossal hoax. Blind materialism means loss of spiritual sight. As such the present civilization of blind materialism is a kind of polished animalism leading the people to **varieties of dangerous work** for nobody's benefit. Both the leaders and the followers are gliding towards a great fall down... By the grace of the illusory energy of Godhead we are now engaged more and more in the dangerous type of work in this machine-age. The machine-age is the result of dangerous type of work. When we leave aside the culture of spiritualism, we are entangled in the dangerous type of work. Nobody can live for a moment without work and therefore when finer elements are made to stop working, gross materialism occupies the devil's brain. The result is that we have now come to the age of nuclear weapons for the destruction of material civilization. By the law of nature, the nuclear weapons have been produced for crushing the result of blind-materialism... The peace move of different powers of the world, by the false gesture of suspending the experiments of dangerous weapons—may be very much pleasing to the comparatively weak nations—but these temporary peace-moves will prove useless by the law of material nature. When the dangerous weapons are produced, they must be utilised for annihilation of blind materialism by the plan of the **Daivī Māyā** or the external energy of Godhead. The problem can be solved when they are taught about their spiritual identity.
>
> The soul-killing civilization is progressively taking to the dangerous type of work by invention of huge mechanical means. The illusory energy is creating this atmosphere for blind materialism and on the other hand she is arranging for their destruction also. Such opposite methods are called illusory energy. The human energy is thus misused for breaking the same thing which is produced by the same

> energy. It is something like blazing the fire and extinguish it by pouring water simultaneously—a sign of insanity or spoiling the valuable human energy meant for spiritual culture. History has been repeated so many times and many, many leaders of materialism like Napoleon, Hitler and others now remain in name only without any sign of the material progress planned by them. De-Stalinisation has already begun in Russia. Nobody is enjoying the result of civilization created by atheists like Rāvaṇa, Kansa, Aurangzeb, Napoleon or Hitler. **Everything is in oblivion and this teaches us the lesson that the materialistic plans of the present age will also meet with the same fate after a lapse of 50 years. Therefore, blind materialism does not bring in any permanent relief in the world.**

Allowing for a 20-year period of grace, the materialistic plans of the present age are coming to an end, and symptoms of the unraveling are seen everywhere:

Due to recent events in the United States everyone that is paying attention realizes that this country, and indeed the entire world, is controlled by Rākṣasas who eat the flesh of children, and thus the citizens, disgusted by the criminal politicians, want nothing to do with the government.

Everyone who is paying attention can see that, what you called an artificial civilization, is actually a fake civilization: fake money, fake food, fake medicine, fake videos, fake images, fake people, fake relationships, fake love, and on and on. It's all fake! In other words, the average person now sees this world as illusion, or māyā.

Western Europe is voluntarily committing suicide by inviting hordes of foreigners to destroy their culture and also reducing their electrical production to curb fake global warming.

The world is now at the threshold of deindustrialization due to the coming scarcity of oil – the very lifeblood that supports every aspect of this fake materialistic society.

And as soon as the oil scarcity hits the tripping point, the economy collapses, taking this soul-killing civilization to its knees.

And in just a few short years as AI and robotics come online there will be no need for people, who will then lose their jobs by the millions

And as the finale, as you predicted, the demons will destroy each other and much of the world.

There is no escape from this final end.

And then?

Then the second half of your movement will begin—fulfilling your desire, and the desire of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākur, and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur, to establish the spiritual culture of *Daiva-varṇāśrama*.

Seeing this inevitable wonderful result, is there any need to continue with anything to do with this civilization, as if tomorrow will be the same as yesterday? It is time now for all devotees to move toward that wonderful future.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for blessing us with the ability to see this and prepare for it. We pray for your continued blessings to give birth to this wonderful spiritual culture.

Please keep me forever engaged in the service of your lotus feet.

Your eternally grateful disciple,

Dhaneśvara Dāsa Goswami
Initiation: 1974, April—Gainesville, Florida, USA

Nirañjana Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

namas te sārasvate 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 Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

I was recently captivated by a verse and commentary I read while discussing *Śrī Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta* with a godbrother.

Gopa-kumāra said something to the Mathurā *brāhmaṇa* that left a deep impression on me.

atyajaṁś ca japaṁ svīyam akṛtajñatva-śaṅkayā
vismartuṁ naiva śaknomi vraja-bhūmim imāṁ kvacit

"For fear of being ungrateful, I never gave up my *japa,* nor for a moment was I able to forget this Vraja-bhūmi." (*Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* 2.2.28)

I believe it was the first time that I reflected deeply on the fear of being ungrateful. Of course, I've not given up my *japa*. But from the commentary on this verse, I've learned that I still have something to be fearful about – the right mentality I should be cultivating while chanting my *japa*.

In the commentary to the above *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* verse, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī elaborates:

> Wanting to avoid being ungrateful, Gopa-kumāra never stopped chanting. He might justify abandoning the mantra only after attaining its final goal. If he were to stop chanting before then, he would not discover the mantra's full benefits. Thus, to stop the chanting prematurely would amount to ingratitude, for without having bothered to receive all the mantra's benefits, how could he properly acknowledge them?

In other words, without realizing the mantra's full benefits, especially since his spiritual master blessed him by saying, "May you develop the right mentality for tasting the mantra's fruit," chanting without this goal in mind would have been tantamount to ingratitude. Gopa-kumāra, therefore, not only never stopped chanting, but he never stopped meditating on his goal, which manifested in his ever-blossoming desire for a spontaneous and intimate friendship with Śrī Madana-gopāla.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in a Montreal lecture on October 23, 1968, you said: "We should be always fearful that 'Māyā may not catch me.'" I am fearful of *māyā,* but unfortunately, not enough. However, I now understand that I should also be fearful about being ungrateful, even though you've given us everything we need for pure devotional service.

On May 17, 1977, when you arrived for your last visit to the Krishna-Balaram Mandir, you delivered to your assembled disciples

a short but very instructive address:

> So there is nothing to be said new. Whatever I have to speak, I have spoken in my books. Now you try to understand it and continue your endeavor. Whether I am present or not present doesn't matter. As Kṛṣṇa is living eternally, similarly, living being also lives eternally. But *kīrtir yasya sa jīvati:*
>
> "One who has done service to the Lord lives forever." So you have been taught to serve Kṛṣṇa, and with Kṛṣṇa we'll live eternally. Our life is eternal.
>
> *Na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre*. A temporary disappearance of this body, it doesn't matter. Body is meant for disappearance.
>
> *Tathā dehāntara-prāptiḥ*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, from these words I have understood that you taught us and will continue to teach us everything we need to serve Kṛṣṇa. But I need to be purer in my service to learn from you how to live with Kṛṣṇa eternally.

We have your books, the holy names, your temples, your *vāṇī*, and your example, which is so dear to our hearts. We have everything you left on this side of the vast ocean of material existence – your bhakti movement – the boat for crossing over the material ocean to the other side. Speaking for myself, however, I know I haven't taken full advantage of all that you've given.

Once, during your visit to Dallas, one of your disciples stood up and asked you, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, how can I repay you?" Your response was concise and to the point: "Just remain obliged."

On this most auspicious day of your divine appearance in this material world, I therefore fall at your lotus feet and beg you to please bless me to become fearless, with the right mentality for pleasing you.

Please make me your servant eternally,

Nirañjana Swami
Initiation: 1974, May—Boston, USA

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

I was born in the darkest ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torchlight of knowledge.

śrī-caitanya-mano-'bhīṣṭaṁ sthāpitaṁ yena bhūtale
svayaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ dadāti sva-padāntikam

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

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

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

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

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

OṀ SURABHYAI NAMAḤ!

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet on this your 130th Anniversary Appearance Day in this world.

The year 2026 marks a significant date for your ISKCON society as we celebrate the 60th year anniversary of your ISKCON being incorporated in the year 1966. The year 2026 is significant for me personally as I commemorate my 50th year anniversary arriving in your Śrīdhām Māyāpur on March 10th 1976. I was 29 years old, having served two years at your ISKCON Ottawa temple in Canada. And this year, as you did in the year 1976, I will soon reach 80 years of age. How time has passed so quickly.

I count my blessings for having taken shelter at your lotus

feet. Every time I listen to your lectures I marvel at your clarity of thought and your conviction in presenting so brilliantly the science and philosophy of Krishna consciousness. Your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* continues to attract the minds and attention of more and more conditioned souls. Just yesterday here in Phnom Penh, in the Kingdom of Cambodia, as a small group of devotees were gathered by the Mekong Riverside, a young man from the Congo by the name Dave happened to notice your Bhagavad-gītā on our book table. He was so happy and so spontaneous that without any urging on our part he began glorifying over our microphone the Bhagavad-gītā that he had only discovered last year when visiting India for the first time.

I can only express my gratitude for your causeless mercy bestowed upon me and upon so many other conditioned souls who would have otherwise continued to loiter and suffer in this forsaken material world. Thank you for showing so much compassion and love to the whole of humanity by bringing Krishna consciousness to the western world. Your universal message of peace and love will resonate more and more in the hearts of a people who continue to experience ever increasing despair and anxiety as the world continues on its spiral dive of surging calamities and destruction. Your teachings and the Vedic knowledge are the only solace and remedy for a troubled humanity.

To help establish universal love and brotherhood you have formulated so simply and clearly three illuminating thoughts in your essay of Gītā Nagari: 1) the Fatherhood of Godhead, 2) the Motherhood of Nature, and 3) the Childhood of all living entities. Who cannot but fail to accept and endorse these simple basic truths and concepts.

This year, by your blessings, I will venture into a new venture by helping to introduce a global awareness to both devotees and non-devotees, introducing a theme that is dear to you and that is central to re-establishing our forgotten Vedic culture of *Daiva Varṇāśrama Dharma*. Exactly eleven years ago in 2015 while I was serving as Minister for the IDVM-India Varṇāśrama Mission, we inaugurated the twelve year marathon called "OṀ Śrī Surabhi Campaign". Since that campaign will end when we will celebrate the last of golden jubilees, your 50th Disappearance Day in November 2027, which will also mark the shifting of the Deities in Śrīdhām Māyāpur to the TOVP, in the same spirit to educate devotees and the general

public about the three gifts of nature to mankind, namely 1) cows, 2) land, and 3) knowledge, we will launch the global initiative having as theme "Make Vṛndāvana Villages". You have on occasion commended Gandhi for his teachings on "Village Organisation". In that context, on May 7th this year a group of devotees will inaugurate a new website by the name www.mvv.global as well as a new App called "Divine Shelter".

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are my divine shelter. I would be totally lost without that shelter. Please kindly allow me to serve you in whatever humble way I can. My days in this body are limited. Since your Vyāsa-pūjā last year, already so many of your early disciples, my godbrothers and godsisters have left this material world to join you in your continued pastimes. I pray that I also get that opportunity whenever you call me to join you and my godbrothers in serving your mission wherever that may be.

I cannot sufficiently nor adequately express my gratitude at this gift of devotional service you have given to me. Please kindly forgive my many shortcomings and offenses I may be committing in serving you. Kindly help me to develop meekness and humility in serving your mission. I am ever grateful and obliged to Your Divine Grace for your kindness upon me.

Please keep me sheltered at the dust of your lotus feet. May you continue to allow me to serve in your glorious mission life after life.

Your eternal servant,

Bhakti Rāghava Swami
Initiation: 1974, July—New Vrindaban, West Virginia, USA

Dhanurdhara Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!

I spend a good part of the year in Śrī Govardhan. The great fortune of living here is getting the association of people with deep attachment to the holy name and authentic love for Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Krishna. Sometimes I am fortunate that these people share something of their inner life with me. Knowing them, I then reflect on what is the foundation of their success. It is inevitably their unshakeable faith in you which includes their initiating spiritual

masters, your books, and service to your mission. They are junior to me in the sense they are not your direct disciples, but they are no doubt your followers and their association deepens my faith in the path of perfection you have given me. You have given us everything. I pray one day to fully take avail of your mercy. I can only bow my head a thousand times in the deepest gratitude for all you have given, especially the association of your followers, both as *sādhakas* (those deep in their spiritual practice) and *sevakas* (those deep in their active devotional service), who walk the path of perfection in your footsteps for me to follow. I am eternally grateful.

Your servant,

Dhanurdhara Swami
Initiation: 1974, November—Dallas, Texas, USA

Guru Prasad Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet, which are the maximum shelter for mankind. All glories to your spotless ananya-bhakti, the treasure house of Lord Caitanya's mercy and the best hope for the suffering souls in Kali-yuga.

Verses from *Bhagavad-gītā* 12.13–20 constitute the qualities found in those who are dearest to Kṛṣṇa. Some of them are understandable, some seem very difficult, and others appear practically impossible. But you personally demonstrated all of them with ease in your actions. *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* Madhya-līlā 22.78–80 lists twenty-six qualities of a devotee, which are easily found in your interactions while present with us in this world. You perfectly embody the traits described in the *Upadeśāmṛta,* what to speak of the descriptions attributed to a topmost pure devotee in *The Nectar of Devotion*.

In the prayers of Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja, he states that one should always be grateful and surrendered to the spiritual master. With such qualities, how can one not surrender? Association with devotees is the major cause of increasing bhakti and acquiring those qualities to some minute degree. That is my prayer to you, along with my acute desire to serve you better and with full consciousness.

Your most unworthy servant,

Candraśekhara Swami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
I am not much, but I am all that I've got.
So let me serve you
So let me work with that
As I am now, let me continue…
The more I go forward, the farther back I am revealed to be
The highest goal, is never close
What should anyone expect?
The heart is deep and restricted
Haunted by broken dreams of past images
All in a line they come to look at me
Like onlookers watch a baby monkey in a zoo
Hard to believe I really lived this life
Fleeting whack-a-doodle experiences hung on a wall
Like paintings in a gallery commissioned without
an artistic theme
The heart is deep and restricted
It will not change soon
But I will not worry
This ad-hoc life will beat me on rocks
Like clothes slapped on the bank
Just one thing, let me focus on hearing Krishna's name
The heart is deep and restricted
Krishna, I know now, there is nowhere else to go
Even though I am nowhere right now
I have left all the familiar lighthouses
I have no regrets
Though Your lighthouse is dim

It is the only one in sight
The heart is deep and restricted
No use in wondering when it will dance
No use in wondering when it will dance
But dance it will, one fine day
I wanted to be great, but I am surely small
Take that, my dear ego
Just do my duty and walk forward one more day
Everything is scientifically arranged for me
The thorn and the rose
The heart is deep and restricted
I know it is in there somewhere
Though I have no real proof
Look, look, stupid mind!!
See there are so many simply serving
Can't you be like them!
The heart is deep and restricted
If I could find it, I would surely give it to you
One day my heart will find me
And I will give it to you…

Your servant,

Candraśekhara Swami
Initiation: 1976, November—California, USA

Vedavyāsapriya Swami

My revered spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my heartfelt obeisances hundreds of times. I bow down to Your Divine Grace's lotus feet as my ultimate shelter. At my advanced age, what else can I do except surrender to your desire in a one-pointed service to please you and my godbrothers, who are overseeing me?

Although the progress is relatively slow in fundraising, this is not dampening my resolve to accomplish the manifestation of a magnanimous temple of your glorious preaching of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Thailand. Simply depending on Your Divine Grace, I want to breathe my last after completion of this project. I have been praying to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa to grant my desire.

Meanwhile, I want to follow in your footsteps – how you exhibited your presence and the preaching that I witnessed in 1976 in New York. Who can imitate you, an empowered incarnation? But you did say "Do as I do" and "Repeat after me." This encourages me even though I am disqualified on my own. Will you, my master, kick me out, a blind imitator of yours?

In my childhood I was known as an obstinate boy. Am I sticking to the temple project in Thailand with my childhood obstinacy? Is obstinacy called *resolve*? I want to purify my thoughts by begging for your grace, which is divine! On this auspicious day of your appearance, I beg you to shower your mercy on me so that I offer my life at your lotus feet birth after birth.

Your selfish and last-minute disciple,

Vedavyāsapriya Swami

Initiation: 1977, October—New York, USA

TRIBUTES BY INITIATED DISCIPLES

Mālatī Devī Dāsī

Dear beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my prostrated obeisances to your lotus feet again and again. Each time I see your beautiful form and effulgent face I am reminded of how you miraculously, single-handedly saved us, your errant disciples, from many forms of degraded life and illusions.

This year, many devotees were surprised and hurt by a particularly abrupt decision from the GBC with a potentially grave impact on your female disciples. Many quotes were being put forth from both sides, the interpretation of which appeared to support each side's particular understanding, while often appearing to be conflicting. At the heart of it for most of the ladies in ISKCON was an unhidden attempt to thwart your very instructions and examples. In other words, ladies would be taken as inferior and no longer eligible for a wide range of services, particularly brahminical and administrative services, foremost.

Since our experiences with you as your spiritual daughters were without hindrances from you, it is especially difficult and painful to hear these things. You were very broad-minded and generous in how you approached different situations, and did not give ultimatums that would be sources of division or barriers to our practice of bhakti in female bodies. You avoided black and white situations, although your students were often not so capable of expanding what they would see in narrow dimensions.

From your purport to *Cc* Madhya 7.128, you wrote: "Every person must get married. Every woman, especially, must get married." That became a misunderstood hammer in the lives of unmarried female devotees, with forced marriages as a result. However, your actual approach was anything but heavy. Some examples:

> **Prabhupāda:** If one can remain without marriage, that is the first class [referring to *brahmacārīs*].
>
> **Rūpānuga:** Women also?
>
> **Prabhupāda:** Women also. What is the use of this material husband? Make Kṛṣṇa husband. Kṛṣṇa's prepared to become everything – love Him as husband, love Him as son, love Him as friend. (Room conversation, 6 July 1976, Washington, DC)

Here, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you're broad-minded and encompassing, not small-minded and narrow. Your idea was that we become Kṛṣṇa conscious, not that we become married, particularly, and throughout your writings and talks, you left room for individuality in how we achieve Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Another example:

> If one becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious, then she doesn't require husband. She knows that 'Kṛṣṇa is my protector. Why shall I artificially seek after father or husband?' And what protection for a few days either the father or the son or the husband may give? Real protection is Kṛṣṇa. (Conversation, 7 January 1977, Bombay)

You gave Nandalal Dāsī a small silver Kṛṣṇa and told her to make Him her husband, and she did that. There are many practical examples in your movement of women who are not protected by a father, husband, or son: myself, Mukhya, Kaiśorī, Praśānta, Viśākhā Priyā, to name but a few. Each of us not only feels fully protected by you, but we also make significant contributions to ISKCON.

You replied to a concerned Śilāvatī:

> The actual system is that the husband is Spiritual Master to his wife, but if the wife can bring her husband into practicing this process, then it is all right that the husband accepts wife as Spiritual Master. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu has said that anyone who knows the science of Krishna, that person should be accepted as Spiritual Master, regardless of any material so-called qualifications, such as rich or poor, man or woman, or brahmana or sudra. (Letter to Silavati, 14 June 1969)

In this letter, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you affirm the precedent set by the Nāga-patnīs and the wives of the *brāhmaṇas*. We're meant to be personal, to appreciate one another's qualities, and to avoid prejudging others based on gender stereotypes (which can go both ways).

You pointed out that the *brāhmaṇa* husbands noted that their wives, having perfected their transcendental attachment for Kṛṣṇa, did not have even a trace of attachment for home, husband, children, and so forth. Therefore, from that day on, the husbands accepted those women as their worshipable spiritual masters and no longer

thought of them as their wives. Clearly, the scriptures, like Kṛṣṇa, direct us past bodily designations to the essence of each individual – toward his or her bhakti.

You pointed out the difference between generalizations or guidelines meant to give us informed direction. Generalizations, by definition, are inferred from specific cases but not meant to be applied indiscriminately, whereas universal statements (such as "we are spirit souls)" are true in every circumstance.

A few examples of your magnanimous inclusive nature in engaging your spiritual daughters:

At the cornerstone-laying ceremony in Mayapur, you asked me to speak – in front of your elderly godbrothers and our own budding *sannyāsīs*.

Śrīmatī Dāsī directly assisted you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, during the Juhu cornerstone ceremony when Ananta Śeṣa was being installed.

Here is a conversation you had with Atreya Ṛṣi Dāsa:

> **Prabhupāda:** Both of them are very intelligent. And Nandarāṇī is more intelligent than her husband. (*laughs*) I know that.
>
> **Atreya Ṛṣi:** I find that he is very intelligent, Śrīla Prabhupāda.
>
> **Prabhupāda:** Ah, Dayānanda.
>
> **Atreya Ṛṣi:** Yes.
>
> **Prabhupāda:** He is intelligent, but Nandarāṇī is still more intelligent. (*laughs*) I know that. Both of them are intelligent, but this girl appears to be more intelligent." (Room conversation, 16 July 1976, New York)
>
> One of your servants commented that "Aniruddha is intelligent like his father [Pradyumna]." You replied, "No, intelligent like mother. She is more intelligent."

You showed us that to understand the statement that "women are less intelligent" we need to consider what "intelligence" means in context. In Sanskrit, there are several words translated as "intelligence." One is *buddhi*, which refers to the ability to analyze, judge, or discern. Another is *medhā.* In the tenth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa

lists *medhā* among seven feminine qualities. *Medhā* means "mental vigor, wisdom, prudence."

From your purport to *Bg*. 10.34:

> The ability not only to read many books on different subject matters *but to understand them and apply them when necessary is intelligence* (*medhā*), another opulence.

Thus, these are broad classifications – *buddhi:* analytical intelligence; *medhā:* nourishing, practical intelligence.

However, women and men each have both *buddhi* and *medhā;* it's just a matter of the degree of each. You taught us to avoid jumping to conclusions about a person or a group of persons based on what body they are wearing around their intelligence. One of the beauties of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is that it sees past all bodily and mental differences to a higher, spiritual truth. When we become devotees, we transcend all designations. Thus, Kṛṣṇa consciousness can unite all people, whatever their religion, race, nationality, age, or gender. The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is meant to be at the forefront of implementing equal vision.

Then, there is what many consider a very heavy, incriminating statement: "Never place your faith in a woman or politician." (Cāṇakya Paṇḍita, whom you quote a number of times) Yamunā Devī Dāsī comments: "I was present on four occasions when Śrīla Prabhupāda repeated the Cāṇakya adage, 'Never trust a woman or a politician.' On each occasion, Śrīla Prabhupāda looked me in the eye. On the last occasion, Bombay 1973, he quoted the saying, heartily laughing in front of a small group of men. Then he said: 'What do you think, Yamunā?' Immediately I said: 'Of course it is true, Śrīla Prabhupāda,' whereupon he became grave, looked at me with great feeling, saying, 'But you are not a woman; you are a Vaiṣṇava.'"

(Note: Cāṇakya Paṇḍita was a member of the court in his time. In those days, much like these days, there were many court-related political intrigues. So it was that one party might send in a beautiful young woman who had been trained to take poison and seduce a particular foe, and when they'd become engaged in intimate activities, she would kiss him and transfer her poisonous saliva, killing the fellow. So, this statement about never trusting a woman or a politician was never intended to describe *all* women as untrustworthy.)

Śrīla Prabhupāda's consistent goal was to help us transcend

material designations. He wanted to see each of us advance spiritually. Women, *śūdras,* and *vaiśyas* are ordinarily regarded as less intelligent, but if one takes to Kṛṣṇa consciousness one is the most intelligent.

> Although Kuntī had the body of a woman, she was a devotee. Therefore she was not like an ordinary unintelligent woman. Rather, she was the most intelligent, for she recognized Kṛṣṇa to be the Supreme Godhead. (*Teachings of Queen Kuntī,* chapter 3)

From Kṛṣṇa's viewpoint, until we're elevated to spiritual consciousness, we're conditioned and fallen. From that viewpoint, those who are spiritually inclined are more intelligent than those who aren't, and *on the spiritual platform, everyone is equal*. Kṛṣṇa does not discriminate.

According to the teachings of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as taught by you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, everyone, regardless of his or her material designation, has the potential to attain the highest spiritual position, to become a pure devotee. Pure Vaiṣṇavas are beyond all designations and classifications, and in their purest state, they see everyone else as beyond all designations and classifications as well. The association of such persons is uplifting. You endearingly said about your female disciples: "These women are not ordinary women. They are preachers. They are Vaiṣṇavas. By their association one becomes a Vaiṣṇava." (Calcutta)

Kṛṣṇa consciousness means facilitating all devotees so they remain enthusiastic and determined to grow to their full potential. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you offered us such facility, and we, your followers, are meant to offer the same Kṛṣṇa conscious facility to others.

Protection in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is ultimately meant to help one advance spiritually:

> But the protection of Kṛṣṇa is that you are perpetually being protected. *Tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma naiti.* You don't get any more material body. That is real protection. (Morning walk, 19 September 1972, Los Angeles)

To serve in the association of Kṛṣṇa's sincere devotees is a form of protection. In such an environment, women fully use their talents and proclivities in Kṛṣṇa's devotional service, and that absorption is another form of protection.

You boldly proclaimed: "Women should be always protected. Protection does not mean negligence. Protection means to give her all facilities. That is protection." (Lecture on *SB* 3.28.18, 27 October 1975, Nairobi)

As pointed out by Viśākhā Devī Dāsī, your brilliant spiritual daughter in her astute writings, Śrīla Prabhupāda protected his spiritual daughters by educating us about our true identities as spirit souls engaging us in devotional service, a process by which we can attain liberation from death and rebirth, the ultimate protection.

Today I had the good fortune to meet with several godsisters, and each one of us expressed our gratitude to you for saving us from the material world and introducing us to Kṛṣṇa consciousness through your loving guidance and protection. Thus, we remain always joyfully in your debt.

With all of the sincerity that I have in my heart,
I gratefully remain your eternal dāsī,

Mālatī Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1967, February—San Francisco, USA

Dayānanda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

My mediation on you is generally contained within my service to you. Thus, in these Vyāsa-pūjā offerings, I generally report my current service.

However, I think that is not the true spirit of singing your glories. I would thus like to submit Hayagrīva's old poem, which wonderfully praised you and your amazing deeds:

'I offer my humble obeisances unto His Divine Grace Prabhupāda A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa on this earth, having taken shelter of the lotus feet of that ever-youthful, beautiful, transcendental Lord,

who, alone, in his seventieth year, threw family, society, friendship, love to the wind, left mother India and set sail around the earth to foreign, unknown shores because his spiritual master spoke to him in a dream,

who carried the glorious message of the munificent Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu to a nation plagued with the leprosy of voidism and impersonalism,

who brought an ageless message of love of Godhead,

who landed in Manhattan with saffron robes, a suitcase and seven dollars and wondered at māyā's skyscrapers and empty, noisy dreams,

who, with white, pointed holyman shoes, walked through the snow to Times Square and laughed at Kali's cinema ads,

who accepted residence with hashish-yogis who believed they were moving the sun and moon,

who played cymbals and chanted *Govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*, "I worship Govinda the Primeval Lord," explaining to void-meditators that Kṛṣṇa's transcendental body is unlimited, that He can extend His hand to all parts of His creation, that any one part of His body can perform all the actions of all the other parts, and that simply by glancing at nature He impregnated her with countless living entities and set the cosmic systems spinning and struck up the song of the universe,

who journeyed downtown, out of compassion, and set up quarters in Lower East Side narrow mice-ridden storefront and trusted Kṛṣṇa to bring next month's rent,

who opened the storefront doors even to Bowery derelicts and clashed cymbals and chanted Sanskrit hymns to God, whose vibrations caught the ears of young psychedelic middle class renegades searching for alternatives to their legacy of lies and materialism,

who had and everlastingly has infinite mercy, delivering it free of charge, a matchless gift, to whomever stops to hear,

who never, to my knowledge, turned one soul away, who effused them all with kindness, affection, truth,

who had mercy on my soul one bright July morning amidst the roaring Manhattan traffic of Houston and Bowery (Most holy spot! Transformed to Vaikuṇṭha by his feet! Bowery transformed to Vaikuṇṭha!),

who lectured every morning on Second Avenue and as the

gold of dawn lit his face played cymbals and chanted softly, careful not to awake the neighbours lest they pour hot water through the floorboards,

who opened *Bhagavad-gītā* and explained Śrī Kṛṣṇa's message verse by verse and set His names — *Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare* — on the lips of the young,

who, by contact only, warmed their hearts and lit the fires of love of God in their souls and smeared their eyes with the ointment of devotion,

who defied cheap popular adoration by truthfully telling the youth of America that to have Kṛṣṇa the soul must be pure, free of everything,

who supplanted the old white-bearded Judaic-Christian God with a beautiful, blue adolescent Boy and evoked gopī tears from the eyes of men,

who led his flock to Washington Square to chant, was invited off the grass by the cops, sat complacently anyway on the asphalt and Hare Kṛṣṇa'd as nervous sailors flicked their cigarettes,

who initiated his first dozen disciples with a fire sacrifice in his apartment, told them their real, spiritual names, chanted their beads, threw rice and ghee in the flames (Svāhā!) and sat smiling amidst the smoke as they coughed and ran to open the windows,

who listened, tolerant, to the threats of Jewish, Catholic and Protestant mothers accusing him of stealing their sons, and offered them bananas, apples, dates and tangerines and charmed them with his smile,

who every Sunday afternoon for a month sat down on the ground in Tompkins Square Park, pounded a bongo and chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa three hours straight while dancing angels dropped exhausted and Lower East Side Ukrainians and Poles stared uncomprehendingly and grumbled, who delivered a beautiful lecture on the spiritualization of energy to a thousand empty seats in midtown's Judson Hall while across the street hundreds flocked to hear the Boston Pops at Carnegie,

who patiently endured the red tape visa harassment of immigration offices and allayed the fears of his children as they swore to follow him to India,

who, on a sudden invitation, jumped a jet to Frisco, telling his New York disciples he'd return in a fortnight, and after four months'

absence laughed, "You have not reckoned a day of Brahmā."

who lectured a thousand Hell's Angels, hippies and teenieboppers in the strobe-flashing Avalon ballroom on the glories of Lord Caitanya's saṅkīrtana movement and, hands upraised, danced with poet Ginsberg, Moby Grape, Grateful Dead and Big Brother to Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa as Tim Leary looked on benevolently,

who chanted and danced in a ring with longhair boys, girls, beads, beards and headbands below the shadow of Hippie Hill in Golden Gate Park on bright March and April afternoons,

who lectured at Frisco Christian Yoga societies, to hippies in the Panhandle, to pacifists at Berkeley, to yellow, red, white and black nationalists, to anyone, everyone and no one in the streets and parks of Saint Francis, who taught the students of Palo Alto a new dance — the "swami" — which in fervor surpassed the frug and watusi, who led a nighttime firelit kīrtana at Frisco beach, roasted potatoes and sang starlit hymns to Nārada Muni,

who sauntered through Muir woods contemplating the redwoods and reflecting how tired their souls must be for having to stand so long without Kṛṣṇa, who, back in Manhattan, wore his body down chanting and glorifying the transcendental blue body of Kṛṣṇa, cooking and writing for Kṛṣṇa, and suffered a stroke that would have killed a mere man, left his body and then returned with the names of his love on his lips,

who sang to Yamarāj, Death, as he stood before him, sang songs of love to the lotus-eyed Boy with pink bottom'd feet, who, in Beth-Israel Hospital, sat like a helpless child as demonic needles came at him, tolerated them and listened to the Western diagnosis: "Tell him to take it easy. The old man prays too much," who, after five days, baffled obscene doctors by walking out the sick ward's pea-green walls to recuperate across country in the dazzling Pacific sands of Stinson Beach,

who sat amidst a labyrinth of kelp horns and sea shells proclaiming that there are only devotees and demons, naught between,

who composed Sanskrit odes to the Primeval Spirit whose eternal teenage lips play a flute,

who wept in a Frisco storefront — "Take to this process. I may be with you or not, but it is eternal." — and bade farewell to his students who thought he was going to India to die,

who bathed in the sun wearing a turban and flying on a carpet

as the Pacific crashed in his ears — "All glories to the assembled devotees! All glories to the Pacific Ocean!" — and finally, following the sun, whizzed to Delhi, Vṛndāvana and Calcutta to Ayur-Vedic physicians, who bathed in the Yamunā, where Lord Kṛṣṇa played His water games, and lived in Rādhā-Dāmodar Temple, where repose the samādhis of Rūpa and Jīva Gosvāmī,

who traveled through India, defying pneumonia, looking for a house for his American children,

who returned to the U.S. via Japan, trying to see the mayor of Tokyo to institute the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in a glass American-made skyscraper,

who finally proclaimed the Japanese "not ready," and returned to a deluge of tears and flowers in Frisco airport,

who, surpassing the Chinese, instituted a yearly festival of Jagannātha love down Haight Street through Golden Gate to the beach, nine miles, and led twenty thousand before the cart of Kṛṣṇa, Subhadrā and Balarāma, who bowed to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Seattle and sat in new glory on the New York Vyāsāsana, the floating dais of praise, as his children fell at his feet, who forgave his renegade disciples in Montreal with a garland of roses and a shower of tears,

who told golden beachboys in Honolulu and Ka'a'awa, Oahu that sun, beach and palm worship is all māyā, that golden flesh, after all, is just a bag covering blood, bone, stool, puss, bile, urine and guts, all rotting moment by moment,

who danced to Kṛṣṇa beneath the sun in L.A. and beneath the red, white and blue flashing neon illusions of Hollywood Blvd., Kali-yuga plastic America, and beneath the moon danced to Govinda and Rādhārāṇī in a Manhattan alley, searching for a possible temple,

who proclaimed natural vegetarian prasādamism to the nation's hamburger stands, the cow-eaters of America, the pig-eaters, bird-eaters, fish-eaters, lamb-eaters, threatening them with endless rebirths as tigers,

who declared that Colonel Sanders of the Fried Chickens of Kentucky would have to undergo a chicken-birth-life-and-death for every chicken smeared with his recipe making its saucy way into the all-devouring mouths of the American karmavores,

who burst two thousand Ohio State students out their skins and jumped for joy on his dais in the All-American City,

who, lauding the "big mṛdaṅgam," bought a press, said, "This is my heart," and printed his own books in Boston,

who, having chanted six years in temples of Vṛndāvana, India, where Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet danced, walked two miles up a West Virginia dirt road, stopping only once briefly for breath, and founded New Vrindaban in the locust-flower'd hills,

who lived there in a shack, sauntered on morning walks through the locusts and maples and blessed the dandelions, blackberries and pokeweed with his gaze,

who sat quietly beneath a persimmon tree reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and musing over the Appalachians,

who boarded the jet age from New York to Hamburg, carrying over the Atlantic real Aryan Vedic civilization in his head and magic mantras on his lips, the Paramhansa on Lufthansa, descending on Europe on his silver swan, singing songs of Kṛṣṇa-love for fractured Germany,

who, not knowing one word of German, lectured on ecstasy in a little storefront temple on Eppendorfer Weg, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa uber alles,

who defined real Aryanism — life according to spirit, not to flesh – to rapt disciples following him on a vigorous morning walk amidst cold, implacable North German beer consciousness, sausages and Volkswagens,

who sat before an Elbe sunset, holding up a picture of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa dancing on the lotus shaped Vaikuṇṭha planet, and who smiled and transformed the Elbe into the Yamunā,

who descended on London reporters like a thundercloud and deluged them with the Absolute Truth — "I have come to teach what you have forgot." "Which is?" "God."

who sang "*Bhaja Govindam*" to this century's British bards, the Beatles — "What are you doing? Your philosophical speculation and grammatical word jugglery will not save you at the moment of death, so *bhaja* Govinda, just worship Kṛṣṇa," and struck up a new song in George's heart,

who shouted down the new crows in London's Conway Hall and continued playing cymbals as their wings fluttered,

who founded a six-story Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple a block away from a storehouse of ravaged Indian treasures, the British Museum, and despite a Gandhi exhibition began the Vaiṣṇava colonization of England,

who buried his head in flowers and danced in ecstasy before the Lord, who saw Arjuna throw down his bow at Kurukṣetra and

Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma pass through Mathurā with Their cows and boy friends as the city girls showered Them with flowers from their balconies,

and who at this moment deluges the blazing fire of the soul trapped in materials and drowns the conflagration of even the most obdurant (my own!) soul entangled in the great chain fire of action and reaction,

who even now insists on wishing me well despite my pigheaded gnawing at o'erchewed stool, who knows the innate sweetness of the soul in love with Kṛṣṇa and who delivers that love with truth,

who draws it out of the timid soul with truth and who demands its flourishing and wishes it well,

who resides at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa eternally, who is His ambassador on earth, transmitting His message infallibly,

who views this universe to be no more significant than water in a calf's hoofprint,

who floats upon the tossing ocean of material and looks with compassion upon the countless dynasties of suffering souls struggling below,

who hears the discordant sounds of Kali's millennia and blends them in harmony to one song that anyone can sing,

who must play in the starry sandbox of the universe like a child with his toys,

who must laugh at the māyā karmaval, the vast play of illusion, of America, of the world,

who must talk to Kṛṣṇa alone at night, sitting on his bed, conferring, listening carefully to His advice,

who perpetually receives the waters of benediction from the ocean of mercy and who pours them forth in torrents to extinguish the flames of materialism,

who, always engaged in chanting and celebrating the message of Lord Caitanya, sometimes dances in ecstasy and trembles and quivers in his trance,

who, with his disciples, untiringly worships Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Their temple,

who is always offering food to Kṛṣṇa and who derives great satisfaction in seeing his disciples eat *bhagavat-prasādam*, the delicious mercy of the Lord,

who is eternally eager to chant and preach the glories of the loving exchanges between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī and who

aspires to relish these pastimes at every moment,

who expertly assists the gopis, Lord Kṛṣṇa's transcendental cowherd girl friends engaged in the perfection of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa conjugal love affairs, who makes various tasteful arrangements for Them,

who, as all scriptures reveal, should be honored as highly as the Supreme and Almighty Lord, for he is the Great God's most confidential servitor,

whose mercy enables me to receive the benediction of the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and without whose mercy I cannot advance on the spiritual path, and who is therefore worthy of my perpetual obeisances and my worship.'

Written by Hayagrīva Dāsa (Professor Howard Wheeler) From *BTG* #36.

Submitted at your lotus feet by your humble servant,

Dayānanda Dāsa
Initiation: 1967, March—San Francisco, USA

Hṛṣikeśānanda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Koṭi Daṇḍavat!!!

On your birthday here is my poem to Your Divine Grace from 1973. I pray you bless me to live by it.

1) *svaguror-upadeśa mahārgha-maṇi*
śirasā vidhṛto hari-nāma-dhanī

Svaguroḥ – own guru, *upadeśa* – preaching, *mahā-argha* – most valuable, *maṇi* – jewel, *śirasā* – by head, *vidhṛtaḥ* – carried, *hari* – Lord Hari, *nāma* – Divine Name, *dhanī* – rich with

I am enriched by the advice of my spiritual master, which is the holy name of Hari, a most precious jewel that I carry on my head.

2) *viharāmi janeṣv-amṛtam vitaran*
bhava-pārakarīṁ taranīṁ kathayan

viharāmi – moving around, *janeṣu* – in people, *amṛtam* – nectar, *vitaran* – distributing, *bhava* – the world, *pārakarī* – cross over, *taranīm* – boat,

kathayan – teaching

Now I will move around and distribute this nectar (of Hari nāma) to people as if a boat that crosses over the worldly ocean of materialistic life.

3) *vṛṣabhānu sutānvita kṛṣṇamanuṁ*
prajapan saphalaṁ janayennu januḥ

Vṛṣabhānu – father of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, *sutā* – daughter, *anvita* – joined, *kṛṣṇam* – Lord Kṛṣṇa, *anum* – after, *prajapan* – chanting, *saphalam* – success, *janayet* – carrying, *nu* – sure, *januḥ* – life

Chanting the name of Rādhā, the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu, and that of Kṛṣṇa, will surely carry our lives to success.

4) *madhu-gopa-vane kṛpayā hi guroḥ*
phala-sañcayakṛd bhajan-ākhya taroḥ

madhu – honey, *gopa* – cowherders, *vane* – (Vṛndāvana) forest, *kṛpayā* – by grace, *hi* – sure, *guroḥ* – from spiritual master, *phala* – fruit (result), *sañcayakṛt* – collector or gather, *bhajan* – devotional service, *ākhya* – known by, *taroḥ* – (of the) tree

By my Gurudeva's grace I can surely collect the fruits (of bhakti) from the Vṛndāvana worship tree.

5) g*urudeva varo mama bhaktiyutaḥ*
nigamannavidohi giraḥ sa sūtaḥ

gurudeva – Spiritual Master, *varaḥ* – honorable, *mama* – my, *bhaktiyutaḥ* – full with devotional service, *nigamat* – from the Vedas, *avidohi* – milking (like a cow), *giraḥ* – speech, *sa* – that, *sūtaḥ* – Sūta Goswami

My most honorable spiritual master (Śrīla Prabhupāda), is filled with bhakti, and he has milked the cow-like Vedas of Sūta by his speech.

6) *kali-dharma iyam hari-nāma-ratim*
parikīrtanataḥ saphala bhavati

kali-dharma – religion of Kali Age, *iyam* – this, *hari* – Lord Hari, *nāma* – name, *rati* – affection, *parikīrtanatah* – congregational chanting, *saphala* – success, *bhavati* – to be

(Saying) The religion of the Kali Age consists of having affection for congregational chanting the names of Lord Hari, which will bring all success.

7) *iti tad-bhajanād gatavān pramadaṁ*

praṇamāmi sadā prabhupāda-padam

iti – in this way, *tat* – by his, *bhajanāt* – devotion, *gatavān* – vanished, *pramadam* – (my) laziness (I become active), *praṇamāmi* – I bow, *sadā* – always, *prabhupāda* – His Divine Grace Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, *padam* – lotus feet

I always bow down to the lotus feet of my spiritual master, (His Divine Grace Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami) Prabhupāda, due to whose devotion my laziness has dissipated.

Your eternal servant,

Hṛṣikeśānanda Dāsa
Initiation: 1967, March—San Francisco, USA

Kāñcanabālā Dāsī

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

It is only by your causeless mercy that I am here and am so grateful; not knowing where I would be otherwise.

That I have been given the gift of opportunity to attempt to honor His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda; Śrīla Prabhupāda emanating the true meaning of; "Purity is the force".

Listening and relishing the DVD series of '*Following Śrīla Prabhupāda*' is potent and feeling Śrīla Prabhupāda's divine presence. It is so moving hearing Śrīla Prabhupāda chant, say, "Hare Kṛṣṇa" pronouncing each syllable resonating such depth of love, absorption in Kṛṣṇa, and humility.

mahāprabhoḥ kīrtana-nṛtya-gīta
vāditra-mādyan-manaso-rasena
romāñca-kampāśru-taraṅga-bhājo
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam

'Chanting the holy name, dancing in ecstasy, singing, and playing musical instruments, the spiritual master is always gladdened by the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Because he is relishing the mellows of pure devotion within his mind, sometimes his hair stands on end, he feels quivering in his body, and tears flow

from his eyes like waves.

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master.'

It is so inconceivable how Śrīla Prabhupāda is kind to us all; Śrīla Prabhupāda being totally dependent, taking shelter of Kṛṣṇa, and carrying Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's instructions as his life and soul no matter what it took, to save all of us lost souls.

Around this time in the late 60s, when Śrīla Prabhupāda was not well, Madhusūdan Prabhu wrote a letter to him expressing that Śrīla Prabhupāda should take care of his health to do less activity and lecturing. In an excerpt, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote back a letter to him on January 24, 1968:

"My dear boy, lecturing for Kṛṣṇa has nothing to do with this body. If I would not have lectured, how you would have come? So as far as possible I am taking care of my health, but Kṛṣṇa's service must be executed, even at the risk of life. A living entity gets millions of opportunities to get a type of body, but hardly, he will get the opportunity to serve Kṛṣṇa. The service of Kṛṣṇa must be executed at all risks, but do not worry; I am taking care of my health by the help of Goursundar." Such is Śrīla Prabhupāda writing such a beautiful personal letter.

I had remembered my first contact was hearing the *'Happening'* album, Śrīla Prabhupāda chanting. It was truly from a different world…the spiritual world. I didn't know what, how, who, or where, but it was something that was very uplifting, so attractive, and a solace for the hankering soul as I was searching. A moment's association with Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee totally revolutionizes and changes the trajectory of such a soul's lives. Shortly after, I found the Temple on the Lower East side and was going there whenever I could. Even though, I didn't have Śrīla Prabhupāda's *vapu* association at that time, still, doing devotional service, association with the assembled devotees speaking about Śrīla Prabhupāda, and reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's sacred Śrīmad-Bhāgavatams was so beyond wonderful. I then firmly desired and wanted to take shelter of Śrīla Prabhupāda as my spiritual master. A few months later, I wrote Śrīla Prabhupāda a letter and sent my wooden japa beads to His Divine Grace. Then, Śrīla Prabhupāda so kindly initiated me from the West Coast. I was so joyful, along with a letter Śrīla Prabhupāda had written. How I am insignificant, but am so very moved when just grasping a drop of realization of receiving the most precious

treasure, coming in contact with Kṛṣṇa's exalted Pure Devotee, back then, and all throughout the years.

I just read recently a conversation a devotee had with Śrīla Prabhupāda:

> Devotee: "What if people don't want to hear our message?"
>
> Śrīla Prabhupāda: "People might not understand our message, but Kṛṣṇa will be pleased, and that is our mission. They thought Jesus Christ's mission was stopped. They killed him. But his mission was attained. He preached three years only, but so many followers. He pleased Kṛṣṇa. We must not be disappointed that no one is hearing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We will say it to the moon and stars and in all directions. We will cry in the wilderness, "Serve Kṛṣṇa, worship Kṛṣṇa!" Because Kṛṣṇa is everywhere, He will hear us. We want to get a certificate from Kṛṣṇa that, "This man has done something for Me." Not popularity. We have to please Kṛṣṇa's senses with purified senses."

In the past era to these years forward; Śrīla Prabhupāda's amazing potency and divine presence is very alive in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement which is still flourishing. And from my flood of loving memories to Śrīla Prabhupāda's present *vāṇī* by serving, worshipping with sincere devotion to Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and devotees, reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books is the true panacea from the turbulent existence of this material world.

So in this life, the longer we are here, Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings are magnifying all the more the true reality here. And thus, just seeing the urgent need is to become internally and externally purified in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. How I pray for this, and it is only by Śrīla Prabhupāda's mercy, there is hope for me.

I am begging to remain your loving servant and disciple always,

Kāñcanabālā Dāsī
Initiation: 1967, December—New York, USA

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

I remember, in the late 1960s, after an evening lecture you had just given in the Los Angeles temple, I arrived late and stood at the door. You looked up and asked, "Where have you been, Vāmanadev?"

In that moment, I reflected briefly and replied, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am working. I am working in a cabinet shop to develop skills so that I may use them in Kṛṣṇa's service."

You then nodded and, in front of everyone, said, "That's all right."

At that moment, I felt a deep and personal closeness to you—and I have carried that with me ever since.

Over the past several decades, I have tried, in my own limited way, to improve my service and my service attitude. I have made attempts to follow your teachings to the best of my ability.

But I must honestly admit that I have come to understand my limitations.

What I feel more strongly than anything else is deep admiration—for what you have accomplished, and for the disciples you have empowered to carry forward this ISKCON movement. I see more clearly now that to be a Vaiṣṇava is not an ordinary thing. To call oneself a devotee is not an ordinary claim.

I can only try to be honest with myself.

In that honesty, I see that I am a devotee—but a fallen devotee who sincerely desires to improve.

With that understanding, I humbly beg for your mercy, your continued tolerance, and your ongoing guidance in this journey.

Even if I do not perfect myself in this lifetime, I am prepared to continue trying—again and again—until I can come closer to properly serving you.

In conclusion, I wish to say that I deeply respect the opportunity to be called your disciple, and I will continue to try my best, for the rest of this life, to live up to that honor.

I remain your servant, in this life and forever,

Vāmanadev Das

Initiation: 1968, March—New York, USA

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

Today I was appreciating the Vedic culture in which you took your birth, for its foundation was knowledge. Even a simple farmer born within it was naturally blessed with wisdom that escapes the current world's intelligentsia. So deep was the embedding of knowledge within the culture that, as I've read in the Bhāgavatam, even the asuras Hiraṇyakaśipu and Kaṁsa could utter words indicating the self's eternal existence beyond the body, speak of material detachment, and warn that one's current actions affect one's future births.

Yet the words of *asuras,* as well as the wise words of most others graced with a birth in this ancient culture, were far different from yours, for their intentions mostly remained selfish and lacked even a hint of a desire to please Kṛṣṇa. No concept of the soul's inherent nature as loving servant of Kṛṣṇa decorated their words. Nor even a hint of surrender to Kṛṣṇa escaped from their minds through their mouths. Generally speaking, none had a sesame seed's worth of kṛṣṇa-bhakti, the land in which you continually reside.

Your words, often quite similar to the infrequently spoken but wise Vedic truths spoken by others born from the same Vedic cultural soil as you, overflow from your *bhakti* into your actions, which twenty-four hours of each day match your words that stress the soul's only true need as love for Kṛṣṇa.

Your words, your actions, but especially your books reveal your *bhakti*-filled heart. In following Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's

example and guidance, you see Kṛṣṇa in every śāstric verse. They reveal Kṛṣṇa's glory in each pastime you translate, and cause you to boldly condemn every attempt at happiness devoid of Kṛṣṇa's guidance and service.

Your words also speak of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's gift of hidden Vedic truths. They offer in an open yet still secret way the sweetness of eternal life in Goloka Vṛndāvana. They instruct readers in that narrow path of service to Kṛṣṇa's holy names, of surrender, and of separation, just as Mahāprabhu taught by His ecstatic example of full absorption in love for Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, at great cost and in your superhuman way, your actions and both spoken and written words place before me – and everyone else – an opportunity to have everything, even things of inconceivable value.

What can this servant of yours offer in return, for I am incapable in so many ways? I pray, though, to hold tightly to your feet, offering to you whatever you have blessed your undeserving servant with. I consider your service as my greatest fortune and your greatest gift.

With full respect, affection, and undying appreciation for your tolerance,

Eternally yours,

Bhūrijana Dāsa
Initiation: 1968, June—Montreal

Rukmiṇī Devī Dāsī

nama oṁ 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 sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual mater, servant of Sarasvatī Goswami. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which

are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

kalinā kalinā sadṛśaḥ ko 'piyugo naṣṭi varānane
tasmiṁs tvāṁ sthāpayiṣyāmigehe gehe jane jane

O charming Bhakti Devī! There is no other age that can be compared to Kali-yuga. In this age, I will personally establish you in each and every home and within each and everyone's heart."

(Śrī Nārada Muni, *Śrīmad-bhāgavata-mahātmyam* 2.13)

anya-dharmaṁs tiraskṛtyapuras kṛtya mahotsavantadā
nāham harer dāsaloke tvāṁ na pravartaye

O Bhakti Devi! Neglecting all other paths of religiosity, if I do not propagate you all around the world in Kali-yuga by organizing various devotional festivals, then I shall no longer be known as a servant of Hari. (Śrī Nārada Muni, *Śrīmad-bhāgavat-mahātmyam* 2.14)

anyān dharma-pathan nirasya bhagavad-bhakte!
kalau tvām ahamsarvātma prathayiṣya iti ate dedham śrī nārada
svikṛtaṁsaṅkalpaṁ saphalikṛtaṁ hari-made yena sva-gurv-
ājñāyataṁ śrīla-prabhupādam eka-manasā vandamahe sarvadā

The extremely firm vow accepted by Śrī Nārada Muni was as follows: "O Bhakti! Sidelining all other paths of *dharma* in this Age of Kali, I shall exclusively propagate you everywhere."

By the order of his guru and for the pleasure of Sri-Hari, the personality who fulfilled this vow of Sri Nārada Muni was Śrīla Prabhupāda. Unto him, we single-mindedly offer our obeisances at all times. (Hari Parshad Dāsa, in glorification of Śrīla Prabhupāda)
Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this holy Vyāsa Pūjā day, the 130th anniversary of your appearance in this suffering world, I meditate on the inconceivable: Who are you? And what impelled you to come here?

Who are you, to have come to fulfill the proclamation and firm vow of Śrī Nārada?

Who are you, among all who heard the command of Śrī Gaurāṅga, to have fulfilled His order?

Who are you, among all who received the order of your Guru Mahārāja, to have come to the West, and then circled the globe to actually fulfill it?

Who are you, among so many others who understood the true

spirit of the Vedas, beyond the external letter of the law of the Vedas?

Who are you, who dared to write in your own *praṇāma-mantra* that your mission was to deliver the Western world that is so filled with impersonalism and voidism?

And who are you, to have actually done it! To deliver us, the most degraded wretches of Kali-yuga!

Who are you, to have challenged *smarta*ism, *sahajiyā*ism, and casteism in India, and then travel to the ends of the earth to challenge communism, capitalism, and every other sectarian "ism"?

Fulfilling Śrī Nārada's vow to Bhakti Devī, as the most rare and empowered servant of Śrī Hari, you organized joyous festivals, sidelining all other paths of *dharma*, on every continent of the world…

…Joyous festivals of your beloved Jagannātha Rathayātrā on the streets of every major city of the world;

…Joyous festivals of *harināma saṅkīrtana* on street corners everywhere;

…Heart-opening festivals of immersion in *bhāgavata-kathā* daily in your temples and retreats everywhere;

…Daily festivals of beauty in each of your temples celebrating the *darśana* of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa;

…Festivals of meeting sincere devotees and creating the mood of Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma everywhere they reside.

…And even bittersweet internal festivals of feeling your separation, longing to go deeper, longing to see and taste these festivals as you see and taste them, as true rasikā bhaktas, following your mood.

Please remove anything that blocks the flow of the joyous festival of your mercy in my heart and in this world.

I am unable to fathom who you actually are and how rare, precious, and dear you are to Lord Gaurāṅga. I can only pray to one day be allowed to join your eternal festival of unprecedented, inclusive, adventurous compassionate *sevā* to Lord Gaurāṅga.

Please create a festival of wonder, a festival of loving reciprocal gratefulness in my heart. When will I be allowed to enter and deeply relish your festival of joyous *kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa*?

And most of all, at this time of conflict in the world and in your ISKCON, please create a festival of cooperation among your sincere followers, so we can demonstrate our love for you.

In loving gratitude,

Your eternal servant and daughter,

Rukmiṇī Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1968, August—Montreal, Canada

Arundhatī Devī Dāsī

nama oṁ 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 glories to your glorious lotus feet. Once again on this special day of your Appearance, I offer my most humble obeisances, and offer you immense gratitude for the incredible gift that you have given me and my God-brothers and God-sisters, as well as all the children, friends and so many others who have taken up Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In the last year I have been thinking more about what I can do in my older age that will still be serving you. I know kīrtana will always be a big part of what I have to offer by your infinite grace. Perhaps some others things too but do not know what just now.

Just less than two weeks ago I had a major accident, a bad fall in a street with on-coming traffic. I was in total shock and ended up with fractures in my shoulder. Fortunately I didn't get hit by a car. You might say that was a wake-up call. As it was so shocking, I didn't know what hit me, I wish I could say Kṛṣṇa was the first thing I thought of, but it wasn't. People helped me off the street and someone offered me a ride to where I was staying (in Mexico at the time) and people came in the taxi with me. In many ways I was helped through this difficult incident. Though I didn't immediately think of Kṛṣṇa, it seems like Kṛṣṇa was there through the many people who helped in so many different ways and still are, as I slowly recover. And I've been crying out to the Lord a lot. So ultimately, these kind of things for a devotee are Kṛṣṇa's mercy, as they bring you closer to the Lord. So though its been a painful journey the last 12 days, I give thanks that I can see how Kṛṣṇa has been there, even when I briefly forgot Him, which I have always prayed that He will never forget me even if I forget Him sometimes. So thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda.

You gave me Kṛṣṇa, the greatest gift of my life. You were/are my savior, and I will always have the greatest gratitude for you and the sacrifices you made in your life to bring Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the western world. I would've surely been dead long ago if you had not come. But instead, I've learned so many things and the greatest lesson of devotion to Kṛṣṇa. I'm a fool though, because I am not that engaged all the time, like we used to be when you were here. Some devotees are, but I am engaged just a little. Still I know Kṛṣṇa-bhakti is my great opportunity in this life I have been given, and you made it possible, so I thank you and honor you over and over again. I pray someday I will be with you always, and I pray that somehow I will find more ways to be engaged. Maybe even move where there are more devotees, if this body continues to work! I pray that you engage me in your service, lead me to how and where I can be of the most service to you. That is the only solace and reason to be here on this planet.

All glories, all glories to you Śrīla Prabhupāda. I love you always and I know you love me too. Thank you so much for the life you have given me! May I always remember you are there and love me even though I am a fallen soul.

I would like to add a prayer for my son Aniruddha Dāsa, your dear grandson. May he be engaged in your service in one way or the other.

Your aspiring disciple,

Arundhatī Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1969, January—Boston, USA
Current location: New York, USA

Bhavānanda Dāsa

ALL GLORIES TO ŚRĪLA PRABHUPADA!

During a Bhāgavatam Class in Los Angeles in 1970, Śrīla Prabhupāda was discussing the nature of mercy. He said "As Portia said in the Merchant of Venice by your Shakespeare that the quality of mercy is not strained. It droppeth like a gentle rain from heaven." He went on to explain that Kṛṣṇa's mercy showers down like rain. Sometimes it falls in the desert, sometimes it falls in the ocean, sometimes it falls

on a hard rock and sometimes it falls on fertile soil. I was sitting next to Viṣṇujana and I nudged him with my elbow and said "Wow, Prabhupāda knows Shakespeare". Now five decades later, I am understanding a tad-bit of Prabhupāda's mercy. One way in which Prabhupāda's mercy was manifest was in his constant travelling around the world distributing the mercy of Lord Caitanya and giving an opportunity to condition souls to awaken to their true selves. There is an interesting passage in *Govinda Līlāmṛta* where some residents of Vṛndāvana were gently scolding Kṛṣṇa since when he herded his cows in the forest of Vṛndāvana, the cows turned up the grass and broke the small shrubs that were growing. So every step Kṛṣṇa took from the touch of his lotus feet, fresh grass and new sprouts sprang up and recarpeted the floor of Vṛndāvana. Similarly, everywhere that Prabhupāda stepped to preach love of Kṛṣṇa, temples have sprung up of different sizes, capacities, but all with Deities of Rādhā Kṛṣṇa, Lord Jagannāth and Nitāi Gour. The Deity worship in these temples is carefully guided by qualified temple presidents who are following Śrīla Prabhupāda's famous "Temple Program".

In 1973, in Prabhupāda's room in Rādhā Govinda Temple, Calcutta, he said that the sun rises first in Bengal and as it proceeds west, the world becomes more and more materialistic. If we carefully study Prabhupāda's establishment of temples which have increased exponentially on every continent of the world, *Maṅgala Ārati* and temple programs are going on sequentially. This establishes a spiritual ring around the globe of the chanting of the holy name and the worship of the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa to counteract the effects of the materialistic Kali-yuga. At any time somewhere on the planet, the Supreme Lord is awakened and offered foodstuff. He is being bathed and beautifully dressed. He is being glorified by His holy name and put to rest. These constant extraordinary activities in hundreds and hundreds of ISKCON temples definitely establishes Śrīla Prabhupāda as the Global *Ācārya, Jagad Guru*. He has done all the work, and our duty is to carefully maintain what he has given us. This is just a small example of why we all say, "ALL GLORIES TO ŚRĪLA PRABHUPADA."

Initiation: 1969, April—Los Angeles, California, USA

Trivikrama Dāsa

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisance. All glories to you.

I am not happy that my conduct has caused such a disturbance within your ISKCON society. When a senior disciple acts improperly, as I have, then innocent people may lose faith in you and in ISKCON. That would certainly be very unfortunate for them, and for everyone, because ISKCON is the ship, of which you are the Captain who is empowered to carry us all back to Godhead.

I am trying my best to cooperate with your GBC, and in a month or so I am due to meet with them for directions. My prayer is that both of us, the GBC and myself, can purely represent your desires going forward.

Yours sincerely,

Trivikrama Dāsa
Initiation: 1969, April—Buffalo, New York, USA

Cathurbhuj Dāsa

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

I was born in the darkness of ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes by the torchlight of knowledge. I offer him my most humble obeisances.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

This year, on your 130th Appearance Day, also coinciding with the terrible events of wars and famine in different parts of the world and the onslaught of Kali-yuga, I think it is especially poignant to recommit ourselves and recall some of the precious gifts that you have given to us all through which to conduct in devotional service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa.

I recall in previous Vyāsa-pūjā tributes offering (see *Śrīla Prabhupāda Tributes* 2015, at 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 to save the fallen souls you took great trouble to sail on the Jaladuta, departing from the land of India to come to the West in 1965. Just recently we have been reading the 8th Canto Part 2 and 3 of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* where the wonderful pastimes of the Lord have been related, including the pastimes of the Lord with Mahārāja Bali and Satyavrata Muni. The Lord's incarnation as Vāmanadeva and as the fish incarnation just to save the Vedas are especially pleasing to read.

As many of us age and as Kali-yuga ensues, we can see 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 a vibrant community of devotees. It is with such devotees, along with well wishers that we have an oasis in the middle of London. The London Temple performs such beautiful festivals — Gaura Pūrṇimā, Janmāṣṭamī, Rathayātrā, just to name a few. These festivals are living proof that Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of pleasure. There are food distribution programmes and *Bhagavad-gītā* classes. Kṛṣṇa is always present through his words, non-different because the Lord is omnipresent. That is why we have Kṛṣṇa kathās. Of course there is politics and sometimes discord, but thousands are taking shelter because of the festivals and spiritual welfare programmes enacted through your mercy and grace.

This very modest offering is an opportunity to reinvigorate oneself and play catch up. May we all be inspired in your service.

It is estimated that there are now between seven to ten 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.

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 in London called "Śrīla Prabhupāda's Hall" which can become a magnet for

attracting devotees.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, to be true to you and to Kṛṣṇa we must re-commit ourselves in our service to you. In one of your writings entitled *Easy Journey to other Planets* you state:

> People dream of travelling to the stars, but such travel is still far away. Ancient yoga traditions, however, describe subtle pathways by which master yogis transfer themselves to planets beyond the earth.

This book, and many others take the reader to the most wonderful places in the anti material sky which are eternal and full bliss and beyond the reach of birth, death, old age, and disease.

By your example and by your books you have provided a method and a tremendous insight into developing our role and attitude in devotional service. By highly practical advice and guidance you have steered devotees along the path of loving Kṛṣṇa, and imbibing the science of Kṛṣṇa without adulation. You have also mentioned the importance of Vaishnava etiquette and *varṇāśrama*, simple living and high thinking.

Today, of all days we seek your causeless mercy.

Your humble servant,

Cathurbhuj Dāsa, London.
15th April 2026
Initiation: 1969, December—London, UK

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

I recall a few of my previous Śrī Vyāsa-Pūjā offerings to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, in the last few years, and they have tended to be reports on how excited I feel about practicing the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Today I am feeling your mercy by reigning in all the hundreds of activities I have done over the years and now being focused upon one. I see it as a necessary function in my case to have constantly worked on scaling down and shrinking my thoughts and activities to much more manageable proportions. The always 'thinking big disease' is finally coming home to roost, and I am feeling very excited about having established the boundaries now of what to do, and make everything as real and as grounded as possible. Without setting the limits of what I am working within, there is no actual tangible progress.

So within the context of creating a Vaikuṇṭha planet by establishing the Daiva Varṇāśrama Dharma Institution – having one Varṇāśrama College with every ISKCON center as a means to establishing Vedic Varṇāśrama Vṛndāvana Villages, starting with Regent's Park as a pilot model. I thought to think globally, but to act locally by taking the first of the six principles of self-sufficiency, namely, to grow food on my estate where I live and learn to grow my own fruits, vegetables, flowers, herbs, nuts, spices, seeds, legumes, roots, medicinal plants and crops on Marley Walk. There are 87 households in total: so, 54 flats and 33 houses and work with all the residents here to become self-sufficient in food over the next few years, if not sooner.

It's giving everyone an opportunity to appreciate the Vaikuṇṭha

atmosphere through nature so slowly but surely learn to live off the land, and spend the balance of the time chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

I humbly beg your approval.

Yours sincerely

Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu Dāsa Adhikārī
Email: mohan.gupta108@yahoo.co.uk
WhatsApp: +44 7934 7000 68
Landline: +44 20 8450 9603

Svarūpa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

There was a song written and recorded in the 1960s that contained the lyrics "God only knows where I'd be without you." I often wonder where I would be had I not come into contact with Your Divine Grace at the young age of 17. On that day you completely changed the trajectory of my life. Instead of entering adulthood, rushing headlong into the dark abyss of ignorance and hopelessness, you instead placed me on the transcendental path toward the illuminated effulgent realm of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Thank you for saving this wretched and undeserving rascal.

Your servant,

Svarūpa Dāsa
Initiation: 1969, December—Boston, USA
Current location: Oceanside, California

Bhakta Dāsa

Your Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

O most revered spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,

On this sacred day of Vyāsa-pūjā, I bow down at your lotus feet with full humility and gratitude. You are the empowered representative of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, carrying the eternal message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and delivering it to the entire world.

yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi dhyāyan stuvaṁs tasya yaśas tri-sandhyaṁ vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam

By your mercy one attains the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and without your mercy there is no progress. I therefore pray to always remain under your shelter, never deviating from your instructions.

You have taught us that real happiness lies not in temporary material pursuits but in surrender to Kṛṣṇa, chanting His holy names, and serving Him with love. Your words are eternal, and I place my full faith in them.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.18: *naṣṭa-prāyeṣv abhadreṣu nityaṁ bhāgavata-sevayā / bhagavaty uttama-śloke bhaktir bhavati naiṣṭhikī*

By your guidance, I have understood that constant engagement in devotional service purifies the heart and awakens firm, unwavering bhakti.

I beg you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to bless me so that I may become a perfect disciple—one who not only hears but also lives your teachings, one who serves without duplicity, and one who carries forward your mission with sincerity and determination.

May I never forget your compassion in crossing the ocean at great personal risk to deliver the message of Lord Caitanya. May I always remember that my life's true purpose is to assist in your mission of spreading the holy name.

On this day, I offer my heart, my words, and my actions at your lotus feet. Please accept me as your servant and guide me eternally.

vande śrīla-prabhupādaṁ sataṁ bhakti-dāyinam / yasya vāṇī-prabhāveṇa jagat sarvaṁ sukhī bhavet

I bow again and again to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, giver of bhakti, whose words bring joy and liberation to the entire world.

Your eternal servant,

Bhakta Dāsa

Initiation: 1970, March—Los Angeles, California, USA

Mahatma Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you.

I first met you two months after I began to learn Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I didn't understand much about you, but my heart changed and deepened immediately the moment I saw you. As soon as I saw you, I began to cry. I suddenly felt a strong feeling that you were the one who is going to take me back to Godhead in this life. You are the one who is going to end my cycle of birth and death forever. I didn't understand it well philosophically; but I felt it strongly.

After your heart attacks on the Jaladuta, you felt that if you had another heart attack then you would not have survived it. If you had left the planet while on your journey to New York, I would have lost the greatest treasure of my life, the greatest treasure for the entire world. How precious it was for me and all devotees to have your personal presence and guidance. Without your coming to the West, we would have remained in the cycle of unlimited births and deaths. This was the power that I immediately felt just by seeing your lotus face.

Every day I remember your mercy, your kindness, and your compassion.

Every day that I'm able to continue service is a gift from you. Thank you for giving me the strength to help me continue to serve you.

Thank you for your mercy that I have been able to chant at least 16 rounds every day.

Thank you for your mercy that I have been able to follow the four principles.

Thank you for your mercy that I have an attraction to reading your books, hearing lectures, conversations and your morning walks.

Thank you for your mercy that I have a taste to share Kṛṣṇa consciousness with devotees and non-devotees.

Thank you for your mercy that I have the association of

other devotees.

Thank you for your mercy that I have beautiful Deities.

Thank you for your mercy that I feel attraction to the *dhāmas*.

The attraction I have for everything in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is your mercy upon me. I thank you for continuing to allow me to serve you.

Your servant,

Mahatma Dāsa
Initiation: 1970, March—Los Angeles, California, USA

Locanānanda Dāsa

"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,

With all of the humility at my command, I bow before you again and again with total gratitude, recognizing your most exalted position as the dearmost intimate associate of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Krishna, specifically sent here to deliver us from the darkness of ignorance.

In this Iron Age of degradation known as Kali-yuga, people in general are experiencing a bitter struggle for a life of short duration, in total ignorance and forgetfulness of their eternal relationship with the Supreme Being. The purpose of the Krishna consciousness movement is to enlighten and elevate all of human society to the platform of rendering service to the Supreme Enjoyer Who appreciates all bonafide forms of sacrifice. It is the highest form of welfare work to contribute one's words, one's thoughts, one's efforts, one's wealth, in fact, every breath of one's very life with the purpose of pleasing Krishna. That is exactly what you demonstrated — how to do everything for the pleasure of Krishna. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, it is stated:

> The occupational activities a man performs according
> to his own position are only so much useless labor
> if they do not provoke attraction for the message
> of the Personality of Godhead. (*SB* 1.2.8)

We can know that Krishna is pleased when we see that Krishna's pure devotee, the spiritual master, is pleased. When Your Divine Grace came to France for the first time in 1971, a press conference was held at the Office of Indian Tourism. Before inviting the press to enter the conference room, half the room was filled with devotees who were all seeing their eternal spiritual master for the first time. You first asked me whether the chanting party was going out daily to which I responded in the affirmative. Then you pointedly asked me, "Are you going out daily?" and I replied, "Yes, Śrīla Prabhupāda!" You were obviously pleased to hear that Caitanya Mahāprabhu's movement was taking root in another European country.

You had just come to Paris from Moscow where a revealing exchange had taken place with Professor Kotovsky. You explained to us that our movement was like a belt wrapped around the world, from New York to Los Angeles to Tokyo to India to Moscow to London and now, Paris. What amazed me was that you were not taking credit for this astonishing expansion but, instead, you would say success came by the mercy of your spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Sometimes you would say, "I am just an ordinary man, and I need your help." You would often give the credit to Krishna, saying, "This is Krishna's miracle." When one of your disciples said, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the greatest devotee of Krishna", you responded, "No, Rādhārāṇī is the greatest devotee of Krishna." The devotee added, "Then, you are the greatest devotee of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī," to which you replied, "To be a Vaiṣṇava, that is something special." The emblem of humility.

You once wrote to me in 1972 that a prediction had been made by a Japanese philosopher who stated that if the Krishna consciousness movement continues to grow at the present rate, in ten years it will become the world religion. You said, with transcendental pride, that our movement was growing like wildfire, just as fire jumps from one tree to another in a forest fire, sometimes even jumping over one tree to reach another, so our movement continues to expand.

I remember how pleased you were when I told you on a morning walk from the Bury Place temple in London that your *Krishna Book* had been translated into the French language. You asked me if I, myself, had done the translation, to which I replied, "It has been translated by someone who previously worked at the United Nations as an interpreter." Then you asked, "Both volumes?", to which I replied, "The first volume was completed, and he is now working on

Volume Two." Śrīla Prabhupāda told me, "Finish the layout, take it to the printer, get it published and then INUNDATE!" We took a few steps further and tears began to flow from your eyes, permitting us to see your transcendental emotion awakened by news of your books being translated into all the major languages of the world. That was the moment when I realized book publication and distribution was your very life and soul.

In the summer of 1977 you visited the West for what had been planned as a world tour of ISKCON temples. At that time I was serving as Temple President in Amsterdam. A year earlier we had acquired in Vṛndāvana a sculpted form of Your Divine Grace in solid granite.

It was meant to eventually be placed on the Vyāsāsana to receive daily worship. Your first stop on your grand tour was Bhaktivedanta Manor. Although your health had taken a turn for the worse a few months earlier, you were determined to visit the temples worldwide just to urge us to become a bit more fixed up in devotional service in the event that you would leave this world. Your Vyāsa-pūjā day was fast approaching, so I called you at Bhaktivedanta Manor to ask for direction concerning the installation of your mūrti on the Vyāsāsana, something that had never taken place before in ISKCON. You spoke to me through your assistant, Pradyumna Prabhu, explaining how the mūrti should have a bathing ceremony and then be placed on the Vyāsāsana. You said that the outfit should be changed when it appeared to be "crumpled", meaning, not ironed. Your mūrti was not to be worshipped like the Deities on the altar with daily food offerings, but a fresh garland could be offered each day to the worshipable form of the spiritual master.

You had once asked me in your quarters in the Los Angeles temple what I thought of your proposed travel plan. You said you were thinking of spending four months in Los Angeles, four months in India, and four months at the Manor in Hertfordshire, England. Then, devotees could come from all over to see you at those three locations. I said that would allow you to see everyone without being inconvenienced with so much time spent travelling. You could then focus more on completing the translation of the remaining cantos of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* with elaborate Bhaktivedānta purports. I presented you with a nicely wrapped gift from the French devotees. With a beautiful air of innocence, you opened the gift which was a framed photo of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Paris-īśvara. You touched it to

your head and said, "Rādhārāṇī is most beautiful." You indicated a point on the wall just behind me and said, "I will place this picture right there." Eleven years later, in 1985, I returned to Los Angeles and was invited to visit your sanctified quarters, and sure enough, the photo of Rādhā Paris-īśvara was still right where you said you would place it.

The world we live in is meant to be experienced by the cheaters and those they cheat. But Krishna consciousness protects us from being misled and exploited. The *Bhāgavatam* tells us that "with one-pointed attention, one should constantly hear about, glorify, remember and worship the Personality of Godhead, who is the protector of the devotees." (*SB* 1.2.14)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we, your disciples, take shelter at your lotus feet recognizing you to be the āśraya-vigraha, as that person we can take shelter of without the risk of being misinformed or misled. You are that pure devotee, empowered by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to spread unalloyed love of God throughout the world. It is beyond any doubt that you are that liberated soul at whose feet all saintly persons are seated. We pray for your mercy and ask only that you cast your merciful glance upon us from time to time.

All glories to Your Divine Grace, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your eternal servant,

Locanānanda Dāsa
Initiation: 1970, August—Paris, France

Aditi Devī Dāsī

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to you, Prabhupāda, and to our illustrious guru *paraṁparā*.

It was by Krishna's mercy in 1965 that I saw the Matchless Gifts store empty, and in 1967 and 1968 I saw your early devotees in Berkeley and San Francisco. Once the devotees were chanting near the Student Union at UC Berkeley, and one devotee especially had the purity of a five-year-old child. He was in the back and quite tall, and I realized later he was Jayānanda Prabhu. A few weeks earlier I had accepted a little prasādam which was being handed out near campus at Telegraph.

Previously, I had walked to the other side of the street as Harināma approached on Telegraph, but a devotee girl was there and gave me a pamphlet. I gave what little change I had and apologized. She said, "That's fine. You seem to be in the mode of goodness."

I looked at the picture of Prabhupāda for a long time.

Two months later, in early 1970, I decided to cast my fate to the wind and left Oakland airport for London. Instead of going on to Copenhagen to join friends, I made an attempt to go to Scotland, but that didn't work out, and then the friends of friends told me about the London Krishna temple and I decided to visit. I had tried many times in San Francisco but it was always foiled.

At last I could visit a temple, and it was magical. Inside 7 Bury Place on the entrance to the left, was the beautiful temple of Rādhā Londonīśvara. Above the Divine Couple were Lord Jagannātha, Lord Baladeva and Lady Subhadrā. The walls were made of California redwood that Shyamasundar Prabhu had sent over. There was a deep purple carpet and colorful pillows lined the floor of the walls. There was a small beautiful painting of young Krishna playing his flute in the forest of Vṛndāvana, reminding us to not forget Him once we left the temple.

After a year and a half (Summer of 1971), you finally arrived in person. I had hoped you would come for Rathayātrā in August of 1970, but you went to San Francisco instead. A year later you finally came. I had been the cook for over a year so I was able to cook for you. I finally received Gāyatrī Mantra from you personally, next to you at your desk.

Then within four days I was called to your room. Harivilās Prabhu was also there, and Prabhupāda asked that I go to Paris, marry Locanānanda Prabhu and build up the Paris temple, and then go to start a temple in Geneva, Switzerland. You said, "Geneva is not a big city, but it is a very important city".

I left India in July of 1975, after having arrived in early 1974 for the spring festivals. I stayed in Vṛndāvana with Yamunā and Madirā in the room above yours at the Rādhā Dāmodara temple. Then you told us to come live in your house in Ramaṇa Reti. You had no GBC for India, and you had to manage all that was going on.

When you came back for the opening, the temple was not completed. You were upset, and you asked Bhagavān to stay for a few months to get things organized. I was sent to Delhi to take care of Rādhā Pārthasārathi as Madirā was pregnant. Soon Prabhupāda

appointed Gopal Krishna Prabhu to become GBC of India. I went to Vṛndāvana for one day, and shared a tonga with Gopāla Kṛṣṇa from Vṛndāvana to Mathurā. As we were leaving, an elderly widow approached with her hand outreached, and Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Prabhu reached into his bag and gracefully gave a donation. At that moment I realized that finally India had a GBC who would lead the *yātrā* to expand in wonderful ways under his kind and humble direction.

Now many years later, I am 80 years old and if I must take birth again, please let it be in a devotee's home, where I can continue to prepare to return back home, back to you and Rādhā and Krishna. Thank you for all that you have given me Prabhupāda: your kind and loving association and instructions in your beautiful books you translated every night while we slept.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for bravely following the instructions of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākur and coming to the West and for giving us the sweet gift and guidance of Krishna consciousness. Please always keep me at your lotus feet. My husband Jayakula Prabhu was told in India that he would depart this world when he was 39 years old, and that this would be his last birth in the material world. And it happened that he departed a few months before his 40th birthday on the Dvadaśī right before Gaura Pūrṇimā, which is the disappearance day of Mādhavendra Purī. I pray I may have such an auspicious departure. "But if it is Your wish that I should take birth again, please let it be in Your devotee's home, Nanda Kiśora."

Thank you forever, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your servant,

Aditi Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1970, September—London, UK

Nāgapatnī Devī Dāsī

Dearest Srīla Prabhupāda,

You are the cause of everything good in my life.
You gave the path to bliss and ended the strife.
Because of your teachings, we can see Kṛṣṇa everywhere,
As the taste of water, the rising sun, and the One who cares.
Your teachings are sweet and sublime.

Just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa all the time
Before we knew or even missed it, everything had changed
Hair, clothes, association, the way we live without any pain.
You opened the door to the true reality we are spirit soul
Eternal, individual, parts and parcel of the Supreme whole
Illusion by the changing bodies, identifying with dualities
Shaken and confused by the modes of material nature
We were stuck in a cycle not seeing the real picture.
Birth, disease, old age and death 8,400,000 different species
Up and down the planetary system, frustrated, with all of these.
Through your infinite mercy, not caring if we were worthy
You became our good fortune cleaning hearts that were dirty.
Teaching us about the Supreme Personality of Godhead
His pastimes, associates, name and fame, you're a godsend.
The greatest treasure the world has ever known
You distributed freely with no care of your own
You placed our heads at Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet
Reestablishing our covered relationships.
Freeing us from lust, anger and greed
Teaching us a higher taste than material bodily needs
You asked so little in return only that we continue to learn,
and share this knowledge with the world that burns
You create a refuge a place where others can come
and experience their transcendental home.
As my gratitude continues to grow
My body diminishes and slows
My progress for all these years is meager
I haven't attained the desired goal rather I'm neger
But I remember your words I once heard you say,
"stay with me, I will take you back to Kṛṣṇa
even if it's through the back door, for I'm Kṛṣṇa's back door man."
Please hear my prayers and release me from the material snare
Service to you is my substance, my only real care.

All glories to you every day, there's no limit for what honor you deserve.

The least we can do is surrender at your lotus feet and serve
Obeisances over and over from every part of this earth.

From every soul who you have given, a chance for a last material birth.

All glories, all glories, all glories to you

Initiation: 1971, February—Los Angeles, California, USA
Current location: Vṛndāvana, India

Sarvamaṅgalā Devī Dāsī

Dearmost Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your beautiful, soft lotus feet. I know that they are soft because I once was blessed to try (though too clumsily) to help put your slippers on. My life has been navigated by your loving kindness.

All glories to those precious feet that traversed so many countries and places of ignorance and suffering, relieving whoever had the good fortune to behold you. Those who did not see you in person had a chance to associate with you through your books. You spread knowledge and joy to all who miraculously came into contact with you. Your books have travelled far and wide, and they continue to lift people out of darkness into the light of wisdom. Your purports spread your ecstasy of love of God to the fortunate people who were withering in ignorance.

I am but one of those seekers upon whom you smiled, encouraged, and engulfed me in the unforeseen blissful connection with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

I still remember how I kept a *Bhagavad-gītā* under my pillow before I met any devotees, sensing it was a very holy book, but I could not make sense of it. Somehow the Lord in the heart gave me the blessing to find Bury Place, enabling me to hear the truth from your bona fide translations of the *Gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Easy Journey to Other Planets*, and other books that were made available to us one by one. Everything made sense, at last.

It is impossible to repay you. I struggle to maintain sufficient awareness of how much you have given us, what to speak of reciprocating appropriately in service. On this day, we get a chance to glorify you and to hear our godbrothers' and godsisters' realisations. We try to dive deeper into our consciousness in order to have a personal reckoning to go forward. I also like to hear the offerings of your "grandsons" and "granddaughters," and other

youth who are dedicated to your mission and who deeply honour you. I am inspired by many of them, and I also feel honoured to be able to serve them and help my husband encourage them in their preaching. It is enlivening to associate with your sincere followers that have been initiated by your disciples.

I regret my lack of steadiness, and now that I am in my late seventies, along with the dwindling effects of age, you have still kept me engaged in your ISKCON society. Only by your mercy was I allowed to come into the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in India and in England. This gift was certainly a lifeline and a treasure. Who else has been so empowered to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the world with nothing but total surrender to and faith in your spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa. Nobody responded to your request to send a *mṛdaṅga* from India. You did all the groundwork in spite of great austerity and lack of support. Later, others came to capitalise on opportunities that arose from your propagation of the holy name. You trained your own disciples to open temples and spread the mission of Lord Caitanya.

There is nobody who can compare with you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, nobody! And I am proud to say that because it is the incredible truth that you had nothing but the *mahā-mantra* and the spiritual acumen to invite Kṛṣṇa to accept our service. You took anyone who had some attraction and desire to serve and empowered them to follow in your footsteps to the extent of their ability.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for the encouragement to preach. Due to you only, we have a taste of transcendental *rasa* that gave us the faith to repeat what you brought to us. In Mumbai so many pious people recognised that you were a bona fide representative of the Lord, and they actually felt great respect and affection for you. This rubbed off on us, trying to help with what you wanted in Juhu, and then the loving propensity manifested between the preachers and the people we met. We became "friends" with those who were offering to help what you had put in motion. This is the result of the personalism you exemplified.

Now I am realising that this loving propensity is truly what we are meant to share with those we meet who have some taste or attraction to your teachings. I have such a long way to go in my attempts to follow Your Divine Grace, and I often feel terribly inadequate and even ashamed. But just hearing your words, seeing your picture, remembering your grace and kindness, recalling your

glowing glance and many significant moments, I am pulled up to trust Kṛṣṇa and His beloved intimate servant, Your Divine Grace.

Writing this to you warms my heart and gives me hope of being with you again, one day, somehow. I read that you said we have to educate our subtle body so that at the time of death when our gross body dies, we can remember that we are not that body, nor the subtle body. If we can practice this education, we will not be carried to another body by the subtle body, and our spiritual body will manifest. I cannot imagine mastering such advanced focus, but now I'm in my 78th year, it becomes obvious that there is no choice but to trust Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and Your Divine Grace. Despite my neophyte failings and conditioning, on this Vyasa-puja I must again resolve to leave behind what is not favourable and attempt more seriously to relish all that is favourable in your matchless gifts.

I pray to be your eternal servant,

Sarvamaṅgalā Dāsī
Initiation: 1971, March—London, UK
Current location: Watford, Herts, UK
Contact: insideoutetc.sarva@gmail.com

Śatadhanya Dāsa

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda

Let's get back to *basics!* Śrīla Prabhupāda and *śāstra* make it extremely clear:

KRISHNA is the source of everything and everyone; everything emanates from Him; everything is owned and controlled by Him; all living entities are eternally part and parcel of Him and constitutionally meant to serve Him; He is the Supersoul within everyone's heart and the overseer and permitter of all actions; and to become free from our present internment under Māyā we must surrender to Him, whereby we can reawaken our original state of eternity, knowledge, and blissful Krishna consciousness!

The question may be begged here that if Śrī Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the absolute source, proprietor, and controller of everything and everyone, then why would we not immediately surrender to Him— and what could possibly be

preventing any one of us from straightaway and fully doing so? Of course, if we are to be painfully honest with ourselves, we might have to admit that we are indeed not cent per cent 'surrendered' to Śrīla Prabhupāda or the Supreme Lord! It would be quite natural to expect that each and every devotee may be situated on a different level of surrender and advancement, at least by some varying degree. But, in any case— by applying the logic of 'pressing of one grain of rice in the cooking pot'— most likely, at this juncture, no one of us could claim to be at the topmost stage!

svatantratā-abhimāne jīva māyāra adhīna haya

By pride of independence, the living entity becomes subject to māyā (Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur - *Jaiva-Dharma* and *Bhajana-Rahasya* commentaries):

> There can be no obstruction at any given moment to fully surrendering at the Lotus Feet of the Supreme Lord save and except our own wilful obstinacy. (Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur quoted- *Harmonist*, circa 1927)

So, then, what are those *Basics*? Am I genuinely or substantially *beyond the bodily concept of life?* Am I totally *free from material desire— Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "Not even a pinch"?* There's no expectation that one must be completely accomplished in these respects to be spiritually knowledgeable or advanced, but nonetheless one should be honest and humble! All through Prabhupāda's books the same theme of 'transcending the bodily concept of life and becoming purified of material desire' is emphasized again and again:

> It can be concluded that a person who is freed from the bodily concept of life is an eligible candidate for pure devotional service. (*NOD*, Chapter 3)

> One is considered to be in full knowledge when he is freed from all material designations, and by spiritual knowledge is cleansed of all material contamination. At that time he can engage his senses in the service of the master of the senses. That is called pure devotional service. (*Cc* Madhya-līlā 19.170)

> Unless and until we are beyond the bodily

concept of life we can fall down at any moment. (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* by Rūpa Goswami).

Therefore, we should certainly not be 'pretentious', jumping and daring to mislead ourselves, disciples, and others, by writing books focusing on intimate Rādhā Krishna and Gopī Līlā, holding histrionic 'retreats' purportedly meditating on the form or pastimes of Rādhā Krishna and Gopī Līlā. Why not instead teach such readers or attendees how to really meditate on the form of Śrī Krishna beginning at the 'Lotus Feet' of the Archa Vigraha Deities in the temple— and that pastimes of the Lord doesn't only mean Rādhā Krishna, Gopī Līlā, but also creation, Kurukṣetra, etc?

Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu only discussed Rādhā Krishna, Gopī Līlā, with three and a half persons: Rāmānanda Ray, Svarūpa Dāmodara Goswami, Śikhi Māhiti and his sister, Mādhavī devī (*Cc*. Adi-līlā 10.134–137).

Śrīla Prabhupāda also affirmed this same point numerous times and chastised the 'Gopī Līlā propagators'. Of course, we have ample narratives of Rādhā Krishna, Vṛndāvana, Braja Līlā, Dwarka, Chaitanya Līlā, etc., written in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books—is that not sufficient? Is it really necessary to put on a *show?*

Forget about *Rāgānuga Bhakti*— it will manifest on its own when we are mature and ready! Instead, be situated in realized knowledge beyond the bodily concept of life, purified from lust and greed, cultivate offenseless chanting, meditate on the *Lotus Feet and Form of Archa Vigraha*, take shelter of and develop genuine affection for Śrīla Prabhupāda, see through purified senses the miraculous workings of Krishna's energies, embrace Śrīla Prabhupāda's and Krishna's instructions, and gradually fully surrender to the Supreme Lord. Freed from doubt, be CONVINCED that Krishna consciousness is the really, real *Reservoir of Pleasure*!

> My dear Kṛṣṇa, O infallible one, my illusion is now gone. I have regained my memory by Your mercy. I am now firm and free from doubt and am prepared to act according to Your instructions. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.73)

> O King, as I repeatedly recall this wondrous and holy dialogue between Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, I take pleasure, being thrilled at every moment. (*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.76)

> Of all types of worship, worship of Lord Viṣṇu is supreme;

but even higher than that, O Devī, is the worship of that which is related to Him (His devotees, His paraphernalia, His holy name, etc. (*Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa*)

Your Servant,

Śatadhanya Dāsa
Initiation: 1971, March—New Vrindaban, West Virginia, USA

Jaya Jagadīśa Dāsa

My dear most Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my grateful obeisances at your lotus feet on this, the 130th anniversary of your divine appearance in this world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, because Kṛṣṇa is the supreme paradoxical, I would like to address the issue of paradoxes. What is a paradox? Well, by comparison, a contradiction is an impossibility, but a contradiction that resolves itself is called a paradox. And Kṛṣṇa demonstrates inconceivable paradoxes that accentuate His greatness.

For example, Kṛṣṇa is smaller than the smallest yet greater than the greatest. Kṛṣṇa is *aja*, unborn, but He appears to take birth like an ordinary being. Although Kṛṣṇa is *ātmārāma*, self-satisfied, He craves the love of His devotees. Fear personified is afraid of Kṛṣṇa, yet Kṛṣṇa is afraid of Mother Yaśodā. Kṛṣṇa is the source of all morality, yet He steals butter and He dances with others' wives in the dead of night.

In the same way, you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, as a pure reflection of Kṛṣṇa's light, demonstrated some fascinating paradoxes. For example, you became extremely wealthy, yet you always lived very simply. You became very famous, yet you always remained humble and approachable. You were completely self-satisfied, yet your loving relationships with devotees were paramount in your life. You were a learned scholar and were worshipped by thousands, yet you never became falsely proud. You were extremely accomplished – with profuse translations, book sales, so many temples and disciples – yet you never accepted any credit for yourself and always passed that credit along to your spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa. Your followers would have done anything for you, yet you never took advantage and always remained austere and sense-controlled. And although you

were fully transcendental to your physical body and did not identify with it, you were completely present and grounded in your body.

You were so exalted that you were beyond the regulations of spiritual life, yet you always strictly followed those regulations. And as described by Hari Śauri Prabhu, you were never in good health, yet you worked more and slept less than anyone else.

I sometimes ask myself: why did you require what I call your salvation experience…of being "saved" by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākur? You were (and are) an eternally liberated soul, and yet you still considered yourself so fallen that you needed Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī to "save" you.

For that matter, why did Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, a ray of Viṣṇu, feel as though he had been "saved" by Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī? All I can say is that the lives of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lord Caitanya, and Their pure devotees are full of unfathomable mysteries…and paradoxes!

In an intimate moment with Hridayānanda Mahārāja, you were describing your childhood pastime of staging authentic Ratha-yātrā processions. Effectively admitting you were an eternally liberated soul, you said: "The same thing I'm doing now I was doing then. Do you understand? The same thing I'm doing now I was doing then."

Of course, the supreme paradox surrounding your life is that in 1977 you disappeared from our vision, and yet you are as present now as you ever were.

I'll end by describing (for me) an embarrassing moment while you were visiting the London temple in August of 1971. I was asked to make a large quantity of popcorn for distribution on saṅkīrtana. I had joined the temple just a few months prior, so a senior devotee insisted that I offer the popcorn to you directly, since you were present in the temple.

You were seated somewhere in the building of 7, Bury Place, surrounded by devotees, so after I popped the popcorn, I found a bowl in the kitchen, approached you, and gently handed you the bowl of popcorn.

Now, if you taught us anything about honoring prasādam, it was to do so at regular times. So to offer you food more or less whimsically did not show the greatest sensitivity. But do you know what you did when I offered you the popcorn? You accepted it, held it for a few moments without sampling it, smiled very broadly, and simply handed the bowl back to me. You didn't refuse this random popcorn nor correct me. Rather, you kindly accepted it, smiled, and then handed it back to me.

What's the paradox here? You were strict with yourself but very liberal with your followers.

Today is a wonderful occasion; we are all so blessed to have your association, as I am blessed to have the association of all of the

Vaishnavas in my life.

May we always keep you in our hearts, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and try sincerely to follow your example and your instructions.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I beg to remain a humble servant,
ever amazed, at your lotus feet.

Jaya Jagadīśa Dāsa
Initiation: 1971, April—London, UK

Viṣṇu Dāsa

As I write this, I'm sitting here looking at one of my favorite pictures of Śrīla Prabhupāda next to our altar.

I don't think anyone has captured this look in Prabhupāda's eyes as well as in this photo.

In the photo his hands are clasped together in his lap; his head is slightly tilted to his right; He is looking straight into the camera; he is looking straight into our souls.

You may be able to see this photo below.

I've never seen anyone look so serious and compassionate in any photos or paintings or in my lifetime.

Captured in this special moment, anyone can feel his intensity of devotion and concern for his disciples and the world.

Looking at his facial expression and into his eyes he seems to be saying: You all have such a long way to go…if you only knew what invaluable treasure I am giving to you. Please don't waste this human form of life…study these books…don't allow distractions or your false ego to overcome you. Chant Hare Krishna *mahā-mantra* and experience *sat-cid-ānanda*, the highest knowledge, happiness and eternal goal of all existence.

In bhakti sevā, your servant in Śrīla Prabhupāda's service,

Viṣṇu Dāsa
Initiation: 1971, April—Los Angeles, California, USA



Nārāyaṇī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please protect your ISKCON by empowering all your disciples to follow your orders. In a lecture on your Vyāsa-pūjā day in London, you gave your order to us:

> "So I hope that all of you, men, women, boys and girls, become spiritual master, and follow this principle. Spiritual master, simply, sincerely, follow the principles and speak to the general public. Then Kṛṣṇa immediately becomes your favorite. Kṛṣṇa does not become your favorite; you become Kṛṣṇa's favorite. Kṛṣṇa says in the Bhagavad-gītā, *na ca tasmād manuṣyeṣu kaścin me priya-kṛttamaḥ*: "One who is doing this humble service of preaching work, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, nobody is dearer than him to Me." So if you want to become recognized by Kṛṣṇa very quickly, you take up this process of becoming spiritual master, present the *Bhagavad-gītā as it is*. Your life is perfect." SP VP August 22, 1973

Our life is to follow your order

In a song recently published written by Cakravartī Dāsa, he sang:

Who will Light the Flame

Something sacred's trembling in the air tonight,
like a temple lamp that flickers when we close too tight.
Whispers moving softly where devotion used to rise,
measuring the heart instead of opening the eyes.
Who may carry love, and who must stand aside?
Who may speak the holy name, and who must only hide?
Who is called to kindle what was never meant to tame?
Tell me — who gets to light the flame?

Who gets to light the flame?
Who calls the sacred name?
If love lives in every heart,
why do we divide the same?

If God is everywhere we turn —
who grants authority?
Let it burn… let it rise…
let it open blinded eyes…

If love is truly living —
no soul needs disguise.
Religion was never meant to be a wall of stone,
never meant to crown a few and leave the rest alone.
It was meant to be remembering what the
soul has known —
love returning love, the seed already sown.

If truth is truly free,
why guarded purity?
If God is everywhere we turn —
who grants authority?
Let it burn… let it rise…
let awakening surprise…

If love itself is calling —
we all become the flame.
The lamp is not fading…
it's asking for air.
When the next heart ignites…
will we guard the walls…
or let it burn everywhere?

Kṛṣṇanandini and her family were not accepted as devotees in one Cleveland temple in 1972. They just wanted to follow Śrīla Prabhupāda. So her mother got the whole family into a car and just started driving and praying. At every junction she prayed which direction to go. In this way from Cleveland up north, they ended up at the Dallas temple far south where Śrīla Prabhupāda happened to be. Her mother got a private darshan with Śrīla Prabhupāda for five hours. At the end Śrīla Prabhupāda asked her "how many do you want me to initiate"? She said 'five'. The sannyāsīs warned Prabhupāda that they got bad reports from the temple about them. Śrīla Prabhupāda answered that wherever we see Kṛṣṇa consciousness then we must fan the spark. The next day, on Rādhāstami,the whole family got initiated. Let us take up this mood

of Śrīla Prabhupāda and fan the spark we see all over the world.

Your servant,

Nārāyaṇī Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1971, June—Florida, USA

Mahāśinī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Thank you for giving us the one true thing
In a cacophony of nonsense caused by Māyā's modes
The transcendental answer to find the Lord's abode
Is the one true thing.
Celebrities, presidents, scream for attention
All their blather; what they all fail to mention
Is the one true thing
Conspiracies, lies and misinformation
Standing above since the dawn of creation
Is the one true thing
Kali-yuga is truly destined
The saving grace; never questioned
Is the one true thing
Images of violence our senses assail
What allows us to see behind Māyā's veil
Is the one true thing
For now it seems the demons have ascended
The only hope that they can be upended
Is the one true thing
You lit the fuse for human salvation
Chaitanya's promise for every nation
The Lord's holy name without discrimination
In all the worlds there is one true thing
We, the drowning, would be wise to cling
We, the fortunate, must not fail to sing
Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare
May Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva always protect your ISKCON.

Your grateful daughter,

Mahāśinī Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1971, June—New Dwarka, Los Angeles, USA
Current location: Roswell, Georgia, USA
Contact: bakaalm@gmail.com

Sureśvara Dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Thank you for inviting us to Lord Chaitanya's hometown, Śrīdhām Māyāpur, which I visit nearly every year before Gaura Pūrṇimā. After the agonizing air travel from America, I've always sat in the Kolkata airport till sunrise, then taxied four hours north to the *dhāma*. But this year was different.

A few months before the trip, Ācārya Ratna Prabhu, the president of ISKCON Newtown, some 15 kilometers northeast of Kolkata, had visited the temple where I serve in Tucson, Arizona, and invited me to see the places where you grew up in Calcutta, as it was known during British rule. Grateful, I offered to present lessons from my Founder-*Ācārya* seminar series. After I'd shaken off the worst of the jet lag (which never seemed to slow Your Divine Grace), I started presenting in the morning, and a few devotees escorted me to your early pastime places in the afternoon.

Our first stop was Tollygunge in south Calcutta, where you made your divine appearance. Although the house was long gone, a part of the jackfruit tree above it, which had just died, was still there, and a cutting from the tree was growing nicely nearby. Since ISKCON had recently acquired the property, for me the new tree symbolized a fresh generation of devotees expanding your movement today.

Our next stop was the Mullik's Rādhā-Govinda Mandir, just down the road from your father's house, where you had received your first impression of Rādhā-Krishna Deities:

> When I think of Rādhā-Krishna, I think of first the Rādhā-Govinda Vigraha…because from my very childhood I am devoted to the same Deity… (Letter to Acyutānanda, Los Angeles, January 27, 1970).

Still a toddler, sometimes you would go alone and stand for hours gazing upon Rādhā and Govinda, who appeared very beautiful to you with Their fine dress and slanted eyes. It would be for the pleasure of Rādhā-Govinda that, beginning from the age of five, you would perform your miniature Rathayātrā festival.

Nearby, what was once your father's house sat on Harrison Road, later called Mahatma Gandhi Road. A little north of Mahatma Gandhi Road, at Urquhart Square, stands the college you attended, Scottish Churches' College (now Scottish Church College), with its stately architecture and well-kept grounds. One year ahead of you at the school was the spirited nationalist Subash Chandra Bose, from whom you heard talks of Indian independence. You were a serious student yet not enamored of Western education or scholastic achievements.

> "I don't like these things," you confided to your friend Rupendranatha Mitra. Rupen found that you were always thinking about "something religious, something philosophical or devotional about God." (*Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*, Vol. I, Chapter 2: College, Marriage, and Gandhi's Movement)

Before we left the college, I approached a student to ask her if she knew that our spiritual master had attended her school. "Of course I know," she smiled. "Everyone knows that Bhaktivedanta Swami attended Scottish Church College." Hearing her say your name, my heart swelled with pride.

At the end of your senior year, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you passed your final exams but refused the British diploma.

> At that time I was Gandhi's devotee. In 1920 I gave up my educational career and joined this Congress Movement. Because Gandhi's program was to boycott the university education and the British law court… (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Appearance Day lecture, Los Angeles, February 7, 1969)

Well aware of your self-description as "Gandhi's devotee" during that time, we next visited 1 Ulta Danga Junction Rd., the first address of the Gauḍīya Maṭh, where one summer evening in 1922 you met your spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. In ISKCON's possession since 2017, the Kolkata devotees have labored

hard to restore and transform the address into a first-class museum honoring your guru mahārāja.

Walking up the winding stairs to the roof, I was drawn to the sacred spot where you had pressed your palms, offered obeisance, and heard the Ṭhākura say:

> "You are all educated young men. Why don't you preach the cult of Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the Western world?"
>
> To which you challenged: "Who will hear your cult of Caitanya Mahāprabhu? You are a dependent nation, and who will hear? First of all you must have independence."
>
> But you were no match for the Ṭhākura: "So he argued, and he defeated me, and there was long talk."
>
> Then after coming down on the street, my friend Mr. Mullik asked me, 'What do you think of this *sādhu*?' So I appreciated. I said, 'Yes, now Caitanya Mahāprabhu's cult is in the hands of an able personality. Now it will be spread all over the world…'" (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Appearance Day lecture, Vṛndāvana, February 11, 1974)

Who knew that superspreader would be you, Śrīla Prabhupāda? Or that devotees worldwide would come to that Ulta Danga rooftop to worship the place where the seed of your movement was planted?

After recruiting hundreds of disciples and establishing dozens of temples in the West, in August 1970 Your Divine Grace returned to India, where you founded the first ISKCON India temple in Calcutta, at 3C Albert Rd, our last stop on the tour. There we had darshan of enchanting Sri Sri Rādhā-Govinda, Whom you installed in May 1971; then we chanted in your room where you dictated Bhaktivedanta purports, received guests, and instructed devotees, especially Western devotees, on how to survive and thrive serving Kṛṣṇa in Mother India.

Back in Newtown, I asked Ācārya Ratna about the huge temple they were building on their property, called the Abhaya Tīrtha project, and its relationship to the temple Your Divine Grace had founded on Albert Road. "The Albert Road temple is Kolkata's legacy project," he explained. "Śrīla Prabhupāda started ISKCON India there and visited often to preach and strategize the spread of Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the subcontinent. In Newtown

the Abhaya Tīrtha project is the fulfillment of Śrīla Prabhupāda's desire for a unique temple in his hometown." As evidence of your desire, Ācārya Ratna pointed to a framed letter excerpt on a wall of the community's temporary temple: "We shall open a very gorgeous branch in Calcutta. Calcutta is my birth-place, so all of you as my disciples do something unique in Calcutta. That will be fitting service to your Spiritual Master." (Letter to Gargamuni, Calcutta, September 25, 1970)

Ācārya Ratna's face beamed as he described Phase 1 of the project. "In addition to the multi-story temple, we are building a Bhaktivedanta Health Care Center, an expanded gośālā, a Govinda's restaurant, many classrooms, a community festival hall, a free prasādam hall for visitors, a spiritual library, a Śrīla Prabhupāda museum, and a Many Moons museum for Prabhupāda's direct disciples."

Noting the many moonlike devotees attending the Founder-Ācārya lessons in the mornings, keen to hear about Your Divine Grace, I have no doubt the Newtown devotees will fulfill their ambitious plans to glorify you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Your pastimes in Calcutta alone seem endless. "Please come again next year," said Ācārya Ratna while seeing me off to Māyāpur. "We have so many more Prabhupāda places to show you."

As the sun sets on the lives of us, your direct disciples, I'm heartened how your matchless gifts to everyone are in such capable and enthusiastic hands.

Your aspiring servant,

Sureśvara Dāsa
Initiation: 1971, July—Detriot, Michigan, USA

Somadās Dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Here I am again trying to glorify Your Divine Grace. I am not worthy or qualified but still feel it is my duty. After all, you have given me everything that I feel is important. You have given me the holy name. You have given me a life in devotional service. And unparalleled association with wonderful devotees.

I owe you my life. Please help me surrender to you.

Your servant,

Somadās Dāsa
Initiation: 1971, July—Boston, USA

Pañcharatna Dāsa

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

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

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

As my years add up
In this frail vehicle
I am in awe of your greatness
And the extent of the miracle

You brought to our world
When you founded ISKCON
In a small New York storefront
Giving form to your compassion

For the suffering souls
The victims of an age
Fully ignorant of the spirit
Only focused on the cage

With all its ornate bars
Polished and shining
But no thought of who's within
Starving and dying

You gave birth on that day
To more than an institution
You brought forth a family
United for a solution

To the universal ailments
Of each embodied being
Lost in the fog of ignorance
In a life without meaning

Your ISKCON miracle
Rescued me too
Gave me purpose
And a mission to pursue

A path of freedom
From endless strife
Cutting through illusion
With your sharpened knife

Of spiritual knowledge
Descending from the Lord
Now planted in my heart
My real life restored

My age in this world
Now approaches that time
When in your words you came
And made my life sublime

With the mahā-mantra
You delivered me from sin
And took me in your family
A new life to begin

Now on this most auspicious day
Of your divine appearance
I fall at your feet again and again
Offering gratitude for my deliverance

And a prayer to remain
Unworthy and foolish that I am
Your eternal servant,
Serving Lord Gaurāṅga's plan,

Sukhadā Devī Dāsī

Sacred Moments with Śrīla Prabhupāda

After reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and associating with his devotees, I finally met him in 1975 at the Miami Airport. My temple president, Abhirāma Prabhu, asked Nartaka Gopāla and I to scatter rose petals in Prabhupāda's path as he glided through the doors. I wasn't prepared for the deluge of feelings when I finally saw His Divine Grace. His stately presence, his gentle smile, his confidence, his effulgence, but foremost his love were on full display. As I struggled to calmly toss the petals in front of his lotus feet, I had the distinct feeling that this was the first time in my life that an experience far exceeded my expectations. I realized that every major event in my life had been somewhat disappointing..milestones that are celebrated … graduations, marriage, employment opportunities ….everything just didn't add up to the hype. Seeing Śrīla Prabhupāda made me an instant "groupie" although this had never been my style while seeing famous bands, personalities, etc. I simultaneously wanted to cry, laugh, all the while just concentrating on my service.

Miami Temple in Coconut Grove was beautified with a tropical climate and several palm trees. Śrīla Prabhupāda gave several lectures in the evening to a rapt audience underneath the palms, creating a mystical scene. He spoke of prasādam and the essential part it played in our movement. Prabhupāda announced that we all had come to the movement due to prasādam, even our temple president Abhirāma Prabhu! A hand rose asking if it was true that someone who had prasādam was guaranteed a human birth. "Yes," Prabhupāda replied. With this reply, there was an eruption of cheers and clapping at the realization of our already good fortune. When the audience calmed down, Prabhupāda continued, "There are some species of monkeys that are considered human." That made everyone more reflective as we realized there was more to going back to Godhead than taking prasādam.

One day when returning from book distribution, I wandered into the back yard completely forgetting that this area was off

limits while Prabhupāda was visiting. Immediately a devotee called, “Bhaktin Sandy, come in here! I entered the house and saw four heads one on top of each other witnessing Śrīla Prabhupāda receiving a massage from Śrutakīrti. My head went on top of the others. Watching Prabhupāda was mesmerizing. His golden body brilliantly shone, defying his age; he appeared youthful and strong. Time stood still for us as we intruded on this intimate scene.

Tamohara, my Sankirtan Party leader with his wife, Mantriṇī, and toddler daughter, Lalitā, decided to follow Śrīla Prabhupāda up the east coast while distributing books along the way. So Bhakta Chris, Bhaktin Marcia, and myself accompanied them and we embarked on a holy mission alternating with distributing books and having darshan of Śrīla Prabhupāda. After Miami we had darshan in New Vrindaban, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, New York, Detroit, and Chicago. Each time we had his *darśana*, we felt more qualified and enthused to distribute his books. I remember some days distributing 300 magazines at a traffic light and loving every moment of this special service. In Philadelphia, at a grand initiation ceremony I received the name, Sukhadā, the servant of one who gives happiness. One morning moving through the crowd, a devotee approached me with a tray of cookies and asked me to bring them to Prabhupāda. Winding my way through the sannyāsīs, temple presidents, etc. I reached the Vyāsāsana. I handed Prabhupāda the cookies and he inquired, “Where are the children?" Someone went to bring them in. I didn’t feel comfortable in that arena of males, so I left to go on the porch where I thought I could hear and see him. The porch was teeming with eager devotees so I decided to go to the end of the walkway. I picked some flowers and made a plan. When Prabhupāda came down the walkway I would give him the flowers.

Unfortunately, when he descended the stairs and started to walk towards me, it began to rain. Part of me wanted to abandon my plan, but another part was determined to offer the flowers despite the rain, and show my love to my spiritual master. When he approached I offered my bouquet of marigolds. He smiled and said, "Thank you very much! “Jaya Prabhupāda,” I responded and there I was, in the spiritual world with my guru and his disciples. Feeling transformed and inspired, I was ready to continue our mission. A small moment in time that still means the world to me.

One of our last stops on our transcendental journey was in Montgomery, Alabama. Tamohara, Bhaktin Marcia, and myself were

distributing beautiful *Back to Godheads* with an amazing picture of the Supreme Personality of Godhead on the cover. We didn't realize we were in dangerous territory. After a short time a policeman approached and decided to arrest us, obviously not appreciating our efforts at transforming the world. He jailed us, and as it was late in the day, our driver Bhakta Chris, was unable to bail us out.

The next morning they brought Bhaktin Marcia and I into a white room with a small window; we were definitely nervous. Shortly after, we were summoned to appear in front of the judge. He questioned each person about what we were doing, why, and what we had done before this. I explained I had been a teacher and thought I could accomplish my lofty goals by working with children, but I soon realized something was missing in the educational process. Each one of us had our turn in explaining our purpose to the judge. All the while, I felt so protected by Śrīla Prabhupāda. Miraculously, the judge dismissed us, apologizing even, (!) giving us his card, and letting us know he would help us in the future if needed!

We were famished after not honoring prasādam for so long and dear Mantriṇī had prepared a feast for us. We entered the RV, sat down, and suddenly there was a knock at the door. Lo and behold, it was the judge and the bailiff. Mantriṇī invited them in, and they sat down and took sumptuous prasad with us. The judge then offered a generous donation, received a *Bhagavad-gītā*, and departed with a big smile.

Prabhupāda, miracles happened, are happening and will happen wherever your instructions are being followed. Your mercy continues to spread due to prasādam, books, and kīrtana. So grateful to be part of your plan!

Initiation: 1971, July—Boston, USA

Viṣṇugadā Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my repeated humble obeisances at your perfect lotus feet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, As you revealed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Lord Krishna once visited Mithilā accompanied by great sages headed by Nārada. All were simultaneously invited to the homes of King Bahulāśva and Śrutadeva, both pure devotees living there. Lord

Krishna and His entourage accepted the two invitations by expanding themselves to fulfill both requests at the same time. In spiritual bliss, Śrutadeva welcomed and worshiped Lord Krishna and each one of the saintly persons at his home. Lord Krishna then commented:

> My dear Śrutadeva, all these great sages, *brāhmaṇas* and saintly persons have been very kind to you by personally coming here to see you. You should consider this opportunity to be a great fortune for you. They are so kind that they are traveling with Me, and wherever they go they immediately make the whole atmosphere as pure as transcendence simply by the touch of the dust of their feet. People are accustomed to go to the temples of God. They also visit holy places of pilgrimage, and after prolonged association with such activities for many days by touch and by worship, they gradually become purified. But the influence of great sages and saintly persons is so great that by seeing them one immediately becomes completely purified. (*Kṛṣṇa*, chapter 96)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, just as the great sages accompanied Lord Krishna to Mithilā, you personally took the trouble to visit us in New York City, not only once but several times. It is certainly our great fortune. And you kindly brought Lord Krishna with you, personally introducing Him to each one of us. I also witnessed how upon first seeing you we felt cleansed and overwhelmed with spontaneous happiness and tears beholding your transcendental presence, your smiles, and your beautiful radiant golden form. This is just as Lord Krishna predicted in the passage above. And furthermore, as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu made the tigers, elephants, and Bheels chant and dance passing through Jhārikhaṇḍa forest, you inspired us to chant the holy names and dance exuberantly, even though some of us (like me) were no more than aborigines.

Spiritual seekers everywhere should note these wonderful events, taking into account that the same miraculous phenomena regularly occurred in the hundreds of towns and villages you visited on six continents of the world. The scope of such *upakāra* had never happened before. It lends proof to the fact that, as you often said, Krishna *bhakti* is universal; within the heart of every living being and manifested by sound contact with Lord Krishna's pure devotee.

And just as the sages expanded themselves to be in more than

one place at once, making their benedictions accessible to more, you have expanded yourself to be in countless temples, preaching centers, and homes around the world through your deity form, sound vibration and compositions, enhancing the ever-expanding terrestrial domain of Lord Caitanya's movement.

The purifying nature of your presence is confirmed and glorified by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura in his prayer *Vaiṣṇave Vijñapti: gaṅgāra paraśa hoile paścate pāvan darśane pavitra koro-ei tomāra guṇa*. After bathing in the waters of the sacred Ganges many times, one becomes purified, but *just by seeing you*, the fallen souls are purified.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you allowed me to see you, but I am fully aware I remain a fallen soul and the lowest of men, somehow avoiding your full blessings. Nevertheless, I aspire to one day be counted as one of your minor servants even though my efforts and contributions to your mission thus far have been meager at best. And although I may have missed the opportunity in the past, I realized today that I never personally or directly asked you to bestow your mercy upon me. And as I advance in age, my chances to do so are dwindling. I know there are many many more qualified, more sincere, more intelligent, more capable, and more pleasing students than me. Still, I am confident that you are extremely kind and magnanimous and despite my disqualifications you might consider my humble request on this, your appearance day. Please.

Aspiring for the dust of your feet,

Viṣṇugadā Dāsa
Initiation: 1971, July—New York, USA

Saṅkarṣaṇa Dāsa Adhikārī

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet. I can never thank you enough for the causeless mercy you have been bestowing upon me for the last 54 years.

Starting in 1969 up until 1971, I was a young hippie singer-songwriter with a vision and a mission of bringing about a spiritual revolution on planet Earth. Through my songs and heartfelt performances, I was trying to awaken in people a higher state of consciousness beyond all miseries. One of my fans told me that I was

a spiritual master and that my songs were my teachings. Another fan wrote a song about me, describing how I had wonderfully transformed his life. Still, I knew that something was lacking in me. I was not there yet.

In December of 1970, I wrote in a song, "Everything is sacred no matter where I turn. Everything is sacred — I have so much to learn." I understood that God is everywhere, but I was not connecting with Him. I had to find that way.

Knowing that Jesus Christ was a perfect spiritual being, I started reading the Bible every day to discover the secret of his spiritual perfection so that I could follow in his footsteps and achieve the spiritual perfection I desired. Then, one most marvelous, illuminating day — Eureka! — I found it.

Lord Jesus Christ says, "Father, not my will, but Thy will be done." I then knew that my spiritual perfection would come from doing what God wants me to do, not what I want to do. But I had a problem … I did not know what God wanted me to do. How would I find out? He is omniscient, so why not ask Him? So I started praying every day, "Dear God, please guide me. How can I be Your perfect servant?"

And He heard my prayerful pleas. He sent His Holiness Viṣṇujana Swami to Austin, Texas, to teach me how to surrender to the will of God.

Under his guidance, I began the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. At that time, George Harrison had released the song *My Sweet Lord*, which became a number one hit in the U.S., the U.K., and many other countries, and sold over five million copies. Since I was a popular singer-songwriter, my idea was to be a Kṛṣṇa conscious singer-songwriter, teaching people about Kṛṣṇa through my songs.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I did not yet want to become your fully surrendered disciple.

However, everything changed when I heard a recording of the *Gurvāṣṭakam* prayers sung by the London devotees. They sang with such deep feeling, such love, such spiritual intensity, it was unlike anything I had ever experienced. When I heard that heartfelt *kīrtana*, my heart melted, tears flowed from my eyes, and I thought, "Wouldn't it be beautiful if I gave my life to Śrīla Prabhupāda."

From that very moment, I became determined that I must become your initiated disciple and as soon as possible. So, I began strictly following the chanting of sixteen rounds daily and the four

regulative principles. Then, on that most auspicious day, August 12, 1971, in a letter from London, you mercifully accepted me as your disciple. From that day on, my life has never been the same.

My earlier desire to be part of a spiritual revolution to uplift the world from misery has now found its perfect fulfillment by joining your Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. You are the greatest spiritual revolutionary in history. By your mercy, I now have the opportunity to assist you in delivering the entire world population back to their original identity as eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for your unlimited kindness upon me. Kindly bless me that I may become a completely pure devotee and serve you forever in your mission to bring all living beings back to their original home in the spiritual world.

Your most unworthy and fallen servant,

Saṅkarṣaṇa Dāsa Adhikārī
Initiation: 1971, August—Texas, USA

Ātmānanda Dāsa

Dearmost Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my respectful, humble obeisances. All glories to your most glorious service to your spiritual master, to the *parampara*, to all the devotees, and to the world.

It is incomparable!

You make it abundantly clear, Śrīla Prabhupāda, about the importance of associating with devotees of "the proper standard", of good character and behaviour. *The Nectar of Devotion* and *The Nectar of Instruction* explain how it is essential to associate with those who are more advanced than we are, if we want to advance most effectively and quickly in devotional service.

Therefore, I am deeply, profoundly, grateful to you for empowering and providing me such inspiring, exemplary devotees like HH Bhakti Tīrtha Swami, HH Janānanda Mahārāja, HG Jayānanda Dāsa prabhu, HG Dhīra Govinda Dāsa prabhu, and our recently departed HG Cāru Dāsa prabhu!

I meditate on you and your instructions, I see your videos and classes, and connect with you by carefully studying your books, as well as your conversations and *darśanas*. However, I am especially

inspired to do so and follow you by seeing the example of these sold-out servants of your divine self!

Having gone through a very difficult, but most valuable period of my life recently, I'm trying to understand more about my relationship with you and Krishna, the Supreme Controller.

And I wonder, *who* is calling the shots in the cosmic order? And *who* is pulling the strings?

In this regard, some points I consider have deepened my understanding, at least a little:

My connection with Krishna is through and by you.

You direct us, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to serve both guru and Krishna. At the same time when difficulties arise for me, I wonder how it is happening?!

How exactly is it arranged? I know that they're all arranged for my benefit, whether I appreciate that at the time or not, but *who* is calling the shots and *who* is pulling the strings?

As you explain, you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the spiritual master, are the external manifestation of the Supersoul. You are the manifest, individual, "Supreme Personality of Servitor Godhead" (CC), who is acting directly, as His instrument.

And "y*asya prasādād bhagavat prasādaḥ*" … "By the mercy of the spiritual master one receives the benediction of Krishna." I get Krishna's mercy by your mercy… And without your mercy I *do not* get it, and therefore cannot make any spiritual advancement!

So, from the *śāstras* and your many instructions, I understand that although Krishna may be pulling the strings, *you* are calling the shots!

Just like Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī mentions a devotee to Krishna, then He himself is pleased and becomes inclined towards that devotee.

Otherwise, how is it at all possible for a rebellious, devious, fallen and unqualified fool like me to have direct access to Krishna's mercy?!?!

> It IS NOT possible …
> Except, because of your relationship with Krishna, IT IS!!
> What is impossible becomes possible!

Because you have thus opened the path to my re-establishing my relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, I have learned (stubbornly) difficult lessons. This year has been an extraordinarily growthful and transformational one for me.

I feel foolish telling you about this, Śrīla Prabhupāda, but maybe

by practising like this, I can aspire to understand and apply the instructions of Lord Caitanya to feel like a fool in the presence of you, my spiritual master.

And it's a way to broadcast how you continue to remain with me (us), tolerating my foolishness and devious way of thinking and acting. I consider it your causeless mercy.

How could I ever repay you?

This past year, I endeavoured to present and facilitate a Transformative Communication Course through a book based on your teachings, entitled *Relationships That Work, The Power of Conscious Living, A Transformative Communication Approach to Self-Realisation*, by Dr, David B. Wolf/Dhīra Govinda das.

Even though I did so much preparation, organization, website and internet marketing, etc, etc, over a period of one and a half years, two weeks before the course was supposed to start, I had no registered participants!

I had begun by expecting and proposing – *and* publicly announcing – doing something on a grand scale, internationally, with dozens of participants.

And I was trying to control, micromanage, everything to make it all perfect.

However, because it was all about me making a big impression, looking good… "Oh, look at how Ātmānanda is doing such great preaching work on behalf of Śrīla Prabhupāda!" – I was courting disaster.

I allowed – chose – to let my own *anarthas* – my lower, self-centred, mundane ways of thinking and acting – to rule.

But neither you nor Krishna wanted me to maintain such a prideful mentality! So, Krishna took everything away, and thus simultaneously chastened and trained me far beyond where you and He had done so before.

I then experienced discouragement, depression and even hopelessness. It was a traumatic time for me.

I was thinking and pretending that I was independent even though you have explained my position throughout your teachings.

For example, "…. Real independence means complete faith in the mercy of the Lord without dependence on the conditions of matter." (SB 1.8.22, purport).

And "Real independence is how to get out of the clutches of these material laws." (SP lecture, Bg. 18.42–45, Durban, October 11, 1975)

Finally, after I had decided to postpone or cancel the course altogether, you arranged – just one week before the proposed start date (!) – for some sincere and serious souls to commit themselves, and we went ahead with the course!

You saw that maybe I had a little sincere desire to learn, transform, and to represent you more purely.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, without your training and example, I simply suffer in illusion. I want – and recommit – to become more understanding and convinced of the powerful and practical reality of your every word and action!

Your example of being completely active, and superhumanly so, but simultaneously fully dependent on Krishna for the result, is the perfect guidance, leadership and role-model (*ācārya*) for any sincere and serious, thoughtful people who want to make a lasting difference in the world.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you, thank you!!!

Crying at your lotus feet,
Your eternally indebted, aspiring servant,

Ātmānanda Dāsa
Initiation: 1971, August—London, UK

Jitāmitra Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

As time goes by and my spiritual life becomes ever more ingrained in who I am and what I do each day, I sometimes forget just how much you have given me in the way of spiritual structure and purpose. I am so grateful that I remain in the mood of wanting to do all of my spiritual practices rather than thinking of them as something I have to do. I never want to take any of this spiritual knowledge for granted or fail to remain eternally grateful to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Lately, I have been reflecting on the experiences I had—like so many others—when first coming in contact with you and your teachings through your books, lectures, and the association of your disciples. It was all so different from anything I had known

growing up, both in my concept of God and in the lifestyle I was raised in. Still very much a child at sixteen, I experienced so many memorable, life-changing moments over things that now seem so simple and familiar.

I remember the first time I heard you explain that we are not these bodies. You gave the example of family members standing around the deathbed of a loved one, crying that he was gone—yet the body was still there before them. Who, then, were they lamenting for? That was a real 'WOW' moment for me.

I remember the first time I spent a night in the ashram and was helped into a sari at 4 a.m. to attend maṅgala ārati and chant my first rounds on japa beads. That was the moment I realized my life would never be the same, because I knew I would keep coming back for more of this uplifting way to begin the day.

I remember being present at the Deity installation of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda when They were installed at our small Henry Street temple in Brooklyn, New York. I can still see it clearly. The room was crowded and filled with fragrant smoke from incense. I found a small place in a corner where I could see Their Lordships and sat there in stunned awe throughout the ceremony, feeling as though we had all been transported to another world. It truly was an "out of this world" experience.

I also remember returning to high school after a summer of regularly visiting the temple and realizing how deeply I needed the association of devotees. I felt that I could not live without their association, knowing they would help me remember Kṛṣṇa and protect me from māyā's influence. Gradually, I began to appreciate more and more what you had bestowed upon me through your mercy.

Now so much time has passed, and the tendency to take these things for granted can arise. They feel so natural, so much a part of my life, that I cannot imagine living without them. In one sense, I still appreciate all the gifts you have given me, but in another, I forget just how extraordinary they are.

The other day, while chanting and gazing at a beautiful, wall-sized mūrti of Lord Jagannātha that has hung in my temple room for many years, I experienced another of those "WOW" moments—an awakening to the Lord's beauty in this wonderful form. I realized that such moments are always available if I simply open my heart and mind to receive them and experience the ever-fresh, sublime beauty of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I pray that I will never take any of these gifts of spiritual life for granted and never forget how special they truly are. I pray that never a day will pass without thanking you for all that you have done for this fallen soul—who would know nothing of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, were it not for your causeless and selfless mercy.

Your loving servant and daughter,

Jitāmitra Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1972, January—New York, USA

Meena Devī Dāsī

Looking back at the early 60s, I was in my late teens and early 20s. Just awful. The terrible stupid dangerous things I did. But what choice did I have? I knew there was something more but what was it? Where was it? I have to find it? But how? It was a terrible time of darkness, fear, and madness. Just awful. It is a miracle I lived through it and do not have some terrible disease.

Then Śrīla Prabhupāda and the Hare Krishna movement were here. I first saw Śrīla Prabhupāda at a lecture at MIT 1967. I couldn't believe my eyes. His movements were so graceful. I thought, OMG, he doesn't have any bones. He's floating or swimming or something. Could not understand a word he said. His accent and the subject matter were too foreign to me. But I did get his penetrating look full force into the very core of my being. There I was, a deer in the headlights.

It wasn't until 1971 after more nonsense and madness that I joined the āśrama in Boston as a student. It was a few days after Śrīla Prabhupāda had visited. It was Janmāṣṭamī.

> Śrīla Prabhupāda, What hope did we have?
>
> If you had not come to America and
> then to the rest of the world…
>
> If you had not given us *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and other scriptures to enlighten and guide us.

If you had not taught us how to serve the Deities.

If you had not given us the mahā-mantra.

If you had not planted the seeds of a
Krishna conscious society.

If you had not given us Tulasī Devī.

What hope did any of us have? None.

Krishna wanted to give with a hundred hands…..
You acted as Krishna's ambassador….

With love and appreciation. And immense gratitude,
Your spiritual daughter,

Meena Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1972, May—Boston, USA

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Loving obeisances. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, my beloved Master and spiritual father.

Seek and you shall find… by the grace of Śrī Guru, the
grace of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Krishna and Sri Mahāprabhu,
and the grace of the saintly Vaiṣṇavas —

One day more than 55 years ago,

A wave of your grace and love,

Touched my stone hearted searching soul… and...
by a chance encounter…in Old Town Chicago,

You, my beloved Master Śrīla Prabhupāda,
appeared as a shining light on the front top
banner of a *Back to Godhead* magazine...

Your faithful follower, your dear disciple Bahulāśva
Prabhu extended your hand, through his hand,
gifting me, your generous invitation to,

Explore Krishna consciousness, the path
of love and service to the Divine,

The Bhakti yoga path of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Krishna
and Śrīmān Mahāprabhu and His Associates.

By your dedication, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to the instruction of
your Divine Master Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākur,

You made the arduous journey across seas to
ignite a sleeping nation of searching youth,

Awakening an army of inquiring and lost souls,

To love the Divine in service.

You sacrificed everything to bring the holy living

scriptures of Mother India to an audience who were searching for meaning and purpose.

You, dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, continue to inspire, guide and, yes, challenge my daily life by your loving presence.

It's 49 years since you left our physical company.

And, as you promised, you have never left our hearts, for in the quiet early morning practice and throughout the day, your divine presence is tangible.

Deep gratitude dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, for your abundant love.

Deep gratitude dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, for gifting me the holy name and your guidance through the holy scriptures, recorded classes and writings.

Deep gratitude dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, for your faithful family of devotees, well wishers, and kind friends who support the way forward with their witness and love.

Deep gratitude dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, for your silent presence through so many challenges I have experienced in this lifetime.

Deepest gratitude dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, for allowing me to send this little ripple of love on your holy appearance day.

I am eternally indebted to you, my Beloved Master.

Humbly with gratitude and love, in your service eternally,

Mañjuālī Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1972, May—Los Angeles, California, USA

Bhavatāriṇī Dāsī

Today I was listening to Kuśa reading from Śyāmasundara's book — the story of how A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda received the name and title "Prabhupāda." How rare and sacred this title is, and the exalted qualifications required to bear it. How Rūpa Goswami, Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswati Ṭhākur, and our own A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda were all uniquely deserving recipients of this divine honor.

Then Kuśa shared a realization — that Śrīla Prabhupāda, too, accepted a new name for our sake, just as we received new names. This deeply touched my heart and made me reflect on the immeasurable gift he has given us.

He once wrote to me:

> The only concern of the devotees is that so many rascals are suffering in this concocted civilization of illusory sense enjoyment — how can they be saved? So our Krishna Consciousness movement is made for that saving of rascals. (Letter to Bhavatarini, May 4th, 1974)

So, my dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Although I am a rascal, you have entrusted me with the service of helping to save the rascals — and thus, in doing so, I may also be saved. Though the restless mind and turbulent emotions may still seek to rage, you have subdued the beast and vanquished the inner demon, revealing instead your divine, endearing mercy. All glories unto Your Divine Grace, A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.

All glories to your divine disciples.

May I forever remain immersed in the association of the Lord's devotees.

Gaura-Nitāi jayate.

Jaya Rādhā-Krishna Yuga.

Your aspiring servant of the servant of the servant,
Your daughter,

Bhavatāriṇī Dāsī
Initiation: 1972, June—Los Angeles, California, USA

Gokulānanda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda:

Please accept my grateful obeisances at your lotus feet.

"*Kaler doṣa nidhe rājan*....." As the ills of Kali-yuga keep exploding all around us, in a seemingly hopeless chaos of demoniac fighting, we are compelled to keep our faith strong that Lord Chaitanya's saṅkīrtana movement can assuredly save mankind from Kali-yuga's increasing darkness.

With each book distributed, with every Harināma going out, that great light of hope is pushing back the demoniac forces that are vainly attempting to hinder Mahāprabhu's Golden Age of merciful gifts.

More and more of your direct disciples are leaving us, to be promoted up to your association as you lead us onward for our continued service to the saṅkīrtana movement.

This glorious truth continuously sustains all of our lives, as we all prepare for that ultimate destination.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda for allowing us to somehow or other continue spreading this greatest good fortune.

Your eager servant,

Gokulānanda Dāsa
Initiation: 1972, June—Portland, USA
Current location: Montreal, Canada

Janakarāja Dāsa

My dear spiritual master,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Recently I recovered my old Macmillan version of your *Bhagavad-gītā* and was thus inspired to read the second chapter of that most authoritative book of perfect knowledge.

You say in your purports that we have to accept the fact that we are the eternal servants of the Lord.

This "acceptance of the fact" made a deep impression on me. This is a fact that is in total opposition to the idea that I am the enjoyer. Rather I am the eternal servant. A direct attack on the false ego.

You also state that once we accept this fact we at once become liberated.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, with every reading of your books the same pages say different things to me according to my state of consciousness. The above facts made a deep impression on me this time.

As if conspiring to give me some realisation I also learned that our eternal service is just as we are doing now under your direction in rendering service to you and Kṛṣṇa.

To further this conspiracy I listened to a lecture today in which you said that sanātana-dharma or eternal characteristic of the living being is service.

You also said that the choice is simply: we either serve Kṛṣṇa or our senses but serve we must, it is the eternal characteristic of living beings.

For one who has tried, even within devotional service, to be the enjoyer, I am only now beginning to understand what is my actual position.

Of course this divine service is full of love and pleasure whereas the service of the senses is full of anxiety due to the temporary nature of the senses and their objects. This we know to be true.

But other than you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who has explained this message so perfectly?

What can I say in glorification of you who is delivering perfect knowledge to the whole world?

I think THANK YOU ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA is probably the most appropriate.

And so, even though I am so dull headed and obviously slow to learn, on your appearance celebrations, please accept my humble thanks at your divine lotus feet.

Your eternal servant

Janakarāja Dāsa
Initiation: 1972, June—Bury Place, London, UK

Viśvadevī Dāsī

My Dearmost Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble and respectful obeisances at Your glorious lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace

I again and again thank Kṛṣṇa to have allowed me to have you as my eternal spiritual master. In the *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam*, fourth canto, chapter 22, verse 47, it says that ***knowledge of Kṛṣṇa is such a great gift, it is impossible to repay the benefactor.*** I pray to always be engaged in devotional service under your merciful guidance with the deepest gratitude.

In 60 years, what you have accomplished is immeasurable. Kṛṣṇa's name has been heard in every corner of the globe. Millions of your books have been distributed, hundreds of temples opened, Rathayātrā celebrated all around the planet, and Kṛṣṇa worshipped everywhere. The immensity of what you so freely offer to humanity to deliver all the suffering conditioned souls is inconceivable. You fulfilled your dear spiritual master Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's desire and mission to spread Lord Caitanya's movement around the world.

On the 50th anniversary of the opening of your magnificent project the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple, we got a glimpse of what you had envisioned. Every day thousands of people come to have the darshan of their Lordships in the beautiful temple you have built for them.

I thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to have allowed me to be engaged in some capacity in the Deities' service for that opening day and after that.

Please forgive me for all the offences I have committed at your lotus feet, at the lotus feet of the Deities, the *dhāmas*, and the Vaiṣṇavas.

I beg to remain eternally be at your lotus feet, engaged in your loving service.

Your grateful insignificant eternal servant,

Viśvadevī Dāsī
Initiation: 1972, June—Heidelberg, Germany
Current location: UK

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances -

All Glories unto you.

Today on the auspicious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā in this year 2026 I am trying to say a few words in your glorification.

The amazing success of your preaching while on Earth did not come to you on a silver plate. It was your hard work over decades that, in due course of time, blossomed into the birth and worldwide existence of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.

You did not come as another reformer. You came as a great soul who set the example for others to follow.

There is a story in this regard - whether true or not, I cannot tell:

'many years ago in England, a monk asked before he died, to write the following epitaph on his gravestone:

"Here lies monk such and such. When I was young, I wanted to change the world. As I grew older, I thought perhaps I could change my nation. Later still, I thought that if I could only change my town. Even later, I thought: if only I could change my family.

Now, as I lie on my deathbed, I realize that if I had only changed myself, I could perhaps have saved my family, my town, my nation—possibly even the whole world."

That is your story, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

You are a true Ācārya — "*ācarati iti ācāryaḥ*" - he, who teaches not merely through words, but through personal conduct and example.

It was your example of hard work—translating from the early hours of the morning, publishing and preaching throughout the day—that inspired thousands of us young boys and girls to carry bags of books on our shoulders and distribute your books all day long, often under the most trying circumstances.

From the earliest hours of the day, you translated these books, practising what you were preaching – 'Books are the basis - Purity is the force - preaching is the essence - utility is the principle-

You walked your talk.-

And so we went out,

following your example, distributing your books, often until late at night, when we returned to the temples exhausted -

That was so because you were selling Back to Godhead magazine in the blistering summer heat of Delhi.

You were sick with high fever, lying on a thin straw mat in winter in your room in Rādhā-Dāmodara temple when two Godbrothers visited you.

"You need a bed" they said "otherwise you will die."

"I want to use every paisa for distributing literature," you answered.

That's why Kṛṣṇa and your Guru Mahārāja transferred huge amounts of credits to you

since you had purchased their hearts.

In the beginning of the movement you were living in a simple straw hut in Māyāpur, all the while talking of building the temple of the Vedic Planetarium, 'all marble and higher even than Victoria Memorial in Kolkata."

Bhavānanda Prabhu asked:

"Where is that money coming from, Śrīla Prabhupāda?

We don't even have the money for the subji tomorrow."

"Money will come" you replied: "Kṛṣṇa is not a poor man."

"But how Śrīla Prabhupāda is that money to come?

You smiled and said:

"Our Mādhava, He is the husband of the Goddess of Fortune.

All we have to do is to please our Mādhava.

Then the Goddess of fortune will shower money on us."

Indeed, that was the principle you upheld throughout your life, and by doing so, you spread the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement worldwide.

Not with gimmicks,

Not by trying to please the public.

By bold preaching:

"I am not going to change the truth for the Americans," you said to Umāpati Prabhu once, back in the 'Matchless Gifts' Second Avenue temple on the lower East Side in New York.

simply *sāṁsiddhir hari-toṣaṇam....*

pleasing Mādhava ...

the same secret formula you gave to Bhavānanda Prabhu years later,

And - wonders of wonders -

phalena paricīyate -

it worked.

That Benedictine Monk, Father Emmanuel Jungclausen you met in 1974 in Germany, the late Abbot of the Benedictine Abbey of Niederaltaich said, shortly before he passed away:

"I have been following your movement ever since I met

Śrīla Prabhupāda.

My conclusion after so many years is, that there is lot of piety in this movement.

Therefore it will flourish."

One Man – One God – One True Religion -

Millions and millions of people

worldwide,

chanting HARE KṚṢṆA today.

You walked in the footsteps of your spiritual master till the end of your life.

Lifting your hand in that final moment,

saying:

"Everything moving and non-moving—there is nothing but Kṛṣṇa. This consciousness is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness."

Then, few moments later,

saying: "Hare Krish..."

you passed away.

Thank you much, Śrīla Prabhupāda

for your precious gifts.

You are saving the world.

- even me.

Hare Kṛṣṇa,

Your servant,

Pṛthu Dāsa

Initiation: 1972, June—Heidelberg, Germany Current location: Vṛndāvana, India Contact: prithu.acbsp@pamho.net

Vaiṣṇavānanda Dāsa

REMARKABLE ŚRĪLA PRABHUPADA

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

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

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this most auspicious and miraculous

day of your divine appearance, Vyāsa-pūjā, please bestow upon me the ability to adequately praise you. To completely extol your unfathomable mercy is insurmountable, it is juxtaposed to Śeṣa Nāga who praises Mahā-Viṣṇu with millions of unlimited tongues, and yet, can never fully conclude glorifying the Supreme Lord.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your disciples, granddisciples, and sincere followers are unable to satisfactorily sing all of your magnificent glories. However, we fervently pray that our feeble attempt to praise you will be kindly accepted.

Among many of your accomplishments, you established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness in just twelve short years. Your foremost, and crown jewel given to the world and your spiritual master, His Divine Grace, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī are your lucid translations of the esoteric Vedic śāstras, namely *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *The Nectar of Devotion*, etc., which are all unparalleled. All of your original books are highly acclaimed and have received numerous accolades by erudite scholars, scientists, prolific authors, eminent professors, distinguished academicians, et al.

Another matchless gift you have bequeath upon the Western World, since you embarked to fulfill the order of your spiritual master, is your magnanimous contribution inherent in the doctrines of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the chanting of the holy names in every town and village:

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Yes, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are a true divine emissary who came to introduce the most effective panacea of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and remedy the suffering of humanity. In particular, you have blessed your disciples by creating a spiritual family (ISKCON) that emanates from a variety of creeds, religions, nationality, race, ethnicity and transcends all mundane designations.

Your direct disciples, granddisciples and sincere followers are forever indebted to you for saving us from the clutches of material existence, and we can never repay you for your causeless mercy.

We eagerly dedicate our lives to happily serve you in the eternal life of full knowledge and bliss. And most notably, we all deem that you are simply remarkable, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your fallen disciple,

Vaiṣṇavānanda Dāsa
Initiation: 1972, July—Atlanta, Georgia, USA
Contact: vaisnavananda@yahoo.com

Ali Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

In many wonderful ways you have worked to bestow the blessing of Kṛṣṇa consciousness upon the world, but perhaps your greatest contribution is the personal change you have brought about in the hearts of your disciples. Their joy and purity, their dedication and freedom from vices, are all evident in their lives, but the feeling of gratitude that each of them feels toward you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is practically inexpressible.

I therefore borrow the words of the great devotee Prahlāda, who prays thus: "My Lord, due to material desires I was falling into a blind well full of snakes, following the common people, but Your servant, Nārada Muni, my spiritual master, kindly accepted me as his disciple and instructed me on how to attain the transcendental position. Therefore my first duty is to serve him. How could I ever give up his service?" (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.9.28)

You have actually saved your disciples from a cumbersome materialistic life, delivered them from the confusion of this world, and led them on the path to Kṛṣṇa. You have now left this world and returned to your original abode, but although you are no longer with us physically, you live eternally in your teachings, in the vast literature you have left us, in the movement you started, and in the memory of your personal example, an immaculate example of uninterrupted dedication to your master, to the masters who preceded him, and to the Supreme Lord in His various forms as you have taught us to worship Them.

I could compare your books to jewels, which you have given as a testimony of love to your disciples and followers in particular and to the whole world in general, and now that we have them in our hands, how could we not feel rich, poor wretches that we were? Now we can show these jewels to everyone; and we can also show how they have the power to change us—not partially, but they transform us radically in all kinds of ways. These are not hidden changes, but

visible ones that everyone can observe.

From the pages of these books, in which you invested most of your life, working tirelessly for endless hours each day and night for months and years, one can perceive the full strength of your devotion to your spiritual master and your firm will to save this confused world, where people do not know where they come from or where they are going. I know that while reading your books, many people feel with every page the sense of heaviness that oppresses them vanishing, and a feeling of light and cheerful hope taking over. I think they glimpse, at the end of the dark tunnel of material problems, the light of a new life filled with transcendental experiences.

You once said, "If I could make just one pure devotee, I would consider my mission a success!" But see how many pure devotees you have made! And see how many you are still making! We can't even imagine how many more you will make in the future! As I look around, I see your disciples who have dedicated their lives to your mission, all now elderly, and I see so much devotion reflected in their services, all extraordinary, all wonderful. Then I see new faces —boys and girls who are putting all their youthful enthusiasm and vigor into continuing to expand your work to make this branch of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's tree, called ISKCON, even more luxuriant so it can bear unlimited quantities of good fruits in the form of good examples, beautiful preaching, excellent care of the temples and Deities, so dear to all of us, and so on, just to name a few.

I conclude by borrowing another phrase, this time from a very great devotee of Mahāprabhu and author of the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, who at the end of his work expresses himself with great humility: "The sky is unlimited, and many birds fly higher and higher according to their own abilities." (*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Antya-līlā 20.79)

One can speak or write only to the extent that one's intelligence and spiritual realization allow. Kṛṣṇa's personality is unlimited, as are His names, forms, qualities, and pastimes, but I am certainly not an eagle soaring above the Himalayan peaks at 30,000 feet; I am a mere sparrow who can only fly among the branches of trees. Thus I am not the most suitable person to glorify the unlimited qualities of Kṛṣṇa and His bona fide representative. There are many other devotees capable of soaring to such heights and composing hymns for your glory. However, in my own small way, I nurture a strong desire to look out at this infinite sky, praying that your benevolent

gaze will fall upon me, too, and grant me the strength to always give my best, under any circumstances.

Your servant,

Ali Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1972, July—Paris, France

Gauragopāla Dāsa

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 Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Śrī Advaita, Gadādhara, Śrīvāsādi Gaura bhakta vṛnda.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare / Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda who arrived in the Western world 61 years ago (1965) at the advanced age of 69 years old with a wonderful gift for the entire world.

In just 12 short years, Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu (God) have become established in cities and farming communities all over the world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you taught us in those early years of ISKCON, that life in this temporary decaying material world is consistently difficult. To help us advance and become serious in spiritual life, you made it a condition of initiation that your disciples must always chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra 16 rounds a day and read your books daily in the association of serious devotees. Telling us that by following your instructions, Kṛṣṇa will always help us and protect us on our spiritual journey back home, back to Godhead.

Despondently over the years, some devotees have experienced great trials and tribulations in their endeavour to realise and follow your strict standards mentioned above, you warned us that the spiritual pathway is often never easy as confirmed in scripture:

> Out of many thousands among men, one may endeavour for perfection, and of those who have achieved perfection, hardly one knows Me in truth. (*Bg*. 7.3)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have also personally taught me that no matter how fallen we are, we should never give up the goal of achieving Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You personally told me this while I was guarding your room in Melbourne Temple, Australia, in early 1976, giving me further appreciation, clarification and understanding of a letter you sent me in 1975.

I have learnt over the years that pure selfless devotees like you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are extremely rare to find, associate with and serve. Fortunately for us, before you left this world in November 1977, you had already trained up many of your young disciples who are still here today nearly 50 years later in 2026, helping a new generation of devotees in your ISKCON society.

Such dedicated devotees are recognised by their Kṛṣṇa conscious words (by always remembering Kṛṣṇa and never forgetting Him), actions, humility and guidance towards the fallen *jīva*-souls suffering in this decaying material world.

You also taught us to be vigilant in this degraded age of Kali-yuga polluted by hypocrisy, envy, fault finding, lust, anger, exploitation, quarrel and the selfish accumulation of wealth (greed) gathered by impersonal imposters masquerading as religious, political and community leaders.

As you have said Śrīla Prabhupāda, there is always hope for the vigilant, honest, and sincere seekers of truth, even if there is some fall down along the way in their attempts to be Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Such spiritually alert devotees will eventually overcome their bad habits, faults, fall downs and misplaced faith, and never again let themselves be cheated by charismatic bullies masquerading as leaders, who rule with abuse, exploitation, and fear tactics.

Such impersonal bogus so called leaders are in many cults around the world, who impersonate spiritual teachings yet have no idea how to properly see beyond the external material bodily covering (matter) of the *jīva*-soul (anti-matter), and properly guide the genuine seekers of truth on the path back home, back to Godhead (Kṛṣṇa).

A bonafide spiritual master like you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, leads all sincere seekers of truth to follow your instructions and voluntarily serve Kṛṣṇa in a capacity they desire and are happy with.

Also, in Vedic teachings, there is no such punishment as 'eternal

damnation for the sinful and fallen *jīva*-souls' in the material world because karmic reactions, good and bad, are temporary. Serious devotees of Kṛṣṇa will always question anyone who claims to be an authority on Vedic teachings.

For such sincere devotees, there is always a clear roadway pathed out with devotional contributions, cooperation, loving exchanges, and reciprocation with Kṛṣṇa voluntarily achieved in the spiritual world.

The spiritual worlds of the Vaikuṇṭha planets and Goloka Vṛndāvana are Kṛṣṇa's eternal abodes where intentional co-operation and exchanges are eternally expanding the reciprocation between Kṛṣṇa and His dear devotees.

Kṛṣṇa's eternal abode is where His dear devotees always think of Him, try to please him in play, and never forget Him, with the only desire to selflessly contribute to His amazing pastimes.

Association with Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world is deliberately a two-way relationship of reciprocation, cooperation, personal convictions expressed as loving exchanges, which are eternally expanding, thriving, and enriching the relationship with Kṛṣṇa in an unlimited variety of devotional and amazing ways.

By choosing to voluntarily serve Kṛṣṇa in this way, in a non-dictatorial, but co-operative reciprocal way, the individual *jīva*-souls (devotees) will perpetually remain in the spiritual world of pure devotional service without ever falling down to the temporary material world of repeated birth and death.

Genuine love or service is only possible between two, on a two-way street of loving returns, personal contributions, and reciprocation. Such a loving atmosphere of giving and sharing between Kṛṣṇa and His devotees is always encouraged by Kṛṣṇa just so love is expressed in two directions.

> Love means a relationship between two persons then there is exchange, then there is love. I must deal with you open-hearted; you must deal with me open-hearted, then there is love. So, if you want to love Kṛṣṇa, God, then these things must be there. (Conversation with Nandarani and Ali, Aug. 9, 1976, Tehran)

> We have got the propensity to love. Love means somebody else. Love cannot be done or love cannot be executed by only one, there must be two. I love somebody;

somebody loves me, there must be lover, there must be the beloved, and the reciprocation between both, then there is love. (*SB* 1.2.6, Delhi, Nov. 12, 1973)

The golden rule is to remember Kṛṣṇa with dedicated voluntary service and never forget Him.

Kṛṣṇa's surrendered devotees never lose their individual ability to contribute their own personal unique distinctive offerings based on personal convictions, intentional participation, and collaboration within Kṛṣṇa's eternal pastimes.

Kṛṣṇa always encourages His devotees to willingly offer individual loving additions to the relationship that adds mystery and variegatedness to the devotees' further spiritual offerings, participation, and advancement in Kṛṣṇa's sweet pastimes.

As Śrīla Prabhupāda taught us, we must never forget that Kṛṣṇa serves and loves His dear devotees far more than they can ever serve and love Him.

By looking hard enough and praying to Kṛṣṇa and His established pure devotees like Śrīla Prabhupāda for their wonderful guidance, the sincere devotees will only associate and seek out Kṛṣṇa's genuine pure devotees and never bow down to the impersonal bogus Kali-yuga imposters exploiting human society all over the world.

Only then can aspiring devotees find real caring genuine Vaiṣṇava devotees of Kṛṣṇa who humbly nurture and encourage them to deliberately serve Kṛṣṇa the best way they can, instead of being compelled or threatened to serve in a dictatorial forceful way. Real devotional service is always voluntary and never forced. Only then will the present impersonalism infesting human society around the world stop.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for bringing this wonderful Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement to the entire world.

Your fallen yet aspiring and determined servant,

Gauragopāla Dāsa (now in my 75th year)
Initiated on July 10, 1972, Sydney Australia

Janmanālaya Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet!

I try to find words of my gratitude, of glorification, words that describe your nature, your grace, your deep, deep compassion. You allow me to relate to you as a son, as a member of your family, as a member of Krishna's family. KRISHNA, who wants us to be… Krishna…who wants us to relate to Him. You reached out to us as we were drowning in an ocean of tears, accumulated through thousands and thousands of years through human history. From Vaikuṇṭha, you reach out to us, and somehow or other you touched my heart, that was only open to the sweet illusions of this world. You advise not to find shelter in daydreams, in the illusion of a carefree existence in this world…no…but to look beyond and beneath the many layers of indoctrinations about who we are and who we should be. There, beneath all these layers lies the original self, the Krishna given personality. You encourage us to simplify our cluttered external existence, which separates us from the deep and eternal person we are. You encourage us to live from the burning core of our hearts.

And so each of us is on a journey now, embracing the concrete situations of our lives and at the same time we all are on an inner pilgrimage. We have to work out the details of our lives and at the same time are challenged to deal with this inner life, our relation in the spiritual world, that is under and beyond the events which try to absorb our attention.

With your fatherly guidance we rediscover our original selves, through service and through compassion for others too.

I want to pick up and live in that spirit of emergency that you tried to implant in us. And I want to hold trust in the heritage you placed in our hands. Many mistakes were made, collectively and individually. But, like one says, it may take a bundle of mistakes to arrive at something sublime.

You showed me that it is possible to jump over my own shadow. Despite all my disqualifications, I beg humbly and with gratitude for the shelter of your lotus feet, the only shelter for us all, for my family, for my wife and myself.

Your servants,

Janmanālaya Dāsa and Īśvarī Devī Dāsī
Initiation: July 1972, Paris, France
Current location: Almvik, Sweden

In Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism the association of devotees is considered to be essential for the practice of bhakti-yoga. Of the nine limbs of bhakti, the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra is the most important. It is so important that some of our ācāryas, those great souls who teach by example, chose for a time to go into seclusion in order to be better able to fully absorb themselves in transcendence, either chanting exclusively, as did our grandfather *gurudeva*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, or as in the case of our beloved Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda chanting and preparing for the worldwide propagation of this great mantra for the deliverance of humanity.

Dear paramārādhya, most worshipful Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda. You took the mandate of your *gurudeva* as your life and soul. For this we are ever grateful. Please accept this meagre offering from your insignificant disciple.

Obeisances to the Times of Solitude of One Mahābhāgavata in Anugatya of Another

Alone near the bank of the Ganges he chanted Their names

For ten years he chanted, like Haridāsa Ṭhākura, he chanted Their names

Not for becoming *siddha*. He already was.

But to show the importance of chanting Their sweet holy names

As a young man, you met him, he told you to go to the West.

To bring the great message of Mahāprabhu to the West.

Alone at the Śrī Rādhā Dāmodara Temple, you chanted Their names.

Not for becoming pure. You already were.

Translating, explaining your opus of magnum proportion, *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*.

Alone near the holy Yamunā, you wrote, and you chanted Their names.

For They are the WHO, They are the WHY:

ŚRĪ ŚYĀMASUNDARA-RASAVATI RĀI!

Alone in that dangerous place called the Bowery you chanted Their names

In the mid 1960s, in a district where mayhem ensued.

Hand in beadbag, somehow, you lived far from the madding crowd,

Then, you opened your arms!

To the poor. To the drug-crazed, the wretched, who yearned to be free.

Eventually even to someone as lost and unworthy as me.
You chanted and chanted Their sweet holy names
Not to gain anything for yourself, or to become well-known.
But to show us that one who's EN-CHANTED is never alone!

Rādhāśyāma Dāsa
Initiation: 1972, July—New York, USA

Sākṣī Gopāla Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

My eternal spiritual master, please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. Please accept these lines of glorification, offered today on your most sacred Vyāsā-pūjā and marking the sixtieth year since you first registered your ISKCON society from your New York storefront temple, on the 13th July, 1966.

"IF THEY KNEW WHAT I WAS DOING..."

PART I

A SECOND in Lord Brahmā's day
For us, ten thousand years
When Gaura-Nitāi unfold Their plan
To lift us from our tears
You seize the day and sow the seeds
Of Kali's overthrow—
The flood of transcendental books
You laboured to bestow

In little more than twenty years
Since end of World War Two
You bring the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam
To lands you never knew
You've changed the course of Kali-yug'
That love of God may grow—
To revive the soul's connection
That we left so long ago

The risks you took to turn the tide
And save us each from death
We cannot gauge or comprehend
Nor pay you back the debt

We owe you for eternity—
Though lazy, dull and slow
We'd no purpose or direction
Til we met your mercyflow

A summer's day. The Manor grounds
Shyam'sundar at your side—
I tag along behind you
And I hear your brief aside

As you cross the empty tennis court
Adrift with summer snow*
Confiding: "If they read my books
They would have killed me long ago"

Your guru's order filled your heart
And brought you to the West
Lord Kṛṣṇa never left your side
Throughout each trial and test
Tinnitus, headaches, heart attacks

The dangers of Skid Row
"If they knew what I was doing
They'd have killed me long ago"

"If they knew what I was doing
They'd have killed me long ago"
Your words hold such significance
That only you could know

—Alone—against the Kali-yug'
You swim against the flow

"If they knew what I was doing
They'd have killed me long ago"
You arrived beneath the radar

When you landed on the shore
The transcendental nemesis
To break down Kali's door—
To seed a revolution that

The world has yet to know—
"If they knew what I was doing
They'd have killed me long ago"

You never compromised your dress
—Shaved head and saffron robe—
You brought Lord Kṛṣṇa's Holy Name
To sanctify the globe

With such missionary fervour
That will shake the status quo
"If they knew what I was doing
They'd have killed me long ago"

PART II

YOUR ARRIVAL TIME was perfect
As you caught the rising tide
—A sea of disillusioned youth—
Arranged to coincide
With advancements in technology
To help your mission grow
"If they knew what I was doing
They'd have killed me long ago"

The thirty-five-mill SLR*
Dictaphone and cassette tape
The airline flights that spanned the globe
The Kodak Super 8
All served to help you preach

Then—TV, Film, and Radio—
"If they knew what I was doing
They'd have killed me long ago"
As offset-litho printing plates
Replaced the Letterpress
Your Back To Godhead magazine

Built bridges East and West

Through ISKCON Press, then Dai Nippon*
You watch production grow
..."IF they read my BOOKS
They would have killed me long ago"
Your purports and translations
Of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam
Were dictated by the Lord Himself
To light the ways of Man

In the Kali-yuga darkness
Where *rākṣasas* run the show
...."IF they read my BOOKS
They would have killed me long ago"

(You said:) "If ISKCON fell tomorrow
It's already far too late...
Our books—already out there
Have transformed the planet's fate"
And who e'er receives your precious words
receives your mercyflow
..."IF they read my BOOKS
They would have killed me long ago"

You witnessed the emergency
Around you on your travels
The slaughterhouse of modern life
That karma soon unravels

You challenged rascal leaders
And exposed them blow by blow
..."IF they read my BOOKS
They would have killed me long ago"

Your plan to revolutionise
The Godless ways of Man
Will not be taken lightly
When the Vaiṣṇava makes a stand
Though you flew beneath the radar
With a plan that few can know

"If they KNEW what I was DOING
They'd have killed me long ago"

The voidists and impersonalists
Dissolve beneath your gaze
The Vedic rites of sacrifice
Have failed to earn your praise
Cast-conscious *smarta brāhmaṇas*—?
You tell them where to go
..."IF they read my BOOKS
They would have killed me long ago"

PART III

YOU MADE IT CLEAR: "We're here
To challenge everyone" you said
Your mission is the antidote
To falsehoods we've been fed:
"All life evolves from chemicals
No need for God, or soul..."
"If they knew what I was doing
They'd have killed me long ago"

Yet all the time no thought of danger
Ever stayed your hand
As you worked beneath the radar
On your Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam
Kṛṣṇa's literary incarnation

—come with Nāma-prabhu—
To spread the yuga-dharm' of harinām
All credit goes to you
The habits of the world's elite
Reveal their ruthless colours
The mask has slipped—it's plain to see
They've no concern for others

Delighting in their decadence
They make a Godless show
"If they knew what I was doing
They'd have killed me long ago"

Who are the "They" you warned us of?
—Of what persons did you speak—?
Whose agenda did you threaten
When you only lived to preach?

Your very name means "fearlessness"
(From depths we barely know)
"If they knew what I was doing
They'd have killed me long ago"

Plans for Kali's dark parade
Now lurk behind the scenes
A digital Dystopia
A technocratic scheme
Where all the world is quantified
And under their control
..."IF they read my BOOKS
They would have killed me long ago"

Yet each and every *kīrtana*, book
And public *harinām*
Is another blow to Kali-yug'
—Frustrating Kali's plan—
Whose demonic institutions
Time and tide will overthrow
"If they knew what I was doing
They'd have killed me long ago"

Each Rathayātrā festival
Each free prasādam plate
Each programme in a school or hall
Is Opening The Gate
The Gateway of your mercy
And the blessing you bestow
To revive each soul's connection
That we left so long ago

You told us: "First they'll laugh;
Then persecute; and—finally—adore"
That: "Preaching will be very good
After Third World War™

When our children's children
Best of preachers—come to join the show
And play their part in *Varṇāśrama*
As practised long ago

PART IV

YOUR WORLDWIDE flood of books
Forever dissipates the night;
Your words will guide all honest souls
And lead them to the light;
And when future global leadership
Seeks out the highest truth
You've printed more than HALF A BILLION BOOKS
To offer them the proof

(You said:) When karma from its Empire days Afflicts the British Isle
The nation—turned to beggars—
Will no longer live in style
Yet land will yield to willing hands
Of those with crops to grow
A future bright for those
Who follow ways of long ago

"Land will be there for taking"
After World War Three collapse
With every chance of deep revival
For those falling through the cracks
Of a digital economy
Controlled by central banks
Instead they'll honour land and cow
While following the sacred vow
To chant Lord Kṛṣṇa's Holy Name
With gratitude and thanks

The pioneers of Village Life
Will do as you suggested
Simple living, thinking high
Where manpower is invested
In tools and seeds and land to grow
In food and heat and shelter

As all around is swept away
In Kali's helter skelter

O Prabhupāda! Your books contain
The transcendental seeds
You urge us each to cultivate
While pulling up the weeds
Still growing in the hardened heart
—Despite some outer show—
Which stunt the bhakti-latā-bīja
That must take root to grow
In Humility and Honesty
Our lives become complete
When we serve you in your service
At your guru's lotus feet
And with eagerness receive
The timeless blessing you bestow
To revive our soul's connection
That we lost so long ago

The treasure of your pastimes
Is discovered in the books
—Biographies of Divine Grace
Your disciples undertook—
To save your *līlā* for posterity
That all the world may know
How you revived the soul's connection
That we lost so long ago

We pray we not obstruct or kill
The words that you impart
In the river of your mercyflow
That purifies the heart
The heart of each devotee
And your ISKCON institution
The heart of all your precious books
That urge a revolution
Of direction and intention
That the world can ne'r defeat
When we take to heart the shelter
Of your sacred lotus feet

Ever begging for your mercy.

Your humble servant,

Sākṣī Gopāla Dāsa
Initiation: 1972, August—London, UK

Yogīndravandana Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

It is that time of year again where your devoted disciples make an effort to honor, appreciate and express their gratitude for you and your unalloyed devotional service. It's a great privilege to be among your dear servants who gave their youth to you in your elderly years to realize the dream of your gurudeva and his disciplic succession. Certainly it was the arrangement of Panca Tattva through time and the modes of material nature. However, each one of us chose to give you our time, energy, intelligence and money. It was a great advantage for all of us including you, the leader and foremost of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta's celebrated disciples.

Today, like yesterday we are still worshipping your *vapu* and following your *vāṇī*, however whatever bad things we have done have returned to haunt us and hunt us down. That is good for us but bad for you, and we are greatly embarrassed as a group to have put a stain on your name. The devotees, your disciples and their disciples, are working very vigilantly to resolve all these matters with dignity and integrity. Out of frustration many of us are unsatisfied and many have left this world to be with you. Still, by the power of Lord Nityānanda, whose appearance is today, and Gaurāṅga, whose appearance is in early March, this saṅkīrtana movement you created is rolling on nonstop because of you and the previous ācāryas.

Please pray for our welfare Śrīla Prabhupāda, and save us from impiety and sense gratification (subtle and gross), and help us to

overcome the skeletons in our closets. Protect us from our duplicitous minds and lead us on to victory in your divine service.

Śrīla Prabhupāda kī Jai!

I beg to remain your unalloyed servant birth after birth,
Sincerely,

Yogīndravandana Dāsa
Initiation: 1972, October—New Orleans, USA

Śukla Dāsī

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda

It has to be considered astonishing that at an age when many choose to retire and live a peaceful life in the garden, Śrīla Prabhupāda decided to take on the monumental task of fulfilling the orders of his spiritual master.

Adopting the task of bestowing upon the world the pure path of bhakti, lighting the way for humanity to receive his causeless mercy in showering the knowledge of past ācāryas and the 'Song of God' itself.

It is by this mercy that advancement may be awarded. Śrīla Prabhupāda's devotion to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Goswami, his beloved guru, and the acknowledgement of our disciplic succession by his relentless preaching is a perfect example of how to constantly evoke the delight of the spiritual master. This simple lesson in devotion began with the '*ting, ting*' of his *karatālas* and the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. Not sitting quietly in a garden in Vṛndāvana, but in the mist and bustle of New York, a vibration that would expel the darkness we were so accustomed to.

Fortunately at this time for the world, Prabhupāda considered *Harināma*, the printing press, and a flood of saffron clad inexperienced fumbling souls to spread his mission. With this faith we clambered into the back of the van, cold showered, fresh faced and eager to change the world.

As a travelling book distributor in Australia for several years, I had come to realize the importance of being bold. Now as a Pūjārī in Hawaii, this practice has not left me when wanting to spread the words of my spiritual master.

I had heard the famous Russian Ballet Dancer, Rudolph

Nureyev, was to perform at the Waikiki Shell in Hawaii — his last performance as a dancer before taking up the position as Director and Choreographer to the Famous Opera Ballet Company of Paris. As my mother was the Director of an important art gallery in Australia, I had the opportunity to meet several famous people on a regular basis. One, was an international entrepreneur. So knowing Michael, I decided to attend the performance — garlands and books in hand. After many curtain calls, I sent a message letting him know I was out front. Being escorted backstage, I was able to garland both Michael and Nureyev who was absolutely thrilled as I presented him with *Kṛṣṇa Book*.

I explained that in the 1920s the International Famous Dancer Vaslvav Nijinsky had performed what was revolutionary at the time, the '*Ballet of the Blue God*'. I explained that the knowledge of the Vedas within these pages was his inspiration. He promised he would read it. A few years later I learnt his last and most cherished work and international world tour performed by the Paris Opera Ballet company was '*La Bayadere*', The Temple Dancer, set in South India. Hearing this, I immediately remembered Śrīla Prabhupāda saying when distributing these priceless gems, that simply by touching the treasures given within these books would change the hearts of those lucky enough to receive their mercy.

Thus, I believe this small story is a wonderful example of how our beloved guru's mercy can awaken the heart in ways we can never imagine. This genuine fidelity to the Absolute Knowledge of the previous ācāryas, the sincere concern for humanity, and the reawakening of the soul's constitutional position of service and love for the divine Lord. Śrīla Prabhupāda's gift of knowledge, his humility and appreciation for his devotees was not only endearing but these examples of recipient's response of his special mercy holds us to those two lotus feet.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Yours in service,

Śukla Dāsi

Initiation: 1973, February—Melbourne, Australia

Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

This is a very short offering as we moved away from London four years ago and are set up on a farm in Wales which I see totally as a gift from you. We are busy offering courses on agricultural development for devotees and newcomers.

I made a visit to the Manor recently for a very nice *kīrtana* evening as I was on a mission a few villages away.

My observation inspired this short Ode to you and Kṛṣṇa and the opening of all your centres around the world. It is inspired by lines from a Tennyson poem:

Devotees come
Devotees go
But I go on forever.

Your ever loving servant,

Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Dāsa
Initiation: 1973, March—Mexico

Hṛmatī Dāsī

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

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisance at your divine lotus feet, which are walking amongst the Surabhi cows in Vaikuṇṭha.

The first time I came in contact with Krishna consciousness was through a picture of Krishna worshipping a cow. It was on the cover of a music album produced by George Harrison. When I saw that picture, at that moment, I knew that He, Govinda, the Lord of the cows, is my Lord. A God who is kind to animals, He is my Lord.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, your divine lotus feet are walking

amongst the Surabhi cows on the pasturing grounds of Vraja, which are moistened with their milk. I bow down to your lotus eyes that are anointed with love for the Supreme cowherd boy, Govinda. Your lotus ears are like a calf drinking the milk of the Vedas. Let my ears taste the constant flow of nectar coming from your lotus lips glorifying the transcendental pastimes of the two cowherd brothers Krishna and Balarāma. I seek shelter of your lotus hands, which are milking the cow of the *Upaniṣads*. Let me taste and relish that delicious, nectarine milk, called Bhagavad-gītā.

Your pure mind is always engaged in thinking of this little cowherd boy Govinda. All Your senses are always engaged in the loving service to the Lord of the cows. You are one of the divine cowherds in the supreme abode of Lord Krishna, known as Goloka, the land of the cows. You possess all the four legs of the bull of religion, Dharma, which are compassion, austerity, cleanliness and truth. With the plow of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, you cultivated our hearts and sowed the spiritual devotional seeds.

Now it is up to me to water this creeper of devotional service, so it can produce the most valuable fruit, pure love for Krishna. I pray to you, my spiritual father, that I may be able to follow this instruction and live a simple life amongst cows, so that I may one day be reunited with you, in the abode of the Lord of the cows.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* you explain that the cultivation of devotional service is compared to many material activities. By friction one can get fire from wood, by digging the earth one can get food grains and water, and by agitating the milk bag or udder of the cow one can get nectarine milk.

Simply by drinking milk, it can increase the duration of one's life. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, in His instructions in *Bhagavad-gītā*, advises *go-rakṣya*, which means cow protection. The cow should be protected, milk should be drawn from the cows, and this milk should be prepared in various ways. One should take ample milk, and thus one can prolong one's life, develop his brain, execute devotional service, and ultimately attain the favor of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna.

As it is essential to get food grains and water by digging the earth, it is also essential to give protection to the cows and take nectarine milk from their milk bags.

The essence of Your teaching is to live simply, protect cows and be Krishna conscious.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your instructions are so simple, but yet so deep. You explain that simply by doing agriculture and cow protection, those are the ways to become sinless and thus be attracted to devotional service. You have given us such a simple process, that even this insignificant servant of yours can get free of sins and become Krishna conscious, simply by following your instructions.

Had it not been for Your Divine Grace, Śrīla Prabhupāda, where would I be today? I am but a fool. I am worthless and useless, but you have given me the opportunity to serve Krishna, by serving the cows. I have no capacity to serve you. However, somehow or other I am trying to serve you, by serving the cows and other innocent animals. I have no other qualifications. I am not a Sanskrit scholar nor can I find eloquent words to describe your glory.

"One cannot become spiritually advanced without acquiring the Brahminical qualifications and giving protection to cows."

The essence of Your teaching is to live simple and be Krishna conscious.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept whatever I can do, and please bless me that I may never forget you. That is my request.

I pray that I will never stray away from your divine lotus feet.

Hoping you will accept this worthless servant of yours.

Your humble servant,

Hṛmatī Dāsī
Initiation: 1973, April—Hamburg, Germany

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to you.

As I reflect on my journey this year, I am struck by a simple realization regarding my own position. When a young student enters school, he is often overwhelmed, because he does not understand the complexities of the educational system. He may struggle with his personal habits and lack the brilliance of other students. Yet, if that student simply focuses on pleasing his teacher by following his instructions with sincerity, his success in that school is assured, because the teacher's pleasure more than compensates for his inadequacies.

I find myself in that very position. I am not as conversant in the philosophy as I ought to be. I struggle with the demands of my material mind and body, and my heart is clouded by a critical eye toward others. Were a judge of devotional service to evaluate my position, they would quickly recognize that I am far from the ideal standard. I take hope, however, in the principle that the disciple's primary duty is to please the spiritual master. Despite my many faults, I am trying to cling to the basic pillars of the life you have given:

- Chanting sixteen rounds daily.
- Attending the morning program.
- Going out on book distribution.

I do these things in an effort to please you, and hope that you will bestow your mercy upon me. I am just like the insignificant student in the analogy. Please be merciful to this fallen servant. If you are kind upon me, I know my spiritual life will be successful, regardless of my personal deficiencies.

Thank you for allowing me to serve in your movement.

Your insignificant servant,

Bhṛgupati Dāsa
Initiation: 1973, April—New York, USA

Jāgariṇī Devī Dāsī

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

In Los Angeles, on December 13, 1973, on the disappearance day of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswati, Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke. He began his class by explaining *prakaṭa* and *aprakaṭa*…appearance and disappearance. That "for a devotee and non-devotee…all living entities…there is no difference between their appearance or their disappearance. Spiritually, there is no difference because we are all eternal, although, in disappearance, we may feel sadness in separation, but spiritually there is no difference…appearance or disappearance..."

I had joined the LA temple that February, and received *dīkṣā* from Śrīla Prabhupāda in May, after only five months since I'd first heard Kṛṣṇa's name! In that short amount of time, I was given (and read) a *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, met Satvsarūpa Mahārāja, and was happily delivered to the LA temple.

I remember listening to that class with undivided attention as Śrīla Prabhupāda told us about his first meeting with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswati, and how his friend "dragged him" there. He had seen many so called sādhus and was unimpressed by them, but this was different!

Śrīla Prabhupāda then said that we would be happy to know that even when he was young, among his friends, he was considered their leader. So his friend wanted to know Śrīla Prabhupāda's opinion about Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta.

After that first meeting Śrīla Prabhupāda accepted Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta as his spiritual master in his heart. Years later, just before he passed away, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta wrote to Śrīla Prabhupāda asking him to preach in the west. Fortunately for us, Śrīla Prabhupāda made that instruction his life's mission.

Śrīla Prabhupāda thanked all of us, saying that we were helping him in executing the order of his guru mahārāja. Then his voice quivered and he began to cry. I remember feeling so happy listening

to Śrīla Prabhupāda. I felt transported by his transcendental sound, to the spiritual world. We never thought of him as old…we never thought he'd leave us.

Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākur wrote:

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!"

So, in honoring this auspicious day, we have an opportunity to reflect on our relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda, and how we can improve our service. We can understand that following Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions, reading his books and listening to his classes is the way to associate with him...by *vāṇī*, associating with his words and instructions.

We have all experienced this. When I think of how short a time we had Śrīla Prabhupāda with us. For me only four years, how is it possible to feel him so profoundly, carry him with me? How is it possible?

I feel so fortunate to have the association of so many exalted Vaiṣṇavas. I feel grateful for the beautiful life Śrīla Prabhupāda has given me.

Creating this movement took years of hard work and sacrifice, and I pray that he will keep me around to attempt to repay my debt to him by serving him, his devotees, and his mission eternally.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your forever grateful servant,

Jāgariṇī Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1973, May—Los Angeles, California, USA

Kālakaṇṭha Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

What a privilege to serve you in this life. Whenever I please you, my heart fills with joy and satisfaction. Your precious and potent gifts, the 'techniques of spiritual life,' always uplift my heart and mind. Reading your books, chanting japa, discussing Krishna with your followers, honoring prasād – anyone, anywhere, now and for all time, can learn these simple practices and transform their lives.

As your service to your spiritual master, you gave them so freely, and at so much personal sacrifice.

As you have given these gifts to me, I pray to share them with others on your behalf. Doing so I please you and enrich my insignificant life with Krishna consciousness all over again.

Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākur wonderfully expresses a disciple's appreciation for his guru in his song, *Vaiṣṇava Vijñapti.*

1) Dear merciful Vaiṣṇav master, be kind to me, please.
Other than you, who can wash out my impurities?

2) To simply be in your presence, all sins go away.
Where could I find someone else with mercy you display?

3) Touching Gaṅgā's sacred waters cleanses over time,
yet to simply see you, one is instantly refined.

4) Offenses to Krishna, better chanting will resolve.
Offenses to you cannot be washed away at all.

5) In your sacred heart, Govinda endlessly resides.
Govinda declares, "Vaiṣṇavas are My very life."

6) Birth after birth, I shall beg for the dust from your feet.
Kindly think of this small servant as your property.

Your servant,

Kālakaṇṭha Dāsa
Initiation: 1973, May—Portland, USA

Arjuna Dāsa (1973, LA)

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this most auspicious occasion I offer my humble respectful obeisances at your lotus feet.

By your causeless mercy you delivered the eternal teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to every corner of the world. At an age when most retire from worldly duties, you crossed oceans alone, carrying only faith in Kṛṣṇa and obedience to your spiritual master.

Whatever little faith, knowledge, or desire to serve we possess exists only by your mercy.

I pray to always remember that devotional service is meant to please the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa, not oneself. Kindly engage me, lifetime after lifetime, in some small service to your mission, so that I may gradually become free from pride and illusion and enter into your pure eternal service.

Your contributions to Lord Caitanya's saṅkīrtana movement are revered all over the universe. Constantly emphasizing bhakti yoga, you stressed devotion, love, and service to Guru and Krishna.

Once in a class you said "don't try to become a devotee; just be a servant of the servant". Your books are our law books, your instructions, our life and soul. Even today, your presence is felt through your *vāṇī,* guiding us toward sincere chanting, humble service, and strict adherence to the principles of bhakti-yoga.

On this auspicious day, I pray to always remember that devotional service is meant to please the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa, not oneself. Whatever little faith, knowledge, or desire to serve we possess exists only by your mercy.

Please don't let me cry forever, rotting birth after birth in this material world. Lift me up to your lotus feet I beg.

You are the personification of amazing grace and a true ambassador of Krishna consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are imbued with humility, pure wisdom, compassion and devotion to your Gurudeva, transforming countless lives. I offer my gratitude and respects for the profound impact you have made in my life.

You have inspired and paved the way for a global movement transcending borders and seas. At the age of 69, Your Divine Grace traveled to the United States, braving the challenges of a new country and culture.

With unrelenting passion, you shared the message of love and devotion. And blessing thousands on their spiritual journey, through life's joys and tribulations. You courageously defended the principles of dharma, challenging the materialistic and atheistic ideologies that threatened the spiritual well-being of humanity. You willingly embrace and guide all, regardless of background or circumstance, exemplifying the universal love of Krishna.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are a spiritual luminary, who illuminated the world with the radiant light of Krishna consciousness. Your translations of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and

Caitanya-caritāmṛta made the path of ancient wisdom visible for all…a testament to the transformative power of selfless love and service.

You propagated these teachings of Lord Krishna, traversing the globe and confronting the materialistic tide to establish the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). Your selfless efforts bore fruit, as the Hare Krishna movement flourished and continues to do so with an ever increasing global network of temples, farms, and communities, providing a spiritual home for millions. As a testament to your transformative power and visionary leadership, your followers, now spanning generations, remain committed to spreading the message of Krishna consciousness.

Even with Your profound wisdom and accomplishments, you remained a humble servant of your guru and Lord Krishna. You are a spiritual master par excellence.

May your teachings encapsulated in your books and lectures continue to inspire and uplift, as we strive to follow in your footsteps on the path of bhakti. And may your love, wisdom, and spiritual guidance, forever be etched in our hearts, a constant source of inspiration and strength.

On this auspicious day, we offer our heartfelt obeisances unto your lotus feet, the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON, who carried the timeless wisdom of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu across oceans and into the hearts of millions.

Thank you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your aspiring servant,

Arjuna Dāsa
Initiation: 1973, May—Los Angeles, California, USA

Govardhan Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Many of your disciples have followed you into their next service in another life, wherever that may be taking place and on whatever plane or planes of existence. I live by their experiences of you – written, filmed or audibly recorded. Many such blessed souls are still alive on the earth. They carry you with them, each in their own way.

You performed your miracles on this planet, surrounded by your disciples for whom your love was palpable. They are still glowing from the experience.

Let me remember how your praṇāma mantra contains the words '*pāścātya deśa tāriṇe*' – saving the Western countries. When you acquired the present Los Angeles temple, you instructed that the pews, pulpit and church organ be left intact. Your intention was that the Americans could come in with their shoes on and listen to Bhagavad-gītā and kīrtana. Coming back to this temple months later, you saw that your order had been countermanded. You told those responsible: 'You think you know better than your spiritual master!' An eye-witness reports that he had never seen you so angry.

I might mention that I am presently helping a local man in his bid for election onto the County Council. As we were walking the streets, he said to me, "Are you religious?" I replied simply, "Hare Krishna". That began a short chat on the subject. I said I was one of the people who'd been initiated by the founder, and so I would be going to the George Harrison place in Hertfordshire to read out a letter. He said, "I used to live in Harpenden so I heard about that place George Harrison gave... but I've never heard the name of the founder."

I left it there – the English psyche is subtle. In the silence between us we both knew and relished the fact that you hadn't named your Society after yourself. Rather, keeping yourself in the background, you had given it the name of Krishna.

Another scene comes to mind: this time, Vṛndāvana temple. I found it a beautiful thing to hear Viśvadevī's remembrance that, standing with other women devotees before the altar of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara, she chanced to look behind her at one point. There she saw you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, taking darshan from behind the ladies and down the steps. Upendra, your servant, told Viśvadevī later that you hadn't allowed the women to be moved. ("Let them see Krishna.") As I say, I found that beautiful among the devotees' remembrances of you. Thinking of it now, though, in retrospect – why would anyone expect anything less than gentlemanly behaviour from you, Śrīla Prabhupāda?

Another temple scene: this time in Melbourne, Australia, where you had recently installed large and massively heavy solid brass Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi. Now your ingenious devotees had set up a smelting workshop outside, and were melting metals to make

smaller, utsav deities, as a complement to the larger, main set. There was great excitement in the community, and in order to supply the gold needed, the women were pulling off their wedding rings and throwing them into the crucible.

Another clip: this time of one of your *saṅkīrtana* devotees of yore – now white-haired and white-bearded. His name: Brajendranandan das. He starts to humbly recite by heart from the *Krishna Book* a passage which he would read to students, back in the day. And it attracted many to buy books. This devotee of yours is trying to put his inspiration into words, but it exudes already from his eyes and from his every gesture. Then he talks about the letter you wrote, that you were always thinking of the boys in the vans, who gave up all comforts to push forward your mission. And how those boys would fall asleep each night meditating on that letter, and knowing that you were thinking of them.

Another saṅkīrtana devotee – this time a girl, Mahādevī dāsī. Last anniversary of your tirobhāva, she had written an offering about her time in the vans, zig-zagging across America in the company of other teenage devotee girls. Now a venerable old lady, Mahādevī could not manage the stairs onto the stage in Vṛndāvana to read out her offering. And so it had been set to music and was played. I'm told sannyāsīs listened and wept. Later, it was posted on the internet for everyone to experience. It really is enchanting. My favourite line: "Your lotus feet / were our guiding beat."

More singing: In 2020, an online seminar was arranged. It was about how we, your followers, should always be committed to reading your books, Śrīla Prabhupāda. As I was waiting for it to start, all of a sudden the theme song rang out: "Be a sage / page by page … fan the spark / be a sage." It was so catchy and upbeat – but there was more to it than that. I realised that this was your disciple Havi dāsa singing. I laughed out loud for joy. What a perfect achievement! Havi dāsa has recorded many devotional songs, including '*Gaurāṅga koruṇā koro*', which is the background music for a special abhiṣek video of Śrī Pañcha Tattva filmed at Māyāpur in 2014. After your disappearance from manifest pastimes, Havi became a famous singer in his home country, which I believe is Venezuela, and he has given interviews there about his Krishna consciousness.

Another delightful incident, told this year in an interview by Lokadṛṣṭī devī dāsī, occurred in 1976, at the New York Rathayātrā. You were walking onto the stage to give your address, when one of

your young disciples, not yet initiated, noticed there was nowhere for you to sit. Watching from the very front of the audience, actually touching the stage itself, the boy became more anxious with every step you took. He thought to himself, 'This is a desperate situation. If there's no Vyāsāsana, the only thing I can do is jump onto this stage right now and bow down, offering my back as a seat for my spiritual master." Suddenly a Vyāsāsana was carried on and the crisis was averted. All this happened within seconds, and without a word being spoken. Next day, you initiated that boy as Vyāsāsana dāsa!

Turning to your books, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I wanted to mention Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.11.23–26, spoken by Vṛtrāsura. Verse 23 starts: '*trai-vargikāyāsa-vighātam asmat*…' That verse says that devotees can forget about dealing in cheating religion for material benefit – the Lord denies us that path.

Verse 24 begins: '*ahaṁ hare tava pādaika-mūla*…' It is a question – When will I again be able to serve Your eternal servants who find their only shelter at Your lotus feet?'

Verse 25 begins: '*na nāka-pṛṣṭhaṁ-na ca pārameṣṭhyam*..' Krishna is addressed as '*samañjasa*', 'source of all opportunities'. Here, Vṛtrāsura rejects any and all benedictions which can be had in this material world. He rejects them all if they would entail him being far from Krishna's lotus feet.

And verse 26: '*ajāta-pakṣā iva*…' How helpless are baby birds whose wings are not even grown yet? Or how can a wife missing her husband be made happy by anything other than his return? This is how much the Lord is essential to the life and soul of a supposed demon, Vṛtrāsura.

I love the irony that a so-called demon spoke so wonderfully, and that his words are passed down the generations of devotees via the Bhāgavatam. Sanskrit mantras were ritually chanted to create a demon to kill Indra, but because there was a mistake made in the pronunciation, Vṛtrāsura was created, whom Indra would kill. That is a material calculation. But the poetic Sanskrit mantras spoken by Vṛtrāsura will stand forever to glorify his right-mindedness and devotion, and to enliven and encourage practitioners of *bhakti*.

The world I've tried to describe in these pages has been created by you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I have come into contact with it in my very imperfect way, but even so, it has had a deep effect on me. Your disciple Kāñcanabālā devī dāsī comes to mind: she was only sixteen years old when she became your disciple, and you knew her well.

She was too young to live in the temple, and anyway, her mother was not favourable. She lived an hour away and had an altar at home, and she visited 26 2nd Avenue whenever she could. She wrote to you about the simple, natural things with which she had decorated her altar, like tree bark, catkins, acorns and moss. You wrote, 'All your devotional service is approved by me.'

I don't know if you can approve of me, Śrīla Prabhupāda, but I ask you to please keep me with you.

Your fallen servant,

Govardhan Dāsī
Initiation: 1973, May—Edinburgh, Scotland, UK

Ramyā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my obeisances at your exalted lotus feet.

As usual, I am totally undeserving to be called your disciple though you graciously and mercifully accepted me as such, and I do aspire to become worthy of that great honor and mercy that you have shown me.

Although it is nearly 10 years now since my dear husband, and your disciple Bhajahari dāsa left us, it is still hard to manage without him. Many years ago now Bhajahari started up a business selling your original books in Europe and the UK. It was successful and much wanted, and all profits were used to purchase more books and pay for shipping and storage. Since his departure from this world, our son Mukunda has, with my help, taken over this service. I am enclosing here for your pleasure that sales figures for last year, 2025.

162 *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* sets
17 *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* sets
695 Bhagavad-gītās
276 *Kṛṣṇa Book* sets
224 *The Nectar of Devotion*
168 *The Nectar of Instruction*
784 *Science of Self-Realisation*
and 7392 various small books.

These are the basic figures but there are some more that have not been recorded. Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I know these are only very small attempts to distribute your wonderful transcendental books, but I do hope they please you in some small way.

I continue to try to keep my head above māyā's tumultuous waters by chanting minimum 16 rounds daily, chanting my gāyatrī mantras, reading your books and keeping up my weekly Bhagavad-gītā reading group. I pray that you will please, by your great mercy, continue to be my spiritual father and not reject me.

With love and infinite gratitude,
Your fallen daughter,

Ramyā Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1973, July—Bhaktivedānta Manor, London, UK

Bādarāyaṇa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

The world needs your guidance now more than ever. It desperately needs your divine presence in the form of your instructions and perfect example. It needs your mood of selfless dedication and unalloyed, unadulterated unapologetic truth. It needs the refocusing of all energies towards the scientific transcendental process which you aptly coined as "The Peace Formula".

I wish I could simply sit in your presence to express the concerns I have in relation to the issues I've researched regarding the state of the world and Kali's influence.

In all humility I submit my heart which is troubled by many things you warned us about. I have studied your statements and directives in this regard and see that Kṛṣṇa gave you a perfectly clear vision into the future. I pray daily for your wise loving guidance so that I may understand and discuss these issues within the framework of your instructions.

These asuric influences are ubiquitous. And we must recognize them and be discerning and bold enough to call them out. It is our duty. As you said, "we must be intelligent enough to calculate the darker side." Otherwise they may very well influence us as part of Māyā's trickery which plays on our sentiments.

Some of these influences are:

- Disregard for the sacredness of all life forms.
- Attacks on objective (divine) reality and common sense (i.e., a man can have a baby).
- Attacks on the masculine principle of *kṣatriya* like protection.
- Attacks on motherhood and the traditional family.
- Corrupt financial systems and manipulation.
- Attacks on faith by Cultural Maoist-Marxist elements worldwide. The proliferation of atheistic communism.
- Attacks on theism by the self proclaimed tech gods of science, via the transhumanist agenda.
- Deception by the mainstream media and social media censorship.
- Deception in regards to the safety of the foods and pharmaceuticals we are ingesting.
- Deception by our educational systems which rather than educate, indoctrinates the youth into Kali-yuga approved practices.
- Fraud perpetrated by recognized charities pocketing millions without benefitting their constituents.

And the list goes on and on and on…

And while I would love more than anything to NOT contemplate these things, but rather focus solely on the divinely sweet pastimes of the Lord and Śrī Rādhā with Her associates in Braj, I am often reminded of how you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, set the example of the most perfect pure devotee preacher – the Ācārya. You spoke of these anomalies frequently. You didn't speak only of *rāgānuga bhakti,* though you were on that platform but also of the nefariously dangerous dealings within this conditioned realm.

While warning us, you simultaneously encouraged devotees to become fully surrendered souls, to become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious, to become pure devotees of the Lord. You encouraged us to preach vigorously as you had done, to shed gallons of blood to save the suffering souls of this fallen age. You encouraged us to plant Kṛṣṇa

consciousness in every quarter of the world by establishing temples, communities, schools, farms and cultural centers. You encouraged us to establish the scientific basis of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and appeal to not only the common man, but the intelligent class as well. And you also encouraged us to fight against atheistic communism which you unequivocally stated will cause the destruction of human society.

> Communism is so evil we must force this war to happen. Communism has to end. But if the American people take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and fight with the communist, they'll come out victorious. Then the menace of communistic movement will stop. And we want that. We want that these demonic communists should be finished. (Room conversation, April 4, 1975, in Māyāpur, India)

As independently thoughtful disciples we must have a keen assessment of the nature of this threat, in the form of its proxy: a well orchestrated atheistic globalist assault on humanity and theism. However it is masterfully disguised as the deceptions I categorically noted above which fall under the category of "it's for the greater good". Thus those that are ruled more by sentiment than discernment may fail to see the seductive nature of their own manipulation by these dark forces.

What we as faithful followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda often fail to see is that these very threats are a clear and present danger at our doorstep. They threaten all the above-mentioned spiritual programs that Prabhupāda wished for us to accomplish. Hence the intensity of his warning:

> Otherwise this (atheistic) communistic movement will finish the civilized human society — Morning Walk, December 12, 1973, Los Angeles

All we have to do is look around to see it's doing quite a good job.

Our mission operates on three parallel paths; To dive deep into our daily practices so as to cultivate the *rasas* of Kṛṣṇa *bhakti* and develop a real taste for devotional service leading up to Kṛṣṇa *prema*. To simultaneously give this message to others in an effective way that actually attracts people, especially in the West where the mission has faltered, so that they take to the path and receive the shelter of Śrīla Prabhupāda. And lastly that we may be ever mindfully vigilant to point out and fight against the malefic influences noted above lest

they infiltrate our own consciousness and the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement itself which can only be destroyed from within.

And thus, while I tire of being the bearer of this type of news flash, I observe that the tendency is to not take these threats very seriously. Laissez faire is often the soup of the day. However, as the Ācārya, you were ever mindful of them as per your repeated warnings. On a practical level if one does not take one's own disease seriously and the subsequent remedial measures to heal, then one will succumb to the pernicious effects of the disease. This analogy is pertinent to the threats we face individually and collectively as a mission.

So, with immersive deep gratitude in our hearts for the profound gift that Śrīla Prabhupāda has given us, let us work patiently and cooperatively to encourage one another in our respective services, always mindful of our foremost duty to always remember Kṛṣṇa and never forget Him. At the same time let us work tirelessly to spread Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission for the benefit of a misled suffering humanity. And lastly may we be vigilant in identifying and casting off the insidious influences of deception so that we may steadily progress in the great movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, so that His glorious Golden Age can be established.

I beg to remain a most humble transparent instrument in your hands despite my innumerable faults and disqualifications. Only by your mercy can I understand these complexities and act accordingly for your pleasure. I beg for your empowerment to present your message purely. Only by your blessings can I advance towards the unalloyed loving service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. I simply fall at your feet and cry for your mercy!

Begging to remain eternally your aspiring servant,

Bādarāyaṇa Dāsa
Initiation: 1973, July—Denver, USA

Rukmiṇī Priyā Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my respectful obeisances unto you, All glories to Your Divine Grace.

I pray to remain an obedient and dedicated follower of your mission. My understanding of your instructions becomes more valid

as the years go by.

Through the many ups and downs of life, the memory of your divine physical presence inspires and uplifts me and allows me to walk through life untouched by the demonic influences of this age.

I pray to always be in your association.

Your servant,

Rukmiṇī Priyā Dāsī
Initiation: 1973, July—Bhaktivedānta Manor, London, UK

Praghoṣa Dāsa

nama oṁ 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,

Thank you for letting me do some service. Spreading your words is keeping me from falling further into this illusory world. Somehow, I get to remain in touch with your followers as I provide them with the prabhupadavani.org website. They instill in me the desire to maintain this facility by sending me their requests when something goes wrong with the stability of the site. This keeps me awake and I am very grateful to all of them whose faith in you is unbreakable.

This is a real funny paradigm as each member of this association of devotees is feeding the others with the necessary elements for success. As Lord Krishna is saying in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

> The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are fully devoted to My service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss from always enlightening one another and conversing about Me. (*Bg.* 10.9)

It's only because of you that such a miraculous system has taken shape in this Kali-yuga. Indeed, Lord Chaitanya has come to initiate the saṅkīrtana movement and this is truly a blessing for all the conditioned souls. But without your wit in explaining how we can benefit from the chanting, no one would have adopted the saṅkīrtana

mood.

How can we repay the debt we have towards you. My gratefulness is felt very very deep in my heart of hearts and my happiness makes me tremble.

May I continue to receive your mercy if you feel I am worthy of it as this is my only hope for bettering my quality of devotional service at your lotus feet.

Your lowly servant,

Praghoṣa Dāsa
Initiation: 1973, September—Montreal, Canada
Current location: Montreal, Canada

Pṛthuśravā Dāsa

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

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this auspicious day of your appearance, I meditate on your unusual achievement of establishing Krishna consciousness on such a wide scale to such a wide spectrum of individuals.

Just as Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī is honored as *śrī-gaura-karuṇā-śakti-vigraha*, 'the personified energy of Sri Caitanya's mercy,' you have inherited that divine quality which rescues fallen souls from the great dream of being independent enjoyers in this world. When they become attracted by your loving compassion they awaken their eternal relation with Krishna.

Guru means heavy. You are carrying the most heavy manifestation of the Lord's internal potency comprised of love and compassion. This gaura-śakti, which propelled you in your mission, was quite evident by your great determination to distribute the holy names to whomever you met. And because your chanting of the holy names was imbued with prema it penetrated the hearts of all listeners, making you immediately successful.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we have a dire need for your mercy that we

may also be a recipient of this gaura-karuṇā-śakti so that we may be enabled to distribute the holy name and teachings of Lord Caitanya to the conditioned souls. Most importantly, we need your mercy in order to be able to show sincere love and respect for our fellow devotees. Land, buildings, corporate organization, philosophy, and even beautiful Deities are not enough to unite a group of diverse personalities into a community or society of loving devotees. Without such an example of loving devotees, how can we attract others to the sublime culture of Krishna consciousness?

You are our source for this divine mercy which eradicates all contamination in the heart and establishes transcendental love of God.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I bow down at your lotus feet with all the humility and sincerity at my command, ready to serve you and please you in any way.

Your humble servant,

Pṛthuśravā Dāsa
Initiation: 1973, September—Boston, USA

Varāha Mūrti Dāsa

To my eternal master, guardian, and guide, Śrīla Prabhupāda,
The thought of never having connected with you fills me with the deepest sense of trepidation. My life, with its limitless potential, would have been wasted in futile mundanity!

By the grace of Śrī Hari, His invisible potency placed me in a particular time and juncture with a favorable mind, enough submission, and earnestness to offer myself and connect with your divine presence. Thus, my path to eternal fortune became illuminated.

As witnessed by all, you extended your mercy to the lost and the fallen, never considering anyone unworthy or unfit for Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's gift.

As a perfect surrendered soul, you are the brilliant light for all to follow. Your heart, devoid of anything other than the desire to please Śrī Kṛṣṇa, bound Him to perform endless and amazing deeds through you out of the deepest affection for His devotee. These deeds have been recorded and sung ever since and will continue for all time.

As a loving father defends his children, you boldly upheld your disciples' right to be recognized and accepted as bonafide Vaiṣṇavas

by their properly following the essence of Vedic principles.

Your footprints have indelibly marked the Earth with the finest spiritual impressions that will forever remain as the true life and inspiration for all sincere souls to follow.

Your self-sacrifice, leaving aside all other interests for the cause of fulfilling your master's order, must surely have amazed the great ācāryas of our line. Your broadcasting the teachings of Caitanya Mahāprabhu all over the world must have created immense joy in the hearts of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who had the vision, and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswati Ṭhākura, who put it into its first practical form. Could there be anything more wonderful than this?

The unshakable foundation laid by you will be the solid platform for coming generations allowing them to form a truly genuine and progressive spiritual structure in which to take shelter and thrive.

You provided the zenith of transcendental conclusions in all of your books — especially *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. In such a short time, you did what even learned scholars could only describe as impossible.

You have changed the lives of teaming thousands — with unlimited multitudes continually entering your fold. Is there no end to your devotional achievement?

Love for Kṛṣṇa is valuable beyond comprehension. Anyone who is even slightly drawn to it may also be held with special regard. You have placed that attraction within the hearts of countless seekers, so let me always appreciate your presence there.

As always, time is wasting no time, so what there is left for this poor soul, please let me dedicate it in the loving service of your lotus feet.

Your eternal servant and disciple,

Varāha Mūrti Dāsa
Initiation: 1973, October—Sydney, Australia
Current location: Sydney, Australia

Kadamba Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Thank you for bringing the message of Lord Chaitanya to the Western counties. On the order of your spiritual master you came out of such unbelievable selflessness to rescue us. We, who had such limited understanding of who God is, who we are, and what the material energy is. You said, "Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and believe it that you are a servant of God (Kṛṣṇa.)" You taught that simply by transcendental vibration of sound everything can be achieved. Simply by chanting the mahā-mantra sincerely, one can attain the perfection of life.

Why is it so hard for me to follow your simple instructions? Why am I so distracted by the diversions Māyā puts before me, and constantly washed away on the waves of her illusion, somehow still believing there is happiness in material life?

I cling to the understanding that Kṛṣṇa is God and offering Him everything is the perfection of life; a flower, fruit, a leaf. When I see a flower, I want to offer it to Kṛṣṇa. This simple thought is a blessing from you. Offer everything to Kṛṣṇa – everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa. I pray that Kṛṣṇa lets me offer my thoughts and actions to Him. I want to see the world in terms of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa is remembrance and forgetfulness.

I know that I am not worthy of your mercy and yet you continue to extend it to me in the form of devotee association, *prasādam*, the Deities, and the books you left for us. Thank you for guiding us to be Kṛṣṇa's devotees and allowing us to do some devotional service under your auspices.

Now, as I am approaching the end of this life, I want to cling even more strongly to your instructions, and help your ISKCON movement expand and flourish. This year has been a year of sadness for me. I believe you know our hearts. Please give all of us, as your disciples, the strength and determination to follow your teachings.

I am embarrassed by my inadequacies and lack of faith and conviction in chanting and am probably not a worthy disciple. But, you miraculously included me in the fortunate souls you took as your disciples. Please do not give up on me, so that someday, someway, I can find my way back home to Kṛṣṇa, Back home, Back to Godhead.

Thank you a thousand times for your patience and loving guidance. You left us the keys. You threw us a life raft. Please help

us to have the intelligence to grab hold of it. You are our link in the chain of the disciplic succession. The scriptures say that Kṛṣṇa comes before the devotee as the spiritual master, as the sun comes before us as the sunshine. Oh, Śrīla Prabhupāda, let me have the intelligence to never give up and to continue this effort to follow your instructions and to make Kṛṣṇa the goal of my life.

Hare Kṛṣṇa. Thank you again and again. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Forever grateful,

Kadamba Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1973, October—Los Angeles, California, USA

Rāghava Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet. The disciple can never repay his debt to the spiritual master, but we must try to please him by our constant devotion and following his orders. Most important is our cooperation to continue his mission.

The world today is becoming more and more degraded as Kali-yuga advances. Māyā is working harder to make us deviate from our principles. Yet it makes us more determined to serve you and Lord Caitanya.

The bright eyed youths who came to you are now elderly … many have already departed. Your books give us renewed vigour and greater incite to this amazing philosophy. We drink in this nectar of your teachings, and it is an elixir that keeps us strong, giving us the strength to spread this Krishna consciousness to every conditioned soul.

I only wish I had done more. Hopefully in my final years I can continue to please you.

Your servant,

Rāghava Dāsa
Initiation: 1973, December—Miami, USA
Current location: Alachua , Florida
Contact: rrich108@aol.com

Dear Girirāja, after understanding His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda's intimate connection with You, I present this Vyāsa pūjā offering for Śrīla Prabhupāda before You.

Please accept my humble obeisances in the dust of your parikrama path which has been traversed by the lotus feet of the great Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, saints, and innumerable devotees.

Last fall, I was fortunate to spend six weeks near You, hearing, chanting and walking upon Your sandy path. Reading and reflecting upon Prabhupāda's purports in that atmosphere took my heart to a level of deeper appreciation and gratitude I never imagined possible.

I was filled with memories from November 10th, 1977 when my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda desired to go on Your parikrama despite the extreme obstacles his health would present.

At first, he requested to be taken on Vṛndāvana Parikrama. His servants cautioned the many ways that it could be suicide. His Divine Grace stated that remaining in his room would also be suicide, but he agreed not to go. Then, after a pause, said he wanted to go on Govardhana Parikrama. That *parikrama* also never happened.

Girirāja, one November morning in 2025, I sat 30 feet from Your massive reddish-brown boulders that reflected warm morning sunlight, dispelling the morning chill. Remembering His Divine Grace's conviction to undertake Govardhan parikrama, I placed a small photo of him facing Govardhan Hill on a makeshift altar in a sacred tree's branches. As that comforting light danced on the leaves of the trees and green parrots played on their branches, it struck me that His Diving Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda had reflected this sacred light of Yours, Dear Giri Govardhan, around the world and illuminated the hearts of countless souls. At that moment I could profoundly understand Śrīla Prabhupāda's intense desire before his passing, to circumambulate You, Dear Giriraja, and how sad it was that it did not happen.

At that time, I felt transported to Prabhupāda's room and the vivid intense emotions of 1977; the smell of frankincense in a coal filled clay pot, and the eucalyptus oil used to clean Śrīla Prabhupāda's room… of chanting there up to 14 hours a day, for the seven days before the decision was made not to go on Govardhan Parikrama.

Somehow, the next day a powerful, perceivable yet indescribable

change in the atmosphere could be felt in A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami's remaining four days before his departure in his Ramaṇa-reti room.

Could it be that either You, dear Girirāja, came to Śrīla Prabhupāda's room at Ramaṇa-reti, or that Śrīla Prabhupāda's room was transported to Govardhana? The lotus of Vraj expands and contracts to facilitate the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

What I do know for certain is the experience of chanting at Śrīla Prabhupāda's bedside, wherever he was, is something that is permanently imprinted on my heart, a memory I will always cherish.

Your servant,

Pārtha Dāsa
Initiation: 1973, December—Los Angeles, California, USA

Sarvadṛk Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet, the shelter of all the worlds.

I often love to spend time contemplating the thousands of attractive photographs of Your Divine Grace, and in doing so try to grasp the scope and magnanimity of your activities. You said once that you were personally present in such photos, and it is true. Yet, while watching the beautiful images pass in front of my eyes, and remembering the circumstances, the places, your līlā, and the devotees present, I sometimes lament. It is a bitter-sweet experience in your separation.

In those photos I also observe that some of my godbrothers were greatly fortunate to be in your company — massage your body, cook for you, travel with you side-by-side, laugh with you, and receive many blessings in the way of your personal association and guidance. Sadly, many of those devotees took your blessings lightly and even left your company and their service in ISKCON, what to speak of devotional service altogether.

My personal association with you was different than theirs. My personal association with you was running around freezing parking lots, dodging security, trying to sell a book or two, or standing in front of grocery stores trying to sell oil paintings to raise money for your BBT. My personal association with you was trying to follow in

your footsteps by preaching the all perfect "*gauravāṇī prachar*," or forgoing sleep and leisure to worship your beloved Śrī Śrī Rādhā Govinda and Tulasī Mahārāṇī. My association with you was getting spit on, verbally and physically assaulted, getting locked up in jail and strip searched, or it was being mocked and humiliated by the empty-headed and unconscious public of this cursed age. All of that, and more, is forever engraved in the sacred portfolio of my association with you Śrīla Prabhupāda.

So, I occasionally lament that I never enjoyed the good fortune of those lucky godbrothers that served you intimately in your "*vapuḥ-rūpa*", as was ordained by providence. Sometimes in moments of lesser clarity I feel sad that I never received any personal instruction from you, to reflect on for the rest of my life. But those instructions are all in your books, a treasure-house of personal instructions to all your disciples, and to the world, so no loss! But when I consider it all, I understand very clearly that I am profoundly fortunate to have done anything for you. I would never trade places with any other devotee, because whatever devotional opportunities that come to my life are ordained by you, are your mercy, and are the greatest asset in my life. What else will matter when my last breath passes from my body?

Even now, after so many years have passed, by your magnanimous kindness, you are still giving me a place in your service, and I am engaged accordingly, doing the best I can. I only wish to remain ever satisfied with your service in any menial capacity that pleases you, "*yuktasya bhaktāṁś ca niyuñjato 'pi*" and in that way, always remain in your personal association.

Your grateful disciple,

Sarvadṛk Dāsa
Initiation: 1973, December—Portland, USA

Havi Dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Today, as the world honors your Appearance Day, I humbly submit this, my expression of love and gratitude for the invaluable

guidance you have given me on my spiritual path. Your compassion and wisdom have illuminated my journey, and I am eternally indebted to you for allowing me to walk beside you, despite my many shortcomings.

I have cherished every moment of your personal association; washing your lotus feet, listening to your divine instructions, and witnessing your beautiful example of devotion to Krishna. Your personality and your teachings have become the foundation of my life, for they represent everything I aspire to become.

Kīrtana is my greatest joy and favorite service; chanting the holy names alongside your devotees fills my heart with transcendental bliss. If it pleases you to keep me engaged in this service, I am eternally grateful. But if you see fit to engage me in another service, I will accept your direction with equal devotion, knowing that whatever you desire is perfect and always for my highest good. I humbly beg for your blessings to always remain by your side, whatever my service may be.

Please keep me in your care, grant me the intelligence to serve you sincerely, and allow me to chant the holy names, *Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare*, until my last breath.

Your humble servant,

Havi Dāsa
Initiation: 1973, December
Current location: Alachua, Florida, USA
Contact: ilanpiano@gmail.com

Jaya Bhadrā Dāsī

Dearmost Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I beg to offer my prostrated obeisances to you, who like the mighty Bhīṣmadeva, "spoke on different subjects with thousands of meanings and who fought on thousands of battlefields and protected thousands of men". I am among the most insignificant and fallen who were blessed to listen to you speak and witness your unwavering battle against the illusory onslaught of illusion, in which you continue to uplift and protect many hundreds and thousands of souls.

A small example of your continuing and expanding influence can be seen in last year's visit to Radhadesh by my sister, a self-proclaimed atheist. She came from Canada to spend a month here in Radhadesh, and of all the impressions and experiences she gained in what she called 'the village', her favourite was to participate in the evening glorification of Dāmodara-līlā in the temple. The bhakti śakti *i*nvested in you by the Lord and His entourage is incalculable, and I pray for the strength to absorb even a fraction of a drop of it.

In my Vyāsa pūjā offering to you last year, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I confessed to having developed affection for a soul embodied in a cat body whom I named Āśā-bandha. I mentioned a parallel I saw in how caring for a creature, who really had nothing to offer me, gave me a glimpse of how, although I seem unable to offer anything of value to you, you gave your all to rescue a foolish, fearful, self-absorbed soul like me. In the meantime, your dear servants found it within their hearts to rescue me from my risky absorption in the wellbeing of Āśā-bandha, reminding me that, especially in this final stretch of life in this body, to focus on my relationship with you and all whom you represent, brooks no such distractions.

This invaluable life lesson was reinforced soon after, when your dear son, Vasūttama dāsa, a devoted soldier in your saṅkīrtana army and a beloved member of our Radhadesh community, suddenly passed away just a small hour after participating in our Holi festival. While we dearly miss his exemplary, humble and extremely hard-working association, there is a general consensus among us that his departure was glorious. And his disappearance is one among many of your exalted disciples who have left us to rejoin you in service in the last couple of months.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your servants extricated me from the ruins of my Kali-yuga existence and gave my life real meaning, purpose and direction. I could never even have imagined the life I have been given, and I am eternally grateful to you and yours for this. Nevertheless, the onus remains on me to reciprocate far more than I am doing, so I pray for the wisdom to strengthen my intention to please you. You can only be satisfied when I think, speak, and act to please your beloved Lordships, and They will certainly not be happy with me unless I live sincerely and seriously for you.

Your prayerful daughter,

Uttamā Dāsī

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

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

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

It is an exceptional fortune that I have become connected to you. Had you not come into my life, I don't know what would have happened to me. Actually, I do know – I would have had a mundane boring life, with no real meaning.

Even those devotees who have not met you are receiving your mercy on a continuous basis, what to speak of me. Therefore, we can consider that if you had not come and spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world, our lives would have been useless. We literally have been saved – offered freedom from the bondage of material nature and its concomitant suffering.

I may have been able to live a life without many external miseries, but it still would have been miserable because of no true meaning. And for me that was my previous distress … a life mostly boring and empty. Until you enlightened me.

Like all my godsiblings, we were drawn to follow you and leave all else behind. We found spiritual fulfillment and our hearts were satisfied.

I may be separated from you, but I always know that you are watching over me and protecting me. You are in the spiritual sky relishing pastimes with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and I would like to join you there some day. Please allow me to serve now in such a way that it will happen. At all times guide me to speak only those words which are in line with your mood and principles.

I am indebted to your pure gifts of the mahā-mantra accompanied by absorption in devotional service. Please allow me to relish those pure gifts, where the treasure of my inheritance awaits.

Your insignificant servant,

Uttamā Dāsī
Initiation: 1973, December—Los Angeles, California, USA

Dravida Dāsa

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my heartfelt obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you on this, your most auspicious appearance day!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you for undertaking the seemingly impossible mission of sailing alone on a cargo ship from India to the United States in 1965, at the age of 69, practically penniless but inspired and empowered by your beloved spiritual master's order to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness abroad.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, the chanting of which – both individually via japa and collectively via saìkīrtana — I find inspiring on every level and an unfailing tonic for my troubled mind and heart. When I joined ISKCON in late March of 1973 at the famous Henry Street temple in Brooklyn, three hours of street harināma was the standard, plus the morning and evening programs, including, of course, 16 rounds of japa. All that chanting and dancing kept everyone fired up and blissful.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for the invaluable treasure of your books. It was your *Teachings of Lord Caitanya* that really convinced me that *bhakti-yoga* was what I wanted to practice full-time, and it was your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* that answered all my questions concerning the soul, God, nature, and what was really important to strive for.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for engaging me in proofreading and editing service in your ISKCON Press (soon to be renamed The Bhaktivedānta Book Trust), set up in the Brooklyn Temple and, in May of 1975, relocated to New Dvārakā, ISKCON's magnificent temple complex in Los Angeles. It was there, in May and June, that I had the unforgettable opportunity to participate in the famous

17-books-in-2-months marathon to produce the 2 volumes of the Bhāgavatam's 5th Canto and the unpublished volumes of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta.*

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for prasādam, by which we can nourish both our soul as well as our body.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for working so hard to establish temples all over the world, where devotees can gather to worship the all-merciful Deities, hear classes on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā, honor prasādam, and help one another advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Finally, Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you for the numerous festivals throughout the year, from Janmāṣṭamī to Vyāsa-pūjā to Gaura-pūrṇimā, Rāma-navamī, Nṛsiṁha-caturdaśī, Ratha-yātrā, and so many more. They all provide wonderful occasions when devotees can gather with one another and with guests, glorify the Lord and his pure devotees, honor *prasādam,* and make tangible progress toward achieving life's ultimate goal: pure love for Kṛṣṇa and returning home, back to Godhead.

For all these invaluable gifts, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and for many more, I will remain indebted to you for eternity.

Aspiring to remain your eternal servant,

Draviḍa Dāsa
Initiation: 1974, January—New York, USA

Śeṣa Dāsa

Prabhupāda Sevā

Service to Prabhupāda
in a happy mood

A bright future will be
something he can prove

Think of what you would be
oh, someone very crude

When Prabhupāda spreads his mercy
grime of sin removed

Follow him carefully
freedom from sin's rule

One day soon sure to be
oh, someone very good

Your servant,

Śeṣa Dāsa
Initiation: 1974, January—Boston, USA

Madhusevita Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to your 130th birth celebration. May your appearance day be glorified for the next ten thousand years.

As much as any past, present, or future members of ISKCON may perform glorious service to Lord Caitanya's movement, they will never be comparable to you because of the unfathomable majesty of your surrender to Kṛṣṇa and compassion for the fallen souls.

In the coming centuries the names of hundreds and thousands of devotees serving in the paramparā will mostly be forgotten, but you will always shine along with the other devotional giants, like Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and the Gosvāmīs. There is a simple and unquestionable proof for the above: the Bhaktivedanta purports. No one will ever give the world such a matchless gift.

You once said that we shouldn't expect to see the results of preaching within our lifetime, and elsewhere you said that we should at least maintain what you had done.

To be honest, I don't know if we were able to maintain the quality of the devotional dedication you infused into your ISKCON and, for sure, because of still struggling to achieve unity in diversity, we can't expect to witness any everlasting results of our preaching.

With so many valiant godbrothers leaving this world – which

creates a most painful condition – the possibility that your legacy may be watered down by sentimentalism, bureaucracy, the bodily concept, or overintelligence, to name just a few, is a clear and present danger. We are in the Age of Kali. We should never forget it.

However, if we devote our life to your Bhaktivedanta purports, you will make miracles that we cannot even imagine. Casting away all distorted forms of devotion, you will illumine our hearts with pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness, giving us the strength and intelligence to maintain your legacy intact.

I bow down in all humility and ask you to please perform this miracle, starting with my forgetful heart.

I beg to remain your eternal servant,

Madhusevita Dāsa
Initiation: 1974, March—Mayapur, India

Divyāṅga Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Thank you for picking me up from the gutter of sense gratification in Kali-yuga. I struggle to follow you and although I fall, I get back up and apply the process you've given us. Hearing chanting and engaging in devotional service. Fortunately, I have good Vaiṣṇava saṅga which was created by you. ISKCON.

According to your purport to Bhagavad-gītā 3.31, we must be sincere and serious. Even if we can't follow purely, if we "don't resent the principle" we'll make progress. I was told when I joined to make spiritual advancement one must please the guru. Mṛgendra told me the best way to please Śrīla Prabhupāda is to distribute his books.

When we were in Spokane at the '74 Expo distributing books, we received a letter from Your Divine Grace:

"I am very keen on the distribution of my books and I am very indebted to all of you for your untiring efforts to see that every man and woman in America gets one of my books. If they simply read one page, even if they do nothing else, they can become perfect." — Letter from Śrīla Prabhupāda, 4/20/74.

I still go out regularly and distribute your books. Not "every

man and woman" just yet, but I'm not giving up. I'm going down swinging, and I pray that I can continue my Saṅkīrtana until I die.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

sarva vaiṣṇavera pā'ye kori namaskāra
ithe aparādha kichu nahuka āmāra

oṁ tat sat. Hare Kṛṣṇa

Your fallen disciple,

Divyāṅga Dāsa
Initiation: 1974, April—New Vrindaban, West Virginia, USA

Ariṣṭahā Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet, on your appearance day.

I remember when I was in Māyāpur 1976, when you came back from your morning walk to take darśana of Rādhā Mādhava. You were effulgent like the sun, and moved with regal grace, accompanied by your most intimate disciples. The kīrtanas were ecstatic, you were circumambulating the Deities, ringing the bell, and your presence and your soft lotus feet were purifying the holy dhāma and us, who were full of offenses, struggling on the spiritual path. I was certainly the worst example, and therefore in need of the most compassion and mercy. My case was really acute and it still is; somehow or other I survived by your grace, so I can only bow down before you and ask your forgiveness. Please engage me in some service, although I am unwilling.

I remember sitting in front of you in your room when you gave darśana. By a wave of your hand, you invited us in; you never rejected anyone if he showed at least a little bit of humility. I also remember during *guru-pūjā*, when a dear godbrother — who is not with us any more physically — gave me a few remnants of mahāprasādam, which you had distributed from your Vyāsāsana. I was not in any way qualified to be there, but the Lord brought me there because of my connection with you. You were fanning the spark. In your presence, which was like the early morning sun driving away the

dark clouds of ignorance, our feeble creepers of devotion could grow.

When you first came to America you were alone and unknown; now there are so many temples, mūrtis of you, all over the world, so many millions of books distributed. Lord Krishna wanted to make you famous; now anyone can see your mūrti, offer obeisances, join the lecture and kīrtana and establish a loving relationship with you. So many thousands of devotees bow down before you, serve you, glorify you, help you to spread Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement's sweet waves of compassion to nourish the spiritually starving souls. Don't let us suffocate in the dry sands of Kali-yuga, but let us swim and drown in the ocean of love of God, Krishna prema. It is very difficult, still, by the grace of Pañca Tattva and Their pure devotee, a blind man can see the stars in the sky, a lame man can cross mountains, and a fool can recite poetry.

I can only pray that memories of you may surface in my steel-framed heart, and one day I can feel the presence of the Lord, who wants a pure place, a soft, clean heart to sit down, not a bad smelling garbage heap. There are so many devotees who inspire me, mostly online, but also in my near presence. I humbly bow down before them. Please bless me so I can serve you in this last part of my life.

Your unwilling, remorseful, stupid servant,

Ariṣṭahā Dāsa
Initiation: 1974, April—Stockholm, Sweden

Kṛṣṇāveśa Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

I offer my respectful obeisances at your divine lotus feet on the auspicious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā day this year, Saturday, 5 September, 2026.

I have heard in disciplic succession that a Vyāsa-pūjā offering should be words of appreciation and gratitude for the qualities and gifts of the spiritual master. When the time comes around each year for me to sit down and put pen to paper for this writing, I do always ask myself if my offerings are generally meeting that requirement, and I've become aware that I'm using my Vyāsa-pūjā writing, yes, to express appreciation and gratitude to you, but also as an opportunity to have an annual check-in with my spiritual master regarding

developments in my life over the past year in ISKCON and the wider material world, and the interesting intersecting zone between the two. I used to worry that I might have nothing new to say to you in any given year, but I've had enough experience now to be able to set those worries aside. Every year I find there has been some new development preoccupying me that I would find worth sharing with you. The experience of bringing these reflections to you, imbued for sure with some words of praise, is something that I find gives a dynamism of relevance and added meaning to my Vyāsa-pūjā writing. I sincerely hope this approach is acceptable to you. And if it makes for interesting reading for you, so much the better.

Writing a Vyāsa-pūjā offering to you feels to me like writing you a letter. I am happy for any offerings I write to you to be published for others to read, or to read them out loud for others to hear, because I remember a letter you wrote to me once that was shared in that way as well. The letter, one of the two you wrote me, was first handed to the temple president in Bury Place with all the other mail that had been delivered that day, and he called me to his office excited to give it to me. Immediately the letter was in my hand, he told me to open it and read it out loud to him, before I had even had a chance to read it to myself! For a moment I flinched, but quickly realised that a letter from Your Divine Grace to any individual will be taken as instructive and edifying by every single one of your disciples, and so cannot and will not be private—or at least I accepted the situation in that way. In that letter you told me our movement is based on love and trust, and that therefore I should cooperate with my temple authorities because if I didn't do so, how would that be love and trust? When I received those words of yours into my heart via my non-private, out-loud reading of your letter to the temple president, to be honest I did not feel overjoyed or blessed, or fortunate in any way (contrary to the outward appearance I projected). Inwardly I felt ashamed, indeed horrified…mortified that you must have perceived me as an uncooperative person, someone displeasing to you. At that time I did not have the mood of a strong disciple or student with heart completely embracing of correction, guidance, chastisement perhaps, from the teacher, the spiritual master. I wanted, hoped, desperately, for you to be pleased with me, and wanted to hear words of praise from you (of *me*) (and *to* me). Many years later, still suffering as I was from the same weakness of heart, but with visible meltdowns occasionally now accompanying my condition, one of

the great generals in your great spiritual army told me gently that I needed to be a better soldier. At that moment I understood what I had not understood before. The image of the good soldier, honoured to serve, the shining abode of all opposites with all her bravery and humility rolled into one, became enshrined in my heart as the signpost to help me find my way to personal growth. I have been heading in the direction she points to ever since.

This year I was asked to give an interview for *A Bond of Love*. One of the interview questions was, "What was your favourite quality of Prabhupāda?" After going deep into consideration, I came up with two qualities of yours that I appreciate the most and spoke about them. These were 1) your quality of being a touchstone, transforming thousands of ordinary conditioned souls into Vaiṣṇavas; and 2) your quality of being a transparent via medium to Krishna. Now after further consideration, I would like to add another quality of yours to my list, a quality that inspires me in light of events I have been exercised by this year in the world of ISKCON, and after considering what the forecast for our worldwide preaching success is likely to be as a result.

One thing I notice about Your Divine Grace is that as a surrendered loving servant of God, you are committed to demonstrating that truth is conclusive. In other words, though we each have our own subjective experience, which is valid in its own right, ultimate truth is objective and on God's terms. You gave us the word '*siddhānta*,' 'conclusion.' For example, the '*siddhānta*' of Krishna consciousness; and "Bhaktisiddhānta," the name of your spiritual master, which means 'the conclusion of bhakti.' You wanted us to have answers, and you made sure you gave us answers. Answers that were not dogmatic, answers that showed us the relevance of Krishna consciousness, answers that made the subject matter accessible to us—but answers that were nonetheless decisive and irrefutable. You exercised our thinking processes, our intelligence, but in stimulating us to think, you did not leave things so open-ended, vague, and inconclusive that we were ever left unsure or in doubt about what was right and true.

Tied in with this, you felt responsible to be authoritative in providing answers, to carry the authority of disciplic succession intact to all who might be or become your students. So when you spoke, you spoke authoritatively. When you asked a group of devotees what the meaning of the word 'horticultural' was, and one

of your disciples responded hesitantly, "*I think* it means 'having to do with fruits and vegetables,'" you chastised him for speaking as if he was unsure of the answer. You were teaching him, and us, that if we know the answer to something, we should state it confidently for the benefit of those who are hearing us. And if we don't know the answer, also for the benefit of others, it is better that we do not speak. You taught us this because you were preparing us to follow you and represent you effectively in the role of teacher.

So these are the two matters I've mentioned that you wanted us to follow you in: 1) knowing and teaching the truth conclusively, and 2) speaking with the weight of authority. These are two responsibilities of leadership. You wanted us as your followers to be leaders in the world and to also possess these disciplines and skills.

To offset the above in order to create the right balance between our receiving knowledge from you in the descending process and actively using our own intelligence to learn, you also said that your disciples should be independently thoughtful, and you engaged some of us in philosophical debate to develop and sharpen their intellectual skills. The two processes, receiving knowledge in disciplic succession and using our own intelligence, not to muddy our learning or to compete with each other for intellectual originality in the spirit of the *muni-jñānīs*, but to help us learn and surrender to Krishna in a thought-out and informed way, you taught, were meant to be practiced in synthesis—in a complementary, holistic way that was lived and demonstrated by you.

So following from these reflections, I would like to end with a simple prayer that devotees in ISKCON today may be blessed by you to lead—as all of us must lead in one sphere of life or another—lead with the real strength of balance and synthesis, with the ability to present truth both holistically and irrefutably, knowing that you have placed the responsibility for decision-making in these changing times with *us* now, and that we are duty-bound to competently take it on. With the mood of surrendered disciples, not with the mood of Māyāvādīs who intentionally favour the subjective over the objective, throwing balance away in order to serve their own anti-authoritarian motives by keeping the world stuck in non-progressive confusion, let us take strength now and waste no more time in revitalising your movement so that it is powerfully mobilised, positively progressive, fit for purpose in the world of today, and adaptively fit for purpose for the worlds of every tomorrow.

Your loving servant,

Kṛṣṇāveśa Dāsī
Initiation: 1974, April—Hamburg, Germany

Nirantara Dāsa

My Confession

Before coming to ISKCON, I would sometimes go to my local Catholic Church to make "confession". Of course, that was during my pre-hippie days up until the age of 19, when I began a life of debauchery. So here is my latest "confession" to my spiritual master, my eternal well-wisher.

My relationship with my spiritual master began from reading his words. For the first time in my life I could actually read something more than a few paragraphs and not become bored, disappointed or frustrated by some nonsense statement. In fact, every word of the pamphlet '*Transcendental Teachings of Prahlāda Mahārāja*' resonated with me, and I felt that finally I had found what I had been looking for all my life, but could never quite put my finger on it.

After joining ISKCON Brooklyn in 1973, the overwhelming emotion was, "I am on my way home". Going out for book distribution every day as a *brahmacārī*, I would take shelter of '*Lord Caitanya in Five Features*' (Chapter 7 of *Adi-līlā*). This book became my new 'Bible'; I would cram the purports all throughout my subway stops.

As the years went by, I changed ashramas and developed a taste for reading Bhāgavatam, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Krishna Book* (my all-time favorite) and even Bhagavad-gītā (the one book I always found most difficult to read).

This past year, by the grace of Guru and Krishna, I was blessed with the secret to not just 'cracking the code' of the Gita, but all of my spiritual master's books. The secret. The keys to the kingdom is that Śrīla Prabhupāda can be confidentially discovered in his Bhaktivedānta Purports. Now I am beginning to understand things as they are.

Śrīla Prabhupāda answered a question I posed during a Sunday Feast lecture he gave in Atlanta, in 1975, when he said that if I learned how to love Krishna, then he would be pleased. Perhaps, I may have SOME love for Krishna, but I certainly have implicit faith

and love in the words of Śrīla Prabhupāda. And nobody can take that away from me.

OṀ TAT SAT

Nirantara Dāsa
Initiation: 1974, April—New York, USA
Current location: Aliso Viejo, California, USA
Contact: nirantaradāsa@gmail.com

Nikuñjavāsinī Devī Dāsī

nama oṁ 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,

My Lord and master and only shelter,
my only worshipable deity and my very life and soul.

September 1965, Russia;

The generals are at the army base, their fingers on the red button, waiting for instructions to press.

It is night, and they have been there for many hours. Who will be the first to send the nuclear missile? Russia or the U.S?

Finally, the order is given: DESIST from the attack.

Many years later, Śrīla Prabhupāda, this same general received a *Līlāmṛta* from his nephew, and realised that the moment you set foot on the Boston Harbour was the moment they ceased the attack on America.

bhavad-vidhā bhāgavatās
tīrtha-bhūtāḥ svayaṁ vibho
tīrthī-kurvanti tīrthāni

svāntaḥ-sthena gadābhṛtā

My Lord, devotees like your good self are verily holy places personified. Because you carry the Personality of Godhead within your heart, you turn all places into places of pilgrimage. (*ŚB* 1.13.10)

At the same time, a little girl, fourteen years old, was walking close to that Boston Harbour, when she felt a gush of wind blowing through her heart and realised she needed to search for self-realisation!

A few years later she became your duly initiated disciple, Ananga Manjari, and realised that at that time she was at the Boston Harbour you were praying to the Lord *Mārkine Bhāgavata Dharma*. This prayer touched her heart like a wave of reconnection.

The first thing you noticed on the harbourfront was a big sign on the dock: UNALLOYED STEEL

You immediately remembered a verse by Rupa Goswami

anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṁ jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-śīlanaṁ bhaktir uttamā

This is what you came to give – unalloyed bhakti – without any tinge of *karma* and *jñāna*.

Later on in New York, you were sitting on a bench with Mr Rubens, who remembers:

> "He seemed to know that he would have temples filled up with devotees. He would look out and say, "I am not a poor man, I am rich. There are temples and books; they are existing, they are there, but the time is separating us from them." He always mentioned "we" and spoke about the one who sent him, his spiritual master. He didn't know people at that time, but he said, "I am never alone." "

You started from scratch, following the order of your spiritual master with full faith.

Little by little, some followers came, with mixed motivations, but you preached pure *bhakti* and gave them the holy name, being the only one with unflinching faith in the power of the name of Kṛṣṇa; they chanted with you and became purified.

Then you sent them out to start centres all over the world, back to India, where you established big temples.

With the prediction of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in your

heart, you fought your godbrothers' opposition to establish a centre in Śrīdhāma Māyāpur where all the western and eastern devotees would come together to chant the holy name.

Your plan was brilliant; you built homes for your devotees all over the world, where they have shelter from the onslaughts of māyā, by associating together, following your perfect recipe.

Four regulative principles, 16 rounds, Deity worship, Maṅgala arotika, *japa*, greeting the Deities, Guru-pūjā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam class, after which came a plate of sumptuous prasādam. Service all day, cleansing the temple, preaching, and book distribution. Then come home for the evening Arotika and Bhagavad-gītā class, hot milk and *Krishna book*.

Your formula for success — you guaranteed the result would be happiness in this life, and going back to Godhead without a doubt. *Asaṁśayaḥ*.

Once, you were heading back from a successful program in a large hall, where everyone had been chanting and dancing and taking prasādam, where you had delivered your lecture, and everyone had become enlivened.

On the way home in the car, one of your disciples saw you with tears in your eyes, looking out of the window.

> "Why are you crying, Śrīla Prabhupāda?"
> "Just look at all these suffering souls", you said.
> For you, it was never enough.
> You wanted to build a house where
> the whole world could live.

Now, so many years later, we are still feeling the effect. We have a home wherever we travel, where we have godbrothers and sisters. We know what time to get up and what we can do to please you. It is very simple:

Stick to the basics, develop love for Krishna by serving Him always, offering everything with loving devotion at His lotus feet.

We pray we may serve you for as many years as we have left in this world, in a way that may please you, and please help us to remember you always.

We are trying to take shelter of your instructions in your books and to serve your beloved Deities the best we can.

With utmost gratitude, we wish to thank you for all you have

given, saving our lives from utter disaster and destruction.

Your humble servant,

Nikuñjavāsinī Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1974, June—Frankfurt, Germany

Yādavendra Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your holy feet. You are the perfect truth-telling gentleman, advocating equal opportunity. And you are an unfathomable source of inspiration for both material and spiritual knowledge.

> It is the injunction of the Vedas that the Spiritual Master should not be treated as ordinary man even if sometimes the Spiritual Master behaves like ordinary man. It is the duty of the disciple to accept Him as Superhuman Man. In the beginning of your letter your comparison of the soldier and commander is very appropriate. We are on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra—one side Māyā, the other side Kṛṣṇa. (Letter to Brahmānanda , Gargamuni, Los Angeles, July 31, 1970)

I was searching for ideas on how to format and write a trust deed, which I have never done before. By Kṛṣṇa's arrangement I immediately came across your letter dated July 29, 1970 from Los Angeles:

> I, the undersigned, A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami, presently author of the following books: *Kṛṣṇa*; *Nectar of Devotion*; *Easy Journey to Other Planets*; *Īśopaniṣad*; *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*; *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*; *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*; *Kṛṣṇa Consciousness: The Topmost Yoga System*, do hereby appoint Rūpānuga dāsa Adhikārī, Bhagavān dāsa Adhikārī, and Karandhara dāsa Adhikārī for the purpose of the publishing of manuscripts and literatures made by me, distribution and collection and all other necessary paraphernalia in this connection. This trust is called the Bhaktivedānta Book Trust. Out of the three trustees, the

majority decision will be carried… (Letters, Vol. 3, p. 1436)

Not only does this sample Trust Deed fulfill my needs and answer my questions, but it seems this text also represents the founding document of the BBT.

I am currently working on donating AU$2,5 million of real estate to ISKCON Australia. I am confident you will be pleased by such a gift, and I trust ISKCON Australia will use this asset wisely. Śrīman Jitamitra Prabhu intends to make a similar gesture.Your and Kṛṣṇa's words contained in *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.39, saved me from being victimized by old age. At that stage of my life, I needed to be clearly reminded that I am not this body but eternal spirit soul, servant of guru and Kṛṣṇa to extricate myself from lethargy.Whenever I have to take an unorthodox shower on travelling-book-distribution saṅkīrtana, I remember your pastime at Bangkok Airport early in the morning of Thursday, February 8, 1973, on the way to Australia, and that gives my ways legitimacy even though I may be on my own. As you demonstrated, to take a shower anywhere we need a *gamchā*, running water, soap, and a *loṭā.* In place of a *loṭā,* I use a 2-liter plastic yogurt container. It's lightweight and regularly available due to my consumption of yogurt. However, I may have to curtail long distance saṅkīrtana travelling because, for the first time in 42 years I endured not one but two saṅkīrtana van crashes within six months. Both vans were written off, but fortunately no personal injuries were sustained.

In *Śrīla Prabhupāda Nectar*, Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami tells the details of the aforementioned bathing pastime: "Śrīla Prabhupāda could do something very unusual, yet he would do it as if it were perfectly normal. Such was the case when he decided to bathe in a washroom at the airport in Bangkok. He had been flying several hours and was taking a two-hour stop-over in the transit area before heading on for another several hours' flight. It was very early in the morning, and the airport was not crowded. While waiting, Śrīla Prabhupāda decided he wanted to bathe, so he asked his servant to get him fresh clothes and his bathing paraphernalia. To accomplish this, the servant had to first locate their luggage, which was being changed from one airplane to another. When his servant managed to do that, he and Śrīla Prabhupāda went to the men's room.

This particular airport had no shower facility, but Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to use whatever they had. He walked up to the small sink and said he would bathe there. The local attendant was with them in the bathroom, and when he saw what Prabhupāda was

about to do, he became upset. Prabhupāda proceeded coolly. Using his *loṭā,* he obtained water from the faucet and, covering the lower portion of his body with a *gamchā,* began washing with soap. The attendant didn't directly confront them, but he became increasingly upset, mumbling to himself as Śrīla Prabhupāda spilled water all over the floor. When Prabhupāda finished, his servant handed him a towel, and he dried off. Then he put on his fresh clothing.

Only as they started to leave did the attendant come forward. He approached Śrīla Prabhupāda and began speaking in the Thai language. They couldn't understand his words, but he was obviously angry.

'Just go away,' said Śrīla Prabhupāda's servant, and he thought, 'You're lucky you're getting to wipe up this water.'

'I think he's a little upset,' said Śrīla Prabhupāda's servant.

Prabhupāda laughed and said, 'I had to bathe. I was feeling very tired.'

(Śrutakīrti dāsa interview in *Śrīla Prabhupāda Nectar* 4.38)

I would like to add this touching 1972 Vyāsa-pūjā poem from your temple in Edmonton, Canada:

> Your heart is more brave than a million eagles
>
> Your heart is more brave than a million eagles
> and Your lotus eyes are as pools of milk
> shining soft like the autumnal moon.

Prabhupāda, they say that the Himalayan mountains are breathtaking and that the paintings of Spain bring tears to the eyes of the beholders. But, my dear Gurujī, they have not yet been embraced by your compassion. Inexhaustible fountain of Divine Mercy and soul-soothing peace is the thought of your causeless love and oceanic compassion for all entrapped in this prison house of illusion.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, most precious soul, you have picked me up from this ocean of suffering where I was dragged by the whirlpools of desire and lust and battered against the scraping rocks a million times, and left to be on the shores of eternal suffering.

O my Lord, your words are transcendentally pure; they are enchanting my soul, singing sweetly of the Celestial Herdsman, Gopāla, by the clear waters of Yamunā. O Prabhupāda, the Herdsman of my soul, May this spotless lotus of love grow upon

the waters of my soul and with you as my Ferryman, let me start the journey home.

O thou Śrīla Prabhupāda, who are the refuge of all simple, sincere souls, our eternal father and friend, you are the kindest person in the world.

Thank you, Prabhupāda, Thank you,"

ISKCON Edmonton (Vedabase/Sri Vyāsa-pūjā/1972 Temple Offerings/ISKCON Edmonton)

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for setting the example in all respects as the true *Ācārya*.

Your insignificant servant,

Yādavendra Dāsa
Initiation: June 1974, Frankfurt, Germany

Tattvavit Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Aiṁ gurave namaḥ. In this homage, I wove together memories and current events.

During my first weekend in ISKCON, I had the good fortune to ride in a car to and from Los Angeles (on Saturday and Sunday, January 12–13, 1974) to see you for the first time and hear your Sunday morning class. I had joined the San Francisco temple (New Jagannātha-puri) on January 11.

This January and February, at the Juhu Beach temple in Mumbai, I offered guru-pūjā to you a few times. Like previous ācāryas and mahājanas, you represent Kṛṣṇa, teaching conditioned souls about the need and possibility of leaving this temporary universe, the "fort" that holds us. You provide the ways and means, as did ancient sages, such as the nava-yogendras, who were the subject of the Bhāgavatam classes. In one class, I compared you to them, because you traveled widely as they did, to purify conditioned souls.

They imparted their father's teachings, those of Lord Ṛṣabhadeva. It is amazing that these and other Bhāgavatam teachings have reached many nations over the past half century by your mercy. ISKCON grew by distributing your books, and devotees continue to distribute them on a vast scale, as reported in the *Saṅkīrtana Newsletter*. Janārdana-Krishna Dāsa, a European friend of mine

whose family moved to America when he was young, distributed more than 25,000 books in 2025. He got initiated after graduating from college and nowadays travels to colleges and distributes books. He had never been to India, but he visited this year. This spring, Mahotsaha Dāsa, an Indian brahmacārī who lives in America, set a new world record for "total books distributed in one day." He sold two hundred stacks of thirteen books, sixty-one sets of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, plus 2,833 big books and 2,462 small and medium books — 5,294 books in a single day!

Regarding your own induction after completing college, you said, "Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvami, after seeing me, said that you all are learned; then why don't you preach the teaching of Caintaya Mahāprabhu in foreign countries? On this I argued with him. I said that we are a dependent country, who will listen to us?"

As Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.39–41): *buddhyā yukto yayā pārtha karma-bandhaṁ prahāsyasi*: By using discernment in the practice of yoga, we can throw off and become free from the bondage of work. In that endeavor, there's no loss or diminution — *nehābhikrama nāśo 'sti*. Those on this path have one-pointed resolution — *vyavasāyātmikā buddhir ekeha*. The commentary of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī on the latter verse inspired your fixed Krishna consciousness, making you determined to carry out the order of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta to preach in English in the West.

Like Arjuna and Mahārāja Ambarīṣa, you were a devotee with steady intelligence, fully restraining your senses and fixing your consciousness upon Kṛṣṇa—*tāni sarvāṇi saṁyamya yukta āsīta mat-paraḥ* (*Bg*. 2.61). Wherever you sat, you spoke with absorption in the profound knowledge of Krisna consciousness, whether giving classes, translating, or meeting people. I first saw you speak in Los Angeles and then at the San Francisco Rathayātrā in 1974 (and later in another half dozen American temples when I traveled with the Library Party in 1975–77).

In Golden Gate Park in July 1974, we awaited your arrival at the starting point of the Rathayātrā parade. When you got out of a car, you saw the carts and deities just behind us in the park, and you offered your full *daṇḍavats* on the parking lot pavement. My first thought was that your clothes would get dirty! But they didn't, as I saw when you stood up. Viśākhā's famous photo of you on the Rathayātrā stage shows you in a long clean white sweater with a red-rose garland, your arms raised as you danced in a *kīrtana*.

My second thought was one of emotional admiration for your whole-hearted attitude of service toward Lord Jagannātha, Balarāma, and Subhadrā. You totally lacked false prestige about being the movement's founder-ācārya. Rather, by bowing down in a parking lot you demonstrated to me how you act simply as their humble, loving servant, along with your followers. You began organizing Rathayātrā parades as a child with the help of your parents and friends.

From the stage, on a rise in the park, you optimistically told the crowd that wherever you traveled, you found that people wanted an opulent lifestyle like the standard in America, and thus, if we danced and chanted, the whole world would follow.

In the historic Juhu Beach temple, hundreds of devotees and visitors attend the daily deity greeting and guru-pūjā early in the morning, and thousands more have *darśana* at the scheduled times throughout the day. Unlike adherents of Abrahamic faiths, who visit their mosque, synagogue, or church on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, respectively, Indians, along with their families or friends, visit temples on any day of the week at convenient times during the day and evening. In our temple, they act humbly, however materially aggressive they might be otherwise in worldly dealings.

The day before I finished writing this tribute, I attended a memorial gathering for Śrīmatī Veerawalli Sethi, who had just passed on at the age of ninety-nine. She's the lady mentioned in biographies about you who removed and donated her gold bangles at a meeting you held with the first supporters of ISKCON in Bombay. You were very pleased by her donation of gold, saying that gold is pure and thus the temple was off to a very auspicious start. Mr. Sethi and his college-aged son defended the new temple with shotguns for a night or two after dacoits had attacked it. Now the Sethis' grandchildren are in college. Your wrote to another couple in Mumbai: "As you know we are constructing the Hare Krishna Land project in Juhu Beach, and we trust that you and your family members will take advantage of the facilities for generations to come."

Our Juhu Beach temple is, indeed, an auspicious place, though culturally conservative. Your visiting female disciples are not invited to give classes unless they wish to share their memories of being with you (this spring, Mahāmāyā Devī Dāsī, shared her memories of you). And as in other ISKCON temples in India, women aren't allowed to perform services on the altar, owing to cultural norms in

India, though they prepare all the flower garlands.

Despite all you did for us, I am thankless and ask for your forgiveness.

Your servant,

Tattvavit Dāsa
Initiation: 1974, July—San Francisco, USA

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you, the ultimate purveyor of transcendental knowledge in the present age.

Somehow or other, 52 years ago, I came in contact with you through the agency of your devotees. Your purports in the Bhagavad-gītā are like a soothing balm to a weary traveler. I have been traveling in this material world trying to satisfy my own desires for zillions of births. But the question remains, "How is that working for me?"

I now must admit that it is not working for me. I must listen to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. You are not trying to satisfy your own desires, but, rather, you are completely focused on satisfying Kṛṣṇa's desires. As I have learned from you, if Kṛṣṇa is satisfied then everyone is satisfied. I now must change my focus from my desires to Kṛṣṇa's desires. How do I know what Kṛṣṇa wants? I know from you. Your entire life is exemplary in how to satisfy Kṛṣṇa. Thus you are the perfect ācārya, teaching by your example. The more that I can live according to your example, the closer I can come to pleasing you and Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise my life is wasted.

As students pay tuition to learn in an institution, now I owe you for teaching and exemplifying the perfection of knowledge. But how can I ever repay my debt? The gift of eternal life in harmony with Kṛṣṇa and all other spiritual souls is more valuable than anything, anywhere and for all time. My humble attempt to glorify you is a small beginning. I am not very learned, or a great wordsmith, but I do know that I must give my life to you. I have nothing else to give.

You have provided the most voluminous, consistent, and exacting explanations of how to serve Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Hopefully, I can also help others to come in contact and follow your instructions and example. This will be the

perfection of my life.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for keeping me engaged in your service. Without this engagement my life is utterly useless.

Your servant,

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Dāsa
Initiation: 1974, July—Ottawa, Canada

Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya Dāsa

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

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

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble and respectful obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet. You are my glorious master, and my personal mission is to share Krishna consciousness with as many *jīvas* as possible, and to inspire and guide those who are developing a serious attitude regarding the practice of devotional service.

My journey in Krishna consciousness is not unique in the sense that I was just one of the lost souls wandering around the city of Atlanta. One of your followers found me and introduced me to your book *Krishna, the Reservoir of Pleasure*, which changed my life forever.

My entire life in Krishna consciousness has revolved around reading your books. Your writings have been my saving grace and have kept me on this path for the past 53 years. I am committed to reading your books daily and studying them thoroughly.

Your books are the greatest blessing for humanity, and I give my utmost respect to the devotees who have dedicated their lives to sharing your teachings with the public. There can be no greater sacrifice on the part of any devotee than to organize and plan their lives around introducing people to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

You set the perfect example for all the world to see. You changed our lives, you changed history on each page with your personal ecstasy, all glories to you Śrīla Prabhupāda.

None of us knows the exact time of our departure from this

world, but what we do know is the time we have before us right now—this moment, this segment of our lives. As Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākur said, "Act with the times that are with thee, and progress yee shall call." This quote is one of my guiding principles: To utilize every moment, every second in your service, and to remember the Supreme Lord Krishna, whom you revealed to us.

I pray at your lotus feet, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and humbly seek your mercy, so that I can carry on with your mission, which is to 'Systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to humanity at large'.

By staying focused on these few activities you have so kindly blessed us with, I am confident that you will be pleased with me, just as Akrura was confident while traveling to Vṛndāvana, that Kṛṣṇa would be pleased with his devotional attitude.

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I again bow at your lotus feet, begging for your mercy like a child who depends entirely on his parents. You are my father, my guru, my shelter. You have given me hope, direction, and new life. You have given me the possibility of returning to the lotus feet of the Lord in the spiritual world. This hope gives me pain because I feel so fallen and distracted by the ever-changing nature of this world. But, my dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am determined not to leave your lotus feet. I am determined never to lose confidence in you. I am committed to staying with your movement, ISKCON, and I will not allow myself to be distracted by any activity in this world, except for engaging all my resources in carrying out your mission. These thoughts are my constant meditation and prayer, and I will spend the balance of my life in service to you and your mission. My confidence is in you and in what you have given me. For that, I thank you millions and millions of times, my dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your eternal servant,

Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya Dāsa
Initiation: 1974, July—Chicago, USA

Laṅgagaṇeśa Dāsa

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

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C.

Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Krishna having taken shelter at His lotus feet.

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

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

yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo
yasya aprasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi
dhyāyan stuvaṁs tasya [yaśas tri-sandhyaṁ]
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.

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

As my life is reduced by my karmic circumstances, I repeatedly offer obeisances to your countless instructions for community cooperation and self-sufficient coordination. Your vision of "Vṛndāvana-like villages" for raising our families in this overwhelming ugra-karma society increasingly reveals multitudes of inspiration for me. Indeed, it seems the only way to *fully represent* the "Back-to-Godhead" solution to society at large!

The "demigods waiting to be born into this movement" certainly await the establishment of a proper launchpad for their opportunity to serve in your properly balanced movement. All subsequent sannyāsīs and preachers will surely fulfill your desire and quell your lamentation for not completing your varṇāśrama objective yourself as they proliferate your organization.

Although the current ISKCON/GBC has not yet achieved a 50%/50% balance between the city temple (preaching centers) and the farm community development simultaneously, the traction is ever-increasing to accomplish this objective—thanks to your guidance and Paramātmā's encouragement. So, I have compiled my "progress report" this year with due respect and appreciation for

my godsiblings, who demonstrate the determination and patience to correct this imbalance. My obeisances are to them for this effort to please you.

As the first volume of my book *Permaculture Ecovillages* continues to slowly gain momentum, I have spent my time fine-tuning the next few volumes for publication later this year.

I have also continued to research additional established intentional communities and fine-tune outreach concepts to introduce aspects of *daiva-varṇāśrama* for them to adopt. One significant aspect of this work has been to dredge my archives for contacts that I developed while working for my brother part-time. He had a business that assisted Native American tribal communities to establish "business incubators." My responsibility was to research the contact information for several hundred of the more than 500 tribes in the USA from 1984 until 2012 when he passed away.

So, I have recently been researching them for ongoing established traditional customs related to their religious and philosophical practices that express their belief in a Supreme Spirit, individual spirits in Nature, and to Mother Earth.

While doing this research, it was brought to my attention that an international organization (*State of the World Forum*) was seeking "white paper" submissions for a $100,000.00 "Multi Intelligence Award" which demonstrates the integration of 2 to 4 intelligences found in their current concept of existence. These four intelligences are described by them as: Human, Nature, Artificial and Cosmic.

So, I submitted a paper which demonstrates that Paramātmā is what they refer to as "Cosmic Intelligence," and the document introduces the "Planetary Dharma Lab," a proposed global design hub uniting systems science, ecological wisdom, and spiritual consciousness to co-develop practical models of integrated intelligence stewardship. This initiative emphasizes *dharma* — right relationship — as the governing principle for cooperative evolution.

In essence, my submission paper argues that:

- Ecological collapse is a spiritual imbalance manifesting as systemic dysfunction.
- Instability in human affairs is a symptom of fragmented perception.
- Artificial Intelligence requires alignment with ecological and ethical intelligence.
- Cosmic Intelligence invites humanity to transcend

anthropocentrism and rediscover its planetary role as custodian rather than controller.

Through conscious integration, these intelligences can form a regenerative symphony of cooperation — establishing moral architecture for a civilization aligned with planetary and cosmic order. In short, the *daiva-varṇāśrama* system in a nutshell is being offered for their due consideration.

Hare Kṛṣṇa! I continuously pray for your mercy and guidance and remain your servant in the groves of New Tālavana Dhāma!

OṀ TAT SAT

Laṅgagaṇeśa Dāsa
Initiation: 1974, July—Miami, Florida, USA

Mahāmanā Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your divine lotus feet.

santo diśanti cakṣūṁṣi...
...devatā bāndhavāḥ santaḥ
santa ātmāham eva ca

When the sun rises, our eyes are able to have a direct vision of all external objects, but when one sees a saint one develops the eligibility for seeing the things hidden within. (*SB* 11.26.31)

The saint is the devotee, the saint is the brother and the friend, and ultimately the saint is the ātmā.

Your divine appearance in this world has brought all auspiciousness to this world, relief from the blazing fire of material existence.

In a most confidential conversation with the Late HH Tamāl Krishna Goswami Mahārāja, you had revealed your true identity:

As a dearmost confidante of Lord Krishna, you were requested by Him to come to this material world to save the fallen souls. Since your divine self did not wish to be separated from the Lord, you had hesitated. But having been reassured by the Lord that you would soon return to Him after completing the preaching mission, you agreed, saying, in your own words, " I will go".

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we can not even imagine anyone else doing or

achieving what you did in a short span of time.

As it is said in *Cc.* Antya 6.193, *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā baliṣṭha sabā haite tomāre kāḍila viṣaya-viṣṭhā-garta haite*

Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, "The mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa is stronger than anything else. Therefore the Lord has delivered you from the ditch of materialistic life, which is like a hole into which people pass stool."

Similarly Guruprasād, mercy of one's spiritual master is the strongest.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, by some exceptionally good fortune, I have come in contact with the glorious Krishna consciousness movement which is the saṅkīrtana līlā of Lord Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

I pray that I remain eternally under your divine Shelter.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for everything.

Your unworthy servant,

Mahāmanā Dāsa
Initiation: 1974, July—London, UK
Current location: Madhya Pradesh, India
Contact: mahamandas@gmail.com

Kṛṣṇarūpa Devī Dāsī

My most beloved master.

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

On this most auspicious day of your appearance, we reflect on the debt of love and duty that we owe to you.

As the scripture says, it is impossible to repay the debt a disciple owes to their spiritual master. We were drowning in the deepest darkness of ignorance, and by the order of the Lord, you appeared in this material world to save all of us lost and drowning souls.

The extent of your most compassionate mercy, the purity of your devotion to the Lord, and your kindness to all of us is something we can meditate on and indeed wonder about.

How wonderful is our good fortune?! We had no good qualities, yet, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you picked us up and you fulfilled our lives, which would have been otherwise wasted in a futile attempt to enjoy this material world.

When I think of my own journey and all the foolish mistakes I've made by my contact with the material world, I shudder at the thought of them.

And when I think of all your transcendental qualities, I am conflicted at how I can possibly describe them. How does a dullard, a person lacking in spiritual qualities, describe the most transcendent?

Just meditating on your pure form, your pure thoughts, and your pure activities makes me even more aware of how inept this foolish disciple of yours is. I can only pray at your lotus feet, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for some benediction by your most beloved Krishna to come to any kind of understanding of your perfection.

I listen to your lectures, to your morning walks, and your room conversation recordings, and I feel so deeply connected to you. I marvel at your transcendental wit, at your bravery, at your boldness, and your sense of humour. I marvel at your transcendental ability to convince people to take up Krishna consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we can never anticipate how you will reply to a question. You are unique. Your mastery at debate is superior to any that I've heard. And you can argue both sides with such skill, I am left dumbfounded.

On this most wonderful day of your appearance, we rejoice with unadulterated enthusiasm and gratitude that somehow or other you have taken this fallen soul, who has been wandering around in this terrible material world, under the shelter of your lotus feet.

There have been many pitfalls in my spiritual life, and I've had many failures, yet you have never forsaken me. Like a kind and loving father, you have always opened the door to the wonderful house that you've built – a house in which the whole world can live.

You have always supported your female disciples, and on many, many occasions you have gone to considerable lengths to make it very clear how important Vaiṣṇavīs are to your movement.

By your words, both written and spoken, you have inspired the Vaiṣṇavis to be an integral part of this Krishna consciousness movement.

Your encouragement that we are not this body and your unbiased view of the importance of women in your movement, continues to inspire and enhance your spiritual daughters, granddaughters, and great-granddaughters leading into the future generations.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I pray that I can continue to serve you, and I pray that I can improve my service to you. I beg Krishna to help

me convey to our youth how much you love them. When that young brahmacārī was your bodyguard in the very early hours of that morning, he asked you how he could serve you. And you said to him "I want you to go where I cannot go." And the brahmacārī was puzzled. He thought, "Śrīla Prabhupāda goes everywhere, all around the world."

And then you said, "I want you to go to the future where I cannot go and I want you to show the people how much Krishna loves them by how much you care for them."

Your compassion knows no bounds – you invite all the suffering souls to take shelter of your beloved Lord Krishna's lotus feet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, all glories to you. May I remain a speck of dust at those lotus feet, sheltered by your mercy.

Your servant,

Kṛṣṇarūpa Devī Dāsī
Date of Initiation: Janmāṣṭamī, 1974, Krishna Balarāma temple, Vṛndāvana.

Aja Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

I am totally incapable of honoring you properly. My only good quality is that somehow or other I was accepted by you as a disciple. Though that's not even really true, as a disciple should have 'discipline'. Sadly, I have almost none. I'm not good at following your instructions which you so clearly gave us. The only qualification that I appear to have is that I love you. I would say that I've given my life to you, though you may disagree since I can't follow well, but, there is no question that you are the most important thing in my life.

I give thanks always that I somehow was blessed to come into your sphere of transcendental activities. I'm blessed that though I didn't have a LOT of personal association, the bits that I did get still nearly knock my off my feet. The first time you looked at me, I was not really even a devotee yet, but you stood waiting for your car at San Francisco airport and you glanced around at your loving students around you. You stopped at me, probably for only a moment, but it felt forever, and gazed into my eyes. That was the moment my life

changed. I was now yours, as your loving yet laser-like glance went into my eyes and down to my very toes and energized or purified every cell of my being.

In 1975, at the opening of the Kṛṣṇa-Balarām Mandir, I was blessed to receive Brahminical initiation from Your Divine Grace. It was the only time I was alone with you, and walking into your room was like entering some kind of heavenly abode. The energy felt fully transcendent, and it seemed a mile I had to walk to get to you, though it was only a few feet. And there, I received the holy Gāyatrī *mantras*, from the Śaktyāveśa Avatāra, Śrīla Prabhupāda in the most holy Śrī Vṛndāvana *dhāma*. What did I do to receive such mercy? I can barely imagine it. It is ONLY due to Your Divine Grace, and otherwise, absolutely causeless.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I beg of you to allow me to continue to love you, even with so many nearly unlimited faults.

Your loving son,

Aja Dāsa
Initiation: 1974, September—Seattle, USA

Viśvatomukha Dāsa

The World Ācārya

You came across the sea alone,
Far from your Vṛndāvana home,
Your guru's order in your heart:
"Caitanya's cult to all impart!"

To this realm of fallen, faithless and fools
Where darkness covers and passion rules,
You brought Bhāgavatam's bright light to all nations,
You being the Bhāgavatam's personification.

In Boston harbor before your ISKCON was displayed,
"O Lord, make me dance as You like," you prayed.
You sang and danced to Krishna's song,
And taught the world to sing along.

"How was it possible?", future historians will ponder.

"Without friend, money or support, alone he wandered,
Yet he quickly raised an army across every land
To build his movement and distribute his books to
every woman and man.
Established Eternal Dharma, set in motion Krishna's plan.
These aren't the works of an ordinary man.
Surely he was empowered by the Divine Hand."

You brought the sacred mantra of Lord
Krishna's holy names.
Wealth, beauty, knowledge, strength, renunciation and fame
Are unlimited within these sixteen words,
Which purify and melt stone hearts,
of all those who have heard.

Personal Godhead, the Timeless Truth,
Afresh for modern times.
"All is one?" "We're all God?" "God is dead?"
NO! You obliterate these crimes.

"To every town and village", Mahāprabhu calls,
"Regardless of caste, creed or color, deliver them all!"
Prabhupāda, you are the one who took that order,
Went worldwide, across every border.

You circled the globe fourteen times in a twelve year span,
Undaunted by advancing age, from Vṛndāvana to Teheran,

L.A. to Lucknow to London,
Fiji to Purī to Perth,
DC, Detroit; Denver, Durban and Dallas.
Krishna's mercy to all the Earth.

Berkeley, Brooklyn; Bombay, Boston;
Bhuvaneśvara, Butler, too.
You taught what we'd forgotten.
We thought it was something new.

Johannesburg to Pittsburg to Hamburg,
Mombasa to Miami to Madras,
San Diego to Stockholm to Sydney,

San Fran to Seattle to Surat.

Jakarta, Jaipur; Geneva, Gainesville;
Gita Nagari, Glasgow and Gorakhpur;
Montreal, Moscow and Mexico,
And to Melbourne and Māyāpur.

New Orleans to New Delhi to New York,
Calcutta to Columbus to Rome,
New Vrindaban, New Tālavan, New Māyāpur:
New life to all where'er you go.

Nellore, Nasik; Penang, Puna;
Navadvipa, Nairobi, Laguna;
Tirupati, Tokyo; Sanand, Toronto;
Santa Fe, Cincinnati and Ipoh.

Viśākhāpatnam, Kuala Lumpur,
Schloss Rettershof, Kurukṣetra and Kyoto;
Potomac, Paris; Hrisikesh, Houston;
Zurich and Buffalo.

Amsterdam, Atlanta;
Alighar, Amritsar;
Ahmedabad, Allahabad;
Hastinapur, Hong Kong, Honolulu, Hyderabad.

To Chicago's former YMCA
Via O'Hare Krishna Airport,
Where this fallen soul saw your lotus feet
And felt the weight of your purports.

Philly to the Philippines,
And everywhere in between.
To Maryland, Cleveland, Auckland, Portland,
And many other Lands,
You sanctified each place you went
And fulfilled Gaurāṅga's plan.

You planted seeds of *bhakti*
Each and everywhere you trod.

They fructify and multiply
To this day and beyond.

You opened a hundred and eight centers,
Oases from the confusion
Of Kali's degradations
And Māyā's gross delusions.

You wrote and published eighty books,
A cultural presentation
To bring peace, friendship and prosperity
To all future generations.

"Respiritualization of whole human society,"
You planned for their salvation.
And as Krishna's World Ācārya,
You've given the foundation.

But how to guide the broad society?
You say varṇāśrama is the key.
So how do we get from here to there?
This we still seek to see.

We beg from you the wisdom
And the strength to bring the essence
Of your vision to the masses.
Oh, we so much miss your manifest presence!

Prabhupāda, you gave us everything we need to go back to Godhead:
Transcendental knowledge, the holy name, Deities, kīrtana and prasādam,
A society of devotees, principles to live by, a purpose in life … we got 'em.

So how can we repay you? In reality, no way.
Still let me attempt, I pray.

Please make me your instrument. Purify my heart.
Let today be a new start
To give myself to your divine service and make

my life complete.
With all the humility I can muster, I
fall down at your lotus feet.

Your servant,

Viśvatomukha Dāsa
Initiation: 1974, October—Chicago, USA

Bhīma Dāsa

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

It is explained in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that if we wish to seriously achieve real happiness, we must approach a bona fide spiritual master:

tasmād guruṁ prapadyeta
jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam
śābde pare ca niṣṇātaṁ
brahmaṇy upaśamāśrayam

Therefore, any person who seriously desires real happiness must seek a bona fide spiritual master and take shelter of him by initiation. The qualification of the bona fide guru is that he has realized the conclusions of the scriptures by deliberation and is able to convince others of these conclusions. Such great personalities, who have taken shelter of the Supreme Godhead, leaving aside all material considerations, should be understood to be bona fide spiritual masters. (*SB* 11.3.21)

You mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.12.3, purport: "The student must approach a spiritual master and surrender unto him fully (praṇipātena)." So, that surrender process is not very easy. It takes great effort and a deep desire for attaining the perfection of

surrendering. Actually, it must be based on love. Once, a devotee was typing for you, and it became mechanical. One day, Śrīla Prabhupāda told him, "If you love me, I will love you." So, it is a matter of love that we are trying to develop for you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. If we serve you for some other purpose, the time will come when we are diverted by some material thing. We are not meant to come to you for any material benefit, but to learn from you how to love Krishna by serving Him. However, in order to do that, we need to learn how to love you first.

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are fully situated in transcendental knowledge, and unless we approach you, we will remain in ignorance. There is no question about your ability to deliver us from material existence through your instructions, which are clear and lead us step by step to Krishna. Śrīla Prabhupāda, we have this rare human form of life, and we need your loving guidance to make it successful. In so many lives, we failed to remember Krishna at the time of death. But this time, we are holding tightly to your lotus feet, with the great hope that we will pass the test at the time of death, when all our devotional activities will be tested.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we submit ourselves unto you and hope that you will accept us with all our imperfections. For it is only by your special causeless mercy that we can hope to understand the science of bhakti and thus raise ourselves to being accepted by Lord Krishna.

On this very special day of your appearance, when we worship you as the representative of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, we ask you to continue showering your blessings on us, that we may serve you and please you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda kī jaya!

Your servant

Bhīma Dāsa
Initiation: 1974, October—Māyāpur, India
Contact: bhima.das@gmail.com

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

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

All glories to your auspicious Vyāsa-pūjā celebration!

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda. All glories to Your Divine Grace By your mercy, you embraced me into the family of ISKCON during the year 1974.

On this most auspicious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā, I offer my humble words of gratitude and appreciation for your causeless mercy upon me.

By your kindness, I have received the opportunity to engage in devotional service and understand the teachings of Krishna consciousness. Whatever little service I am able to perform is only by your inspiration and guidance.

At guru-pūjā we sing '*Śrī Guru-vandana* – as explained therein, "The lotus feet of the Guru are the abode of pure devotional service," which helped me to learn through associating with you and serving you. The fruit of which has bloomed to final reality this year 2026, ISKCON Colombo, Śrī Laṅkā celebrated its 50th Anniversary. Moreover, we celebrated Kubhābhiṣekam of the newly opened temple on the 1st February 2026. Your life-size *mūrti* which I acquired many years before was an inspiration and guiding light to our progress throughout.

Now, I feel the opportunity which you gave me fifty years ago was the 'greatest gift' to build a temple to rescue the fallen souls from being drowned in this island.

On this sacred day, I pray for your good health and long life so that you may continue to guide and inspire all of us for many years to come.

Please accept my submissive offering,

Mahā Kartā Dāsa

ISKCON Colombo – President
Initiation: November 1974, Germany

Phalinī Devī Dāsī

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am lying at your feet with my face in the dirt and a bunch of straw between my teeth. I blew it again, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Time after time, I give in to the temptation to disobey you. I ignore your instructions, over and over and over again. I have offended Your Divine Grace, therefore, there is no hope for me unless you forgive me. Again.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, why are you so determined to keep trying to save me? You keep giving me opportunities to serve your devotees. You keep allowing me to mingle with Vaiṣṇavas and join them in kīrtana. You continue permitting me to visit holy *dhāmas* and take *darśana* of Deities. You continue to allow me to read your sacred books and take Kṛṣṇa *prasādam*. Why are you so kind to this rebellious soul?

I don't understand the depth of your love for me. That's my conclusion. How else could you tolerate such brazen disobedience for so long? You love me more than a mother loves her naughty toddler who purposely ignores his mother when she scolds him for making messes. The mother cleans up the messes dutifully, without complaint. You silently tolerate my misbehavior, and you refrain from correcting me because you have already said it and you know I know you said it. You know I remember what you said. You know I am purposely ignoring your instructions and just willfully going about making a mess of my life.

Is there any hope for such a repeated offender? What could possibly serve as a remedy? I'm already in the correctional institution,

this prison, the material world. If I don't get my act together before I leave this body, I stand a good chance of taking birth again in one of the 8,400,000 species of life in this realm, causing Your Divine Grace to have to come back and rescue me again. That's a horrible thought. I don't want to trouble you again, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Oh Śrīla Prabhupāda, I abhor pain. I don't want to have to endure another term in someone's womb, practically dying of agony while waiting to be pushed out through a tiny opening that gave me a splitting headache last time. I have forgotten how miserable I was in that amniotic sac, being mercilessly bitten by tiny worms, finding no way to escape my pain. I could not tolerate having my back and neck bent like a bow, but I couldn't straighten out. And when I finally got out of that horrible place, I was covered in slime and I couldn't breathe until I was rudely spanked! And to add insult to injury, it turned out that my mother couldn't breastfeed me because she was a smoker!

Oh Śrīla Prabhupāda, I'm sorry I could not write a nice offering of glorification this year. I'm so stuck in the quicksand of ignorance that I just couldn't come up with the inspiration to write you a pretty poem or a loving letter filled with words of gratitude. My heart has become hardened by desires for sense gratification and my ability to properly glorify you has become severely compromised. I can't even cry out to you in helpless agony to save me! You have already done the best job you could to save me. You have already extended your loving, compassionate hand to me, and I have refused to take hold of it. You have already thrown me the life raft, but I didn't grab it. Now, here I am, treading water out here in the ocean, woefully looking up at your sincere followers who are joyfully chanting and dancing on the ship with Your Divine Grace at the helm. I belong up there with you and your devotees, but I dove back into the water thinking I would just go for a little swim. That was a stupid idea. A really, really bad idea. I'm like the dumb guy on the roof, who refuses to take help from the raft, the boat, and the helicopter, yelling, "No thanks, God's gonna save me!" as the flood waters rise to finally drown him.

Enough of this tale of woe. The onus is on me to swim over to that life raft before the sharks start eating me, and climb back up onto the ship. I know you'll be pleased with me if I say good-bye to the material world once and for all, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and rejoin the kīrtana on the ship's deck. I know I'll be happy, too.

Your rebel daughter,

Phalinī Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1974, November—New Dwarka, Los Angeles, USA
Current location: Prabhupada Village, North Carolina, USA
Contact: phalini@gmail.com

Lalitā Devī Dāsī

To my beloved Spiritual Master, His Divine Grace, Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at the dust of your divine lotus feet. By your mercy, the time has finally come when I am truly endeavoring to study your transcendental books with determination!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you so compassionately presented your famous *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* to the world and it has transformed the hearts of unlimited souls in every corner of the planet. Krishna says in BG Chapter 10, Verse 8, that He is the source of all spiritual and material worlds. The learned or '*Budhāḥ*' serve Krishna with '*Bhāva-Samanvitāḥ*', great feeling and attention and with all their hearts!

By listening to disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda being interviewed on television when I was 13 years of age, my heart was affected so deeply. These young persons were engaged all day, every day in serving you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and so they were practicing pure devotional service under the guidance of an Uttama Adhikārī, a bona fide spiritual master. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you sowed the seed of devotion into their hearts and by their sincere service and efforts to distribute Krishna's words, I also was pulled into this glorious movement by Krishna's mercy! *Bhagavad-gītā* 10.10, speaks of '*Satata-Yuktānām*' or always engaged. These two words describe those souls who I lived and served with.

Recently, my very special godsister requested to interview all the devotees who were serving at ISKCON Montreal from the very beginning. During our recent exchanges, we came to realize that during our *bhaktin* years, we actually never spoke to each other about our personal lives before joining ISKCON. We only talked about our services and that was it! Although we would never consider ourselves to be pure devotees, our thoughts remained focused on you and Krishna! Śrīla Prabhupāda, we were excited to devote

ourselves with great enthusiasm to serving you. Bhagavad-gītā, Chapter 10, Verse 9, describes how 'we derived great satisfaction'. We were truly happy and felt bliss from all the ecstatic kīrtanas and loving devotee association. There was no doubt that our hearts were being cleansed and we felt no regrets leaving our prior mundane and sinful existence.

The purity and absorption the devotees manifested was due to your loving care for us all. By Krishna's extraordinary mercy, we had the association of a Paramahaṁsa pure devotee from the moment we came forward to serve in this life. Krishna says "I give the understanding by which they can come to Me". We were at the right place at the right time because Krishna allowed us to be there.

Now 50 or so years later, we can clearly see how most of the devotees, including myself, had multiple difficult circumstances or tests throughout this life. Throughout *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, we hear of the greatest devotees facing challenges and eventually overcoming them by Krishna's mercy. So many obstacles you personally had to navigate through! You showed us first hand the quality of '*dṛḍha-vrata*' – you had firm faith; you were completely tolerant; you were full of love and devotion. You were completely dedicated in your mission to carry out the orders of your beloved spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and to make come to pass the predictions of the Six Goswamis and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the spreading of Krishna consciousness to every town and village!

It is clear to me at this time in my life that there is no reason for lamentation over the personal trials and tribulations I may have faced. In *Bhagavad-gītā* 10.10, Krishna says, "to those who are constantly devoted to serving Me, I give the understanding by which they can come to me!" He knows exactly what each devotee needs to advance towards the path of pure devotion. If the devotee sees each and every obstacle as sent by Krishna, he surrenders and accepts all difficulties as one more opportunity to remember and pray to Krishna. If the devotee does his part, then Krishna will reciprocate!

The biggest boon at this stage of my life is to recognize how Krishna has once again surrounded me with extraordinary devotees associated with my Bhakti Sange Japa Group family. In *Bhagavad-gītā* 7.19, Krishna instructs us that "after many births and deaths, he who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, knowing me to be the cause of all causes and all that is. Such a great soul is very rare." I

thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for so kindly giving me the strength, the determination and the assistance of my Bhakti Śāstrī teachers. They are such great souls empowered by their spiritual masters who are ever surrendered to your lotus feet! Your most glorious disciples, those who have dedicated every moment of their lives to serving you, have enlivened and trained their disciples to continue to deliver your transcendental translations and purports with such purity and sincerity. They continue to uplift and enliven so many of us by expertly presenting this Raja Vidyā – the King of all Knowledge! Everyone in all the three worlds is forever indebted to you for your dissemination of transcendental knowledge and allowing us all to capture what is the real meaning of total surrender to Lord Krishna as shown by your example!

I am trying to hold on to your beautiful lotus feet. Through studying and eventually absorbing the purports of your transcendental literatures, my intent is to please you. I am praying to continue to have the association of those who have taken full shelter at your lotus feet, and I request you allow me to remain there for whatever time it may take until I can serve you with my whole heart and soul. May I learn to always remember you and Krishna and never forget you and Krishna!

Your most thankful servant,

Lalitā Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1974, November—Montreal, Canada

Jagadvīra Dāsa

Obeisances I offer at your lotus feet
and pray that by your mercy we can again meet

You came on a cargo boat to the USA
Every day you would chant and pray

You started to preach the message of the Divine
Your words were all pure and your age was sixty-nine

And soon those words spread far and wide
You became our teacher and transcendental guide

In Sydney in 1972 I met you
Very soon my life changed and I knew what to do

For your mercy Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you
You are our ever well-wisher — that is so true

Your servant

Jagadvīra Dāsa
Initiation: 1974, November—Sydney, Australia
Current location: Okinawa, Japan
Contact: jv27648@yahoo.co.uk

Gopīśa Dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances to the dust of your lotus feet, which is the shelter of the fallen, dispossessed and spiritually famished.

As another year winds past in an all too quickening lap around the track, I am witnessing so many events, both glorious and painful. Our godsisters and godbrothers, your disciples, are leaving us at an alarmingly accelerated rate and we are diminished. Though their passing is glorious in its own right, the inexorable power of time is sweeping us all away. I can only hope and pray that they are once again in your loving association and fully absorbed in the wonderful pastimes of Śrī Chaitanya and Nityānanda and the unlimited and ever-expanding līlās of Goloka Vṛndāvana.

Here in New Vrindaban, your first farm community and the crown jewel of the West, we have seen a significant increase in visitors as well as local interest in the vaiśya way of living with an emphasis on simple living and high thinking.

Of course, you wanted to implement varṇāśrama dharma as the second phase of your mission. Having attended a brilliant course developed by your very dear daughter Urmilā Devī, it appears that through those efforts we may finally begin to understand how to make that come to fruition. As varṇāśrama dharma encompasses all the varṇas, it requires each and every one of them to complete the structure. Please bless her endeavor so that in the very near

future we will see everyone engaged according to their propensities and offering the results of their service to the lotus feet and Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

Your Palace is undergoing a major renovation, and we pray for your guidance and encouragement to bring it back to its former splendor as a way of glorifying you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and as a lasting testament to your dedicated and loving disciples who built it for you with their love and their blood.

May we continue to be guided by your instructions, your presence, which is felt here so strongly, and by your unshakable strength and gentle compassion.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your insignificant servant,

Gopīśa Dāsa
Initiation: 1974, December—New York, USA

Tāraka Dāsa

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

Born blind in ignorance, I could not see,
Till your torch of knowledge awakened me.
I bow to you, my master true,
Whose mercy gave me life anew.

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

At Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet you stand,
A faithful servant by His command.
O Śrīla Prabhupāda, we bow and pray,
That in your footsteps we may stay.

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

O heir of Sarasvatī's flame,

Gaura's herald, spreading His name,
You broke the void, the skeptic's chain,
And brought Lord Caitanya's gift again.

On this sacred day, our voices rise—
In thanks, in love, with tear-filled eyes
For what you gave, no end can be,
Please carve a gem from dust like me.

Story One: A Gem of Me

In Montreal, the temple hushed,
A quiet tension, hearts were flushed.
The '60s pulsed with restless grace,
Yet time stood still in that holy place.

Devotees gathered by the door,
Uncertain what they waited for—
Perhaps a darshan, brief and sweet,
A word, a glance, or dust from feet.

The hallway hummed with whispered sound,
While incense swirled and danced around.
Then suddenly—a burst of light!
The door swung wide, and hearts took flight.

Out flew His Divine Grace with flair,
He leapt with grace through temple air.
He landed spinning, turned once more,
Then struck a pose upon the floor.

He froze—arms lifted, shining face,
A lion carved in sudden grace.
And then he cried with gleaming glee,
"My Guru's made a gem of me!"

His eyes were vast, his spirit wild,
The innocence of God's own child.
As if his bones were made of song,
He danced where elder limbs don't belong.

But more than art or age defied
Was what he said, and how he cried.
For what he meant rang deep and true:
Our hearts are forged by Guru's view.

Not gold, not fire, not flawless stone—
But service, love, and truth alone
Had shaped the man we bowed before,
Who walked with saints, yet swept the floor.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda! We declare:
You made your gems beyond compare!
My godsiblings gleam with luster bright,
While I have failed to hold that light.

Your Master's glance became your creed;
His mission was your only need.
And from his will you took your stand,
With Bhāgavatam in your firm hand.

The spark he struck within your chest
Became a sun that will not rest.
Its rays now kindle every shore,
And still, you pray to give us more.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, flawless guide,
I kneel before your ocean tide.
Though cracked, unpolished, far behind,
Please shape this stone with patient mind.

If they, the gems your hand refined,
Now shine with light of Bhakti's line,
Then hope remains for dust like me—
Someday, a gem through purity.

Crown of the Paramparā

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, matchless guide,
Y-ou crossed the ocean's roaring tide.
A senāpati by Śrī Gaura's call,
You came to lift the souls who fall.

No task too great, no heart too low,
Your mercy caused bhakti to grow.
With Kṛṣṇa's name, you shook the west,
And gave the world its treasure chest.

The Bhāgavatam you did unfold,
Like Vyāsa—truth, direct and bold.
In every line your voice is heard,
You lived and breathed the sacred word.

You taught the world with perfect grace,
And built a shelter, place by place.
Though Lord Caitanya's work was vast,
You did what He did not in the past.

O *śaktyāveśa*, pure and strong,
The world shall echo with your song.
But even amidst your glories grand,
You showed us love by your own hand…

Story Two: The Impossible Floor

In Hyderabad, the stone was laid,
But not yet smoothed, nor temple made.
The rooms for Śrīla Prabhupāda's grace
Were raw, half-built—not yet in place.

The walls were bare, the bridge not spanned,
A board bowed low where men should stand
No rail enclosed the balcony's edge,
Just open space past concrete's ledge.

Though offered comfort, soft and grand,
He left a wealthy Indian's land.
"I want to be with the devotees," he said,
And chose the stony floor instead.

Painful to tread, that cursed floor—
With gravel crushed, and cement sore.
Blue road-stone, jagged, rough, and mean,
Made even sweeping far from clean.

Loose sand and powder clogged each crack,
And seemed to throw my effort back.
But still I knew this was my role—
To cleanse this stone, and cleanse my soul.

They told me, "Śrīla Prabhupāda has said—
Success is in the toil, not tread."
So down I knelt, with moistened cloth,
And offered service, meek and soft.

No careless hand, no lazy stroke,
But every pass, a silent yoke.
The cloth would fold, not push the grime,
Each rinse a prayer, each scrub a rhyme.

I'd learned in New York's temple room
To clean as if I faced my doom—
For Kṛṣṇa's house, the golden gate,
Must shine with love, not dirt or fate.

And as I cleaned, a joy arose—
Like sunlight through a window glows.
The harshness of that stony face
Became, through service, polished grace.

Though Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke not a word,
A deeper language still was heard.
He watched in silence, stern and kind,
And knew the motions of my mind.

At times I tried to catch his gaze—
To seek his praise, to feel his rays.
But playfully he turned aside,
To cut the root of servant's pride.

He never once had cause to speak,
For I had learned what he would seek.
His silence bore a joyful weight:
Approval in its quiet state.

Upon his bed without a sound,

He sat—his feet not touching ground.
I reached to clean beneath his seat,
And found my head beneath his feet.

I felt the world dissolve away,
Perfection's joy in sweet array.
His lotus feet above my head,
My heart was filled, my soul was fed.

No wealth, no heaven could compare—
For all I sought was present there.
In serving him, my life complete,
Eternal bliss at Guru's feet.

And oh! the joy! the sacred thrill!
My soul stood breathless, calm and still.

To serve beneath his lifted toes
Was bliss that only bhakti knows.
I wept inside, not out of pain,
But from the mercy I'd attained.

The floor that once was rough and gray
Now glistened in a mystic way.
The stones seemed smooth, the air was pure—
As if the dust had made it sure.

And more than this, my heart was clean.
Washed in the love that lay unseen.
My pride, my filth, my hidden stain—
All melted in that sacred rain.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, let me stay—
A speck of dust along your way.
Though I have stumbled, fouled, and failed,
Still let me serve—though weak, though jailed.

The floor I scrubbed was not just stone—
It was my heart, chilled to the bone.
You saw within that murky core,
And let me clean it at your door.

Now all I crave—no grander aim—
Than to reflect your flawless flame.
If you, in mercy, lift once more,
This broken soul from that gritty floor.

Final Prayer for Mercy

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, master divine,
Whose lotus feet no dust can define,
Though I am low, unfit, and blind,
Still let me serve with heart and mind.

Though pride and weakness cloud my way,
Your glance can drive the night away.
And if you see me strive once more,
Please lift me from this stony floor.

You saw in me some tiny spark,
A soul once lost in Kali's dark.
You gave me faith, and strength to stand—
And scrub the floor with trembling hand.

But I have failed, and faltered still,
Been dragged again by fleeting will.
Yet here I kneel with tearful plea:
Please do not take your eyes from me.

Correct me hard if I offend,
But never let this mercy end.
Though I am fallen, rough, and impure,
Let me be scrubbed—till I am sure.

That I may shine, though dull and dim,
A gem reflecting only Him.
Formed by your touch, refined by flame—
Please carve me with the Lord's holy name.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, I stand so small,
Incapable of glorifying you at all.
Foolish, fallen, weak in plea,
Yet in your mercy, hope I see.

Correct me firmly, shape my way,
But in your service let me stay.
Among your servants, ever near,
Your shelter is my only prayer.

With straw in teeth, with tearful eyes,
I beg, O master, hear my cries.
Whatever comes, whatever may be,
Please never turn your glance from me.

Your grateful servant,

Tāraka Dāsa

Initiation: 1974, December—New York, USA
Current location: Gita-nagari, Pennsylvania, USA
Contact: tmattler108@gmail.com

Paratpara Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

My most humble obeisance to you, dear lord and saviour.

> With every rising and setting of the
> sun a day passes, and is lost.

Each day lately we are reading that yet another of our godbrothers and sisters have been faced with the ultimate test – can the holy name be remembered, will I have the mercy of the devotees and be granted their association next lifetime? You stated in class on SB verse 10.14.8, "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 deeds, offering you respectful obeisance from the core of his heart, is surely eligible to become liberated, for it is his rightful claim. This should be the guide of all devotees."

And again in *The Nectar of Devotion*, (Chapter 10: Expecting the Lord's Mercy) you tell us that, "When impediments arise we 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. By such activities he earns his claim to enter into the kingdom of God." (*Dāya-bhāk, becoming the lawful inheritor of the property of the father).* Your Divine Grace has earned this for your faithful sons and daughters.

The senses dim with age, but the desire remains strong. Your sublime smile awakens my dull heart each day. You divine words quiet my many attachments. Thank you.

This stubborn daughter prays to be your eternal student,

Paratpara Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1975, January—Vancouver, Canada
Current location: Victoria BC, Canada

Mṛtyuhara Dāsa

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

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

My Gurudeva, please accept my respectful obeisances.

All glories to you, the representative of Śrī Krishna in this western world.

I was thinking about my life before I met you.

So many things to do, many useless commitments, so many activities without purpose.

I, like many in this world, was involved in various activities, often quite boring.

If we ask the people we meet, almost all of them would say that their life seems without purpose.

Inside, they feel as if living at the mercy of events, sudden and not understood.

Yet all, as I was, feel the desire for something different.

Finally, the day came when I met you in London, at the Bury Place temple.

It was there that I met you, and it is there that my heart returns when I think of how my life changed.

This memory comes to mind because a few months ago, the

devotees in London acquired the rare relic connected to you, the Bury Place temple near Oxford Street, and I saw a wonderful photograph in which I saw myself again, with long hair, together with my friend Giorgio.

It was there that I met you, and it was there that my life made a decisive turning point.

Until that moment, I was involved in many foolish things, but that day everything changed.

How could it not have been a decisive turning point the moment I met you?

Everything changed. Nothing was as it had been before

The activities that had seemed dead became alive.

Thoughts turned into hope.

The search ended, with all the satisfaction that fills the heart after meeting you.

Life took an inconceivable turn.

Everything we had dreamed of as hippies immediately manifested in the purest reality.

All the desires for a different world, a world made for all of us, truly existed and were manifesting before our eyes.

Enough with boring activities. Enough with senseless actions.

Finally, it was time to say: it is happening.

Yes, something unimaginable was happening.

From that day I understood that my life finally had a direction.

I want to thank you on behalf of all your disciples.

On this day of your Vyāsa-pūjā, your day, we must dedicate it to you, to your infinite greatness, O Spiritual Master.

Nothing should be for our glorification, but everything should be focused on you, on your glories, and on your activities.

Everything that exists in this movement is only a reflection of your mercy.

The temples, the devotees, the holy name chanted everywhere: all of this was made possible by your effort, your determination, and your complete dependence on Sri Krishna.

You crossed oceans, faced unimaginable difficulties, and without any guarantee brought an inestimable treasure to people who did not even know they had lost it.

How can we truly comprehend your greatness?

How can we measure what you have given to the world?

You remain forever our refuge, our guide, and the light that

illuminates the path of countless souls.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Please accept once again my endless obeisances at your lotus feet.

Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Mṛtyuhara Dāsa

Initiation: 1975, February—Rome, Italy

Nartaka Gopāla dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my loving obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you!

This year marks the 50th anniversary of my first trip to India in 1976. We had been distributing books at Miami International Airport so Sukhadā dāsī and I went to get purified in the holy dhāma at the Gaura Pūrṇimā festival. By Kṛṣṇa's mercy, that year your health was decent, and you gave class every single morning for over a month. We followed you wherever you went: Māyāpur for ten days, Calcutta two days, Delhi paṇḍāl five days, traveling saṅkīrtana paṇḍāl at Modinagar and Alighar a few days, Vṛndāvana dhāma 11 days. Our souls were in ecstasy to be with you every day.

At that time your sister, Bhavatāriṇī, was visiting Māyāpur. She was known affectionately amongst your disciples as Pishima, *father's sister* or *Auntie* in Bengali. One time you remarked about her: "She is not only my sister, she is my godsister, a great Vaiṣṇavī." She received harināma initiation from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswati Ṭhākura, and after he passed away you encouraged her to take dīkṣā initiation from your godbrother Bhaktisāraṅga Mahārāja.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, all of your lady disciples who visited the holy dhāma would love to visit Pishima because she reminded us so much of you. Her facial features, hands, feet, and even her voice were so similar to yours. For us it was almost the same as being in your association, except that she didn't speak English, so we usually had one of the ladies who spoke both languages translate for us.

Sukhadā had a strong desire to massage Pishima's lotus feet, and I wanted to sing Bengali bhajans for her with the harmonium. So we got to do that and for us it was a divine experience. Sukhadā massaged her lotus feet for over a half hour while I sang various Bengali bhajans with the harmonium, such as *kabe ha'be bolo se-dīna*

āmār, When will my offenses ceasing, taste for the name increasing, when in my heart will your mercy shine? When, Oh when will that day be mine? And Pishima was crying silently with her mouth open a little. It was a sublime mood.

Another time I was so happy to visit her as she sat on her chair outside on the veranda of the Lotus building at Māyāpur dhāma. A cherished desire of mine was fulfilled as I took a series of photographs of her. I was elated when they used one of my photos this year for the cover of *Back to Godhead* magazine, March/April edition.

We loved how Pishima always carried a plastic bottle of Gaṅgā jal with her and sprinkled some before and after she sat on the temple floor, and before and after eating. She would also sprinkle some water on us ladies when we needed purification.

Pishima reminded us of the importance of feeding *prasād*. She would say: "*Sannyāsī sevā āmār prāṇ*." 'Service to the sannyāsīs is my life and soul.' She would ask them: "What will you eat?", and cook every day. Her greatest service to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, was her cooking. The first thing you usually asked for was shukta. She was especially expert at making bitter vegetable shukta stews which are a specialty of West Bengal. Shuktas are always made with a bitter spice, a bitter leaf or a bitter vegetable. Every day you would have shukta, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and every day Pishima's shuktas were different. No shukta could compare to hers, she made the best shukta in the world. In her cookbook, Yamunā Devī quotes Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja saying that Lord Caitanya preferred the taste of shukta over even the nectar drink pañcāmṛta made with honey, yogurt and cardamom.

In 1977 she told her family she needed to go to Vṛndāvana to see you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. They made no arrangements so she went alone. No one had told her that your health was bad. When she arrived you asked her how she knew you were ill. She said she could feel it in her heart. Twelve hours before you departed, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you told her: "When I leave you should cook a lot for all the sādhus in Vṛndāvana. Not a little but a lot."

After you departed, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the devotees were trying to determine your place of birth in Calcutta. At that time, over a hundred years ago, it was the custom that a pregnant woman went to her father's house to give birth and stay for one month. You had told Pradyumna dāsa that you were born at your grandfather's house, but one of the GBC members was wrongly insisting that it was at *your* father's house, so some devotees were confused. They asked

Pishima but she didn't know. Shortly thereafter she had a dream in which you came to her, Śrīla Prabhupāda. You were annoyed, saying: "What's this? You don't know where I was born?" In the dream, you personally took her to your birthplace. The next morning Pishima informed Sarvabhavana dāsa and he arranged for a car. They went to her grandfather's house and she showed them the big jackfruit tree that you were born under.

Pishima called you "Mahārāja", and she always took great pride in you and your accomplishments. She was completely attached to you. She said that after you departed she felt the most separation from you when they put your bhajan tape over the loudspeaker in the late afternoons in Śrīdhāma Māyāpur; she just wanted to leave the planet. She passed away on the Ekādaśī after Gaura Pūrṇimā in 1980, March 13, 1980.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you for introducing us to your sister, and thank you for all the treasures of Kṛṣṇa consciousness that you have given us. If I sometimes think what my life would be like without you or Kṛṣṇa, it is a horrifying thought. Thank you so much for allowing me to call myself:

Your servant,

Nartaka Gopāla dāsī
Initiation: 1975, February—Miami, Florida, USA

Medhāvī Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet on the auspicious occasion of your 130th Vyāsa-pūjā.

Every year before this day, your disciples and followers search their hearts for suitable words to glorify your wonderful achievement of spreading the mercy of Śrī Caitanya, Śrī Nityānanda and all of the great ācāryas all over the world.

Every year, I must beg forgiveness for my many shortcomings and offenses. *aparādha sahasrāni, kriyante 'har niśaṁ mayā/ dāso 'ham iti māṁ matvā, kṣamasva madhusūdana.*

Most of my association with yourself and your other disciples now occurs only on the internet. My heart-felt thanks go to HG Siddhānta Prabhu for making the devotees' memories of you so available.

Of course, you always instructed that vāṇī was more important than vapu. Still…

Recently, I was listening to the 'memories' of one nice mātājī from London. She remembered how she had only just seen you in the early 70s and then a day later, or so, you were leaving to preach in Africa.

In her interview, she mentioned that she hadn't been able to 'take-in' who you really were. She was fearful that she might never again get the opportunity to see you. She wrote you a letter and you responded encouraging her that she was an intelligent girl and that she should use her abilities in Kṛṣṇa's service. In the years that followed she has been able to perform many services for your pleasure.

For myself, so many years later, I also still cannot really comprehend who you are. In the gāyatrī mantras we daily chant, "Let us try to understand my spiritual master who is always in blissful Kṛṣṇa consciousness." Of course, your qualities, being the Lord's most confidential servant, are as limitless as are His. I miss not having any close personal association.

After my initiation in April '75, I requested to stay in India to hopefully get some of your personal association and guidance. That didn't work, for the six months that I served in Māyāpur, you were traveling in the West. Unfortunately, I had to leave India for London on the very same day that you were returning to India for Janmāṣṭamī in Vṛndāvana.

In the UK, you visited in 1976, but when the devotees went to receive you at Heathrow, because I was a driver, I was instructed to stay in the van at the loading zone, thus missing the joyous reception in the terminal. Afterwards, I was to collect yours and your servant's luggage. So, service to the devotees. That's good, I thought.

After some time, the servants came running up, saying that the luggage had gone with another vehicle. One of the devotees was from the UK. He informed the others that he knew the way to the Manor, so they commandeered the van. I was told that I could get a ride back with the other devotees, and they zoomed off. The problem was that everyone already had quickly left back to The Manor.

At that time, being a brahmacārī meant that you really had 'no' money. After begging for fare from people at the airport, catching the train to Radlett, I then called the temple. After an eternity waiting, a devotee finally answered, (No one answered the phone back then at the Manor). I requested someone to please collect me at

Radlett Station. A devotee did come — an hour and a half later, after the ecstatic *kīrtana*, Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival talk, and a sumptuous feast were all finished.

In other devotee memories, one hears of so many occasions when you looked intently at devotees, and they experienced their eternal connection with you.

My firm desire is that hopefully in a future life I will have the opportunity to join your movement earlier and to experience those special moments when the ISKCON movement was beginning. Maybe even an opportunity to render some simple personal service to you.

Of course, you are the most merciful and compassionate personality in the three worlds, but my sinful past, numerous offenses and absence of previous piety have left me here where I am...unable to appreciate the great mercy that has already been bestowed upon me. What can be done?

Still, I remain your lowly servant near the bottom of the world.

Medhāvī Dāsa
Initiation: 1975, April—Vṛndāvana, India
Current location: Cape Town, South Africa

Vimalā Dāsī

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

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

Referring to the 26 qualities of a pure devotee, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains in a 4th canto purport that *'when one is transcendental to all material qualities, all the good qualities come out.'*

And the very first of these 26 qualities of a pure devotee is that… 'He is kind'. The ultimate expression of real kindness is to freely give one and all the opportunity to develop pure love of Godhead.

Śrīla Prabhupāda displayed this one quality so richly that I am focusing my whole offering on just one aspect of this manifestation of kindness…the gift of his transcendental books!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you achieved your divine mission by opening over 100 temples, translating and printing millions of books, and encouraging your disciples everywhere to vigorously teach this science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

When you lectured during the very early days of the Krishna consciousness movement in America, you would often tell your listeners, *"I have come to your country not to take anything, but simply to give."*

And 'give', you did, with not a moment of precious time wasted. You had a solid, long term vision. You knew you had to leave a powerful legacy, one that would last through generations, so that all could somehow connect to Kṛṣṇa through your instructions. One of the kindest things you did, Śrīla Prabhupāda, was to give us access to a feast of transcendental literature that would sustain and fully nurture us in our spiritual advancement.

To do this, even while travelling you would sleep for only a few hours, then rise at around 1:30 a.m. and continue translating your books. In June 1976 in a conversation in Toronto, Canada, you explained your system…

> So this dictaphone is always with me, wherever I go, so my writing book is not stopped. Maybe few pages, but something is there daily. Little drops of water wear the stone. So in that way we have translated so many books.

In a letter in 1976 to your disciple, Śrutadeva, you kindly gave us this simple, but powerful formula for staying in Kṛṣṇa consciousness…

> If you want to stay in Kṛṣṇa consciousness you will have to develop firm faith in Guru and Śāstra. Therefore, **you must study my books very scrutinisingly**, follow the four regulative principles very strictly and chant 16 rounds daily avoiding the ten offenses. Don't take this movement as something cheap.

Once during a room conversation in Bombay in 1974, you explained to the devotees there why even you read your own books daily…

> Every morning when I sit here to write my books Kṛṣṇa comes personally and he dictates to me what to write, so I simply take dictation from Kṛṣṇa and I write these books. Therefore, when I read them, even I learn something.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you promised us that by reading your books

seriously and following the instructions in them, we can easily make advancement and become fully Krishna conscious, even in this lifetime.

You warned us that we cannot directly approach Kṛṣṇa without studying this philosophy. You once declared that we have so many books that we cannot read them all throughout our whole lifetime. By repetitively reading your books again and again, you promised that we will gain deeper understanding each time we read.

So thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for the sublime gift of your association through your purports and lectures. We are eternally indebted to you for your kindness upon us.

As you said before your departure in May, 1977…

> If I depart, there is no cause for lamentation. I will always be with you through my books and my orders. I will always remain with you in that way.

This verse perfectly describes you:

> The pure devotee is always within the core of my heart and I am always in the heart of the pure devotee. My devotees do not know anything else but me and I do not know anyone else but them. (*SB* 9.4.68)

Your lowly daughter,

Vimalā Dāsī
Initiation: 1975, April—Melbourne, Australia

Caitanya Svarūpa Dāsa

In the darkness of my night, you were the lamp,

In the deepest confusión you brought me the right answer. You didn't just show me the path; You taught me how to walk and be healed from māyā by embracing the divine mahā-mantra.

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

You are the one who awakened my soul to the greatness of Krishna

consciousness, I offer my deepest gratitude again and again.

Initiation: 1975, April—Vṛndāvana, India

Mokṣalakṣmī Devī Dāsī

My Dearmost Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you my divine Spiritual Master.

And suddenly, in a flash, almost fifty years have gone since you walked amongst us. For next year, in 2027, it will be the fiftieth anniversary of your disappearance. As I contemplate on this, it strikes me that I only spent a few years with your physical presence but almost fifty years without it. This must be a testimony to your greatness, for why would a relationship go on continuously like this if there was not something extraordinary about it?

That day almost fifty years ago was a terrible day. Of course I could rejoice at your re-joining Krishna in the spiritual world, but maybe the idea of facing life without your personal presence was just too painful. But face it I did, and here we are forty-nine years later, still missing you. After all, in India you would constantly be arriving bringing the magic that only you could create. Despite this, I have somehow continued on, probably because I realise that you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are as close to me as I allow you to be and want you to be. It is such a wonderful thing to know you are eternally with me. Maybe even waiting patiently for me.

As you have told us that our relationship is eternal, that surely means that one day we will meet again and what a wonderful reunion that will be. I wonder where and when that will happen. Will we go on adventures again? In this life I did go on a few adventures with you. I went to the paṇḍāl program in Ahmedabad where you charmed the participants in the house programs with your words. The pandal tent was filled with people eager to hear and chant with you. Someone brought Limkas, India's version of 7UP, for you and the rest of us so we could quench our thirst in the hot April weather. Always eager to follow correct etiquette we all waited for you to drink first before we touched our own. I know it's a small thing but I always think this showed our love for you because it really was hot and I, for one, was really thirsty but there was no way I would even

touch my drink without you drinking yours first. Our own comfort was always secondary to your needs. I think this must show love or at the very least an incredible amount of respect. But you being an incredibly reciprocal soul drank your drink giving the permission needed for everyone to drink. You only took a small amount so I concluded you only did this so we could all drink. I know I gulped mine down so thankful for your benevolence in every aspect of your devotees lives.

Recently, I have been remembering the extraordinary, now historic, opening of Krishna Balaram Temple, particularly the parade. I mean it's not every day you go on a procession with Śrīla Prabhupāda. There were even elephants. How many people can say they went on a procession with elephants? You brought such unusual adventures into my life. I mean living in India was one long adventure. Living at the house donated by the Taparia family which later became the Goshalla was a multitude of new experiences. There weren't even toilets when I moved in, no running water, but there was a well. The main challenge for me was the occasional snake that would slither by. Funny how the front lines of a war with constant air raid sirens going off doesn't bother me, but snakes really unsettle me.

I remember the day you visited the Taparia house unannounced. It was during your morning walk accompanied by some devotees. You stepped into the middle room and looked around but said nothing. I always wondered what you were thinking but didn't want to speculate.

My adventures did not stop with your physical departure, they continued on with so many unusual situations. We went on a long, long walk. the length of the country with your deity form seated on a cart pulled by oxen. Well, in your final days in Vṛndāvana you did say you wanted to go on an ox cart around Govardhana Hill. Actually, you did go around Govardhana Hill in your deity form not long after you left your body, accompanied by all your devotees who were in Vṛndāvana. But why restrict your ox cart journeying to Govardhana Hill? I have accompanied you on quite a few of these Padayātrās in various countries and what adventures we had! You may not be physically present but to me you are, thankfully, right by my side, otherwise why would I go on. What a boring life it would have been without you.

Now in my seventies, my ageing body constantly reminds me of

how determined and strong you were to leave the safety and comfort of Vṛndāvana to cross so many oceans to give the world Krishna. Everyone who benefited from this sacrifice of yours is left with this unpayable debt to you. You are beyond merciful. I repeatedly thank you for the super human task you carried out. I also look forward, if I am lucky, to more adventures with you in both this life and the next.

Your unworthy servant,

Mokṣalakṣmī Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1975, April—Vṛndāvana, India

Prassannātmā Dāsa

Dear Prabhupāda,

One more year has passed, still struggling to complete our task. You told us to finish our business this lifetime. No more birth. You gave us th

e profound philosophy of 'you are not this body'. It means no attachment and increases our love for Krishna.

Only through your mercy can we understand completely. You opened our eyes to see the Lord. Many lifetimes of our material attachment can be cleansed by surrendering to your lotus feet.

Simply remembering you, our life is purified. Please forgive our offences and protect us from this material world.

Your servant

Prassannātmā Dāsa
Initiation: 1975, April—Vṛndāvana, India
Current location: Vṛndāvana, India
Contact: prassann@cs.com

Ādikartā Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Please accept my most humble obeisances.

You have made a huge impact in this world. ISKCON is having a profound effect, changing the lives of millions of souls all

over the world.

Faithfully carrying the eternal message of the Vedas and following in the footsteps of the greatest personalities this world has ever known; you, by your appearance here, have given this world a new life. Beautiful temples are manifesting all over the world, vibrant chanting of the holy name, colorful festivals, and most importantly, devotees with absolute faith and conviction, that serving and loving Rādhā and Krishna is the only panacea for the soul.

However, it all starts by following your instructions as they are the only key to success.

As you are probably aware, many of your direct disciples are leaving us in quick succession. In the past month alone, at least four of your dedicated disciples have left us for greener pastures, or more appropriately for a better body. As you said to Jayānanda prabhu in your famous letter after his disappearance:

> I am feeling very intensely your separation. I hope that at the time of death you were remembering Krishna, and as such you have been promoted to the eternal association of Krishna. If not, if you had any tinge of material desire you have gone to the celestial kingdom to live with demigods for many thousands of years and enjoy the most opulent life of material existence. From there you can promote yourself to the spiritual world etc…but as you were hearing Krishna *kīrtana*, I am sure you were directly promoted to Krishna loka. *Janma karma ca me divyam*. (Bg. 4.9). Krishna has done a great favor to you, not to continue your diseased body, and has given you a suitable place for your service. Thank you very much, Your ever well wisher, A.C Bhaktivedānta Swami.

These servants, Badrinārāyaṇa Swami, Cāru Prabhu, Ekanātha Prabhu, and Rañjit Prabhu, all did great service in their own ways to spread the glories of Krishna, and of course yourself. Undoubtedly you will bless these great devotees with similar destinations.

I can only aspire to follow in their footsteps and become your instrument to spread the holy name. Chaitanya Mahāprabhu ordered, "every man and woman in the universe to help distribute the fruits of Krishna *prema*." Thus it is our duty to to give this nectarean fruit to whoever we may meet. However finding people that are serious about accepting it requires patience and tolerance, which you amply

showed in your sojourn here.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.7.13–15, that was one of your final purports I believe, the verse reads:

> When brāhmaṇas are free from envy, untruthfulness, unnecessary pride, grudges, disturbance by the opulence of others and false prestige, their blessings never go in vain.

In the purport of this verse you emphasize the importance of brāhmaṇas to bestow their blessings on others. Since you kindly gave me the sacred thread, it must be my duty to develop the above mentioned qualities and bless others. However that is only possible if you kindly bless me to become your pure devotee. Actually giving others the greatest gift of Krishna *prema* is the most satisfying experience. Please therefore help me find people and situations where I can offer others the greatest gift that you kindly, out of your causeless mercy, bestowed upon me.

Your eternally aspiring servant,

Ādikartā Dāsa
Initiation: 1975, May—London, UK
Contact: akd108.1@gmail.com

Sukhavāhā Dāsī

My respects to you in prayerful supplication
Expressing my heart with deep consideration.
Dear Father, a short poem of celebration
A taste of your gifts in abbreviation.

Without you Father, what would be my fate
Just a life of frustration, anger and hate.
What I felt inside and couldn't articulate,
Your words gave voice to my soul innate.

You sought to share, by educating
Through tireless hours of translating.
Not trying to prove that you are great,
Not using your words to hurtfully berate.

Your short time here you accelerated.
Young hippies you moved and activated.
Bhakti latā seeds you germinated,
Love of Krishna you fully propagated.

Never wanting to control or manipulate,
Rather longing to encourage and validate.
Infusing our hearts by inculcating
The devotional truths you were emanating.

Guiding not by dictation or domination;
Your kindness and love was our motivation.
Chanting and dancing...healthy stimulation,
Protecting us from repeated transmigration.

A true progressive using innovation,
Manifesting Krishna's qualities of creation.
You generously shared your association,
Engaging us in service for our elevation.

You came, our deepest sorrows to mitigate,
By teaching us *japa*, how to meditate,
To search for Krishna so fascinating,
The Nava Yauvanam, ever rejuvenating.

Into our hearts your love penetrating;
Filling us up, overwhelming and saturating.
Then slowing us down, Krishna to await.
Living in separation, to anticipate.

I pray my dear Father not to imitate;
Rather to deeply assimilate
Your loving lessons of appreciation,
To pass them on to the next generation.

Thank you for your heartfelt compassion.

Your servant,

Sukhavāhā Dāsī
Initiation: 1975, May—New Vrindaban, West Virginia, USA

Your movement is growing in every direction
Spreading like sunshine with warm affection
Uniting hearts with a shared connection.
The devotees work hard without objection.

You guide us forward with hope and reflection
Building a community with love & protection
Their spirits align, free from dejection
Creating a world filled with Divine perfection.

It all started with one great sage
Traveling abroad at an advanced age
With firm faith and books to set the stage
In a land of distressed youth to engage.

You empowered us with your merciful gaze
To reach conditioned souls in countless ways
Extinguishing effects of the material blaze
Extracting from Māyā's bewildering maze.

You set the example for all to follow
Without your books, our lives would be hollow
In depths of ignorance we'd only wallow
Leaving your mission? That's hard to swallow.

I'm in the sunset of my years
I feel no loss, I shed no tears
I'm happily serving amongst my peers
With only progress, and never fears.

You paved the clear path for our journey back,
Providing us everything; nothing we lack.
May we remain steady and never grow slack,
With hearts well-protected from every attack.

Soon the final test will come
As it does for everyone.
By your grace, this world is overcome,
And the prize to go back home is finally won.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

We at ISKCON Tucson, resolve to rededicate ourselves to your mission to sacrifice this one life to spread the teaching of Śrī Kṛṣṇa far and wide in the desert southwest. May you continue to bestow your mercy on us and allow us to continue in this great movement of yours.

Your surrendered servants at ISKCON of Arizona,

Written by Sandāminī Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1975, May—San Diego, USA
Current location: Tucson, Arizona, USA
Contact: sandamini108@gmail.com

Mahākāla Dāsa

My dearmost Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated daṇḍavat-praṇāmas at your divine lotus feet.

By your transcendental causeless mercy, another cycle of 365 days has passed since I last wrote you something in my feeble attempt to glorify Your Divine Grace. I beg your permission to present a few thoughts on how I feel your influence as an ācārya and a śuddha-gauḍīya-vaiṣṇava has changed the course of human history:

You have helped us understand that bhakti awakens us to our very life as eternal living beings, and not simply brings us to another approach on religion;

You have shown us by your perfect example that real service to humankind is spreading the eternal teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His bonafide followers to one and all;

You have warned us against prioritizing the institutional aspect over the missionary aspect of our endeavors as your representatives. By doing so, you have revealed to all of us the unique feature of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's incomparable compassion;

You have perfectly played the role of father and mother to all of your disciples. Who could resist your oceanic love? Who could doubt your intentions as a surrendered disciple of your Guru Mahārāja?

I must admit that the more I think of your perfect example as an Ācārya, as a sādhaka, as a spiritual father, as a thinker, as a writer, the more I tend to believe that there is no room for

despondency and doubt!

Your fallen son,

Mahākāla Dāsa
Initiation: 1975, June—Brazil

Rāmānanda Dāsa

In, *Cc* Ādi 8.17, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī cites a tantra-vacana, quoted from the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, emphasizing the rarity of pure bhakti:

jñānataḥ su-labhā muktir
bhuktir yajñādi-puṇyataḥ
seyaṁ sādhana-sāhasrair
hari-bhaktiḥ su-durlabhā

"By cultivating philosophical knowledge one can understand his spiritual position and thus be liberated, and by performing sacrifices and pious activities one can achieve sense gratification in a higher planetary system, but the devotional service of the Lord is so rare that even by executing hundreds and thousands of such sacrifices one cannot obtain it."

In the purport Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes two famous verses by Prahlāda Mahārāja:

matir na kṛṣṇe parataḥ svato vā
mitho 'bhipadyeta gṛha-vratānām (*SB* 7.5.30)

naiṣāṁ matis tāvad urukramāṅghriṁ
spṛśaty anarthāpagamo yad-arthaḥ
mahīyasāṁ pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekaṁ
niṣkiñcanānāṁ na vṛṇīta yāvat (*SB* 7.5.32)

The above verse, along with another verse penned by Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura (*chāḍiyā vaiṣṇava-sevā nistāra pāyeche kebā*), leaves no doubt that pure bhakti can only be obtained by accepting the dust from the lotus feet of a pure Vaiṣṇava or the guru. At the end of the purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "The above-mentioned *tantra-vacana,* quoted from the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.36), is our perfect guidance in this connection."

However, *Brs* 1.1.36–38 speak of the rarity of the attainment of *bhāva-bhakti* and beyond. It is curious that there is no mention of the necessity of taking shelter of a pure devotee. However, if one returns to the beginning of the chapter, in context with what Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is presenting, the full picture comes into focus. He first defines pure devotional service as:

anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṃ
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam ।
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-
śīlanaṃ bhaktir uttamā ।।11।।

In defining "*kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*" Jīva Gosvāmī comments as follows:

> In consideration of *ceṣṭā-rūpa* and *bhāva-rūpa-bhakti*, *anuśīlanam* means service for persons related to Kṛṣṇa or service for Kṛṣṇa directly. That is the meaning of *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam.* Because this definition also includes persons related to Kṛṣṇa as well as Kṛṣṇa Himself, it avoids the fault of being too narrow. Thus, *aṅgas* of bhakti such as taking shelter of guru's lotus feet may be included in bhakti, even in *bhāva-rūpa-anuśīlanam*. At the stage of *bhāva*, *sthāyi-bhāvas* and *vyabhicāri-bhāvas* may be expressed in relation to guru within this definition of bhakti. This service or *anuśīlanam*, obtainable **only** by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, is a transformation of the Lord's s*varūpa-śakti*, and thus is not material but spiritual.

Later on, Jīva Gosvāmī further comments:

> *Sthāyī* (what is permanent) …is a synonym for *sthāyi-bhāva*, just as Bhīma means Bhīmasena. Therefore, the *sthāyi-bhāva* is that which does not give up its form. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*: Volume Two (p. 10).

Thus, the expression of love and devotion to the guru as a servant is never abandoned but is enhanced to an unlimited degree as one advances toward perfection. Similar sentiments expressed toward the Lord can be expressed toward the guru. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 3.2.3 states, "When *prīti* or adoration achieves a pleasurable nature by *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, *sāttvika-bhāvas* and *vyabhicāri-bhāvas* in the hearts of the devotees, it is called *prīti-bhakti-rasa*. (This is also called *prīti-bhakti-rasa* or *dāsya-bhakti-rasa*). When the recipient of mercy acts as a servant, it is called *sambhrama-prīti* and the recipient identifies

himself as the object of parental affection, it is called *gaurava-prīti*." Then *Brs* 3.2.76 states, "Eagerness to execute service with respect and trembling with eagerness, because of knowledge of the Lord's greatness, is the quality of *sambhrama*. Prīti combined with this *sambhrama* is called *sambhrama-prīti*. The learned call this *sambhrama-prīti* the *sthāyi-bhāva* of *prīti-rasa*."

In the commentary, it is explained that *kampa* means "trembling with eagerness to do service as quickly as possible." Let us tremble in eagerness to serve the mission of Śrīla Prabhupāda. This is the secret of success. It cannot be said better than in Śrīla Prabhupāda's own words at his famous lecture on December 13, 1973, in Los Angeles:

> If we strictly try to serve the spiritual master, his order, then Kṛṣṇa will give us all facilities. That is the secret. Although there was no possibility, I never thought, but I took it little seriously by studying a commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura on the *Bhagavad-gītā.* In the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the verse *vyavasāyātmikā-buddhir ekeha kuru-nandana* [*Bg.* 2.41], [Those who are on this path are resolute in purpose, and their aim is one. O beloved child of the Kurus, the intelligence of those who are irresolute is many-branched.]
>
> In connection with that verse, Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura gives his commentary that we should take up the words from the spiritual master as our life and soul. We should try to carry out the instruction, the specific instruction of the spiritual master, very rigidly, without caring for our personal benefit or loss."

Upon seeing my master once again, falling to the ground, thinking of offering respects a hundred and thousand times, but being agitated by joy, may I forget to rise up; his ever devoted servant,

Rāmānanda Dāsa, weeps.
Initiation: 1975, July—Chicago, USA

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

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

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

You have given us everything from beginning to end,
there's nothing undone to help us transcend,
the modes all around us with chains in each hand
leaving us helpless like slaves they command.

We are fooled Śrīla Prabhupāda…fooled to think that we
can trust the material modes of nature.
They're ruthless, cunning, cruel and mean,
they'll never miss a chance to wipe you clean,
of all you've gathered throughout your life,
they'll lighten your load, and just give you strife.

In the course of time due to unimaginable good fortune, there sometimes appears in the world a great soul sent by the Supreme Lord out of His kindness and compassion. This eternally liberated selfless spiritual master is sent to release the suffering souls of the world from the all-pervasive burden — the ignorance of ahaṅkāra. We conditioned souls identify so intensely and exhaustively with the material body, which includes the mind, that if it or anything relating to it on any level is threatened in any way, a mere disagreement can escalate into a catastrophic war meant to destroy the world.

Having experienced the modes of material nature since time immemorial in every combination and every way possible, now, due to causeless mercy I find myself at the lotus feet of the greatest master who has ever changed the course of humanity.

Following in the footsteps of Lord Caitanya, you Śrīla Prabhupāda are giving an opportunity to each and every jīva in a human body to achieve the ultimate goal of life. There are no boundaries to what you are freely giving. An exhibition of this causeless mercy is that you have accepted me as your disciple.

A soul-saving Vaikuṇṭha man,

Who came to execute Kṛṣṇa's plan.
Declare it to the world, let all voices sing,
My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are more than a king!

A king protects the citizens. He is the most important person in the realm. Everyone is dependent upon the king. But you are more than a king Śrīla Prabhupāda, and we are your praja having dedicated our lives to your service.

To free us from anxiety and bring us all to piety,
You gave us a society rooted in sobriety,
with infinite variety and transcendental propriety.

"Thus He spread *kīrtana* even among the untouchables.
He wove a wreath of the holy name and *prema* with which
He garlanded the whole world." (*Cc* Ādi-līlā 4.40)

How fortunate we are if one of the petals from that garland falls upon us!

Lord Caitanya Himself spoke the following sacred words to Sanātana Goswami describing the qualities of a devotee. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the personification of these qualities:

"Devotees are always merciful, humble, truthful, equal to all, faultless, magnanimous, mild and clean. They are without material possessions, and they perform welfare work for everyone. They are peaceful, surrendered to Kṛṣṇa and desireless. They are indifferent to material acquisitions and are fixed in devotional service. They completely control the six bad qualities – lust, anger, greed and so forth. They eat only as much as required, and they are not inebriated. They are respectful, grave, compassionate and without false prestige. They are friendly, poetic, expert and silent. Devotees are always tolerant, forbearing and very merciful. They are the well-wishers of every living entity. They follow the scriptural injunctions, and because they have no enemies, they are very peaceful. These are the decorations of devotees." (*Cc.* Madhya 22.80–81)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, what are you not to us?

You are our eternal master and guide, our teacher and dear-most trustworthy friend in a world of thieves and rogues and rascals and demons! You are our most beloved relative and eternal

father. Everything that we have and everything we know, you have graciously bestowed upon us, your eternal wards and dependents. Your words are our life and soul and we, each of us, strive to carry out your instructions everyday in all that we do, to our level best. You have given us everything we need to attain the goal of life and the love our hearts yearn for.

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda
You are our constant inspiration
for contemplation,
on emancipation and eternal liberation.
Saving us from the tribulation
of mundane interpretation
and mental speculation!
And though we are unqualified, still
we are not disqualified…

For we are your dancing white elephants, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and you have accepted us. Please let us dance and dance and dance in your court for ever and ever.

In an assembly of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples, no matter where, no matter when, and no matter in relation to what, there is something in each of our hearts that is universally felt. If we embrace that feeling from the depths of our souls to express our love for you Śrīla Prabhupāda, there will be a great chorus that fills the universe and extends beyond its limits. Of all the *jīvas* in this material world, bewildered, suffering and floundering, how have we become so fortunate to reside at your lotus feet? We are grateful to you Śrīla Prabhupāda! We are so very very grateful!

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you O beloved master!

Your insignificant servant and daughter,

Samapriyā Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1975, July—San Francisco, USA

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I did not know what I was searching for until I found your feet.

The world had given me noise and named it meaning, had dressed my confusion as freedom, had taught me to wander proudly without direction. I carried questions like quiet wounds—unseen, unanswered, growing heavier with time. And then, without spectacle, you entered my life—not as a conqueror of minds, but as a patient gardener of the heart.

You did not demand belief. You revealed clarity.

You did not give me something new. You showed me what was always there, waiting beneath the restlessness.

In your presence, the chaos within me learned to sit down.

The questions did not all disappear—but they softened, as if they finally trusted the silence between your words.

I have watched the way you speak—not to impress, but to awaken. I have watched the way you see—not the surface, but the hidden flame in every being. And I have felt, perhaps for the first time, what it means to be guided without being controlled, corrected without being diminished, loved without being possessed.

If devotion is surrender, then it is not the loss I once feared.

It is a returning.

A quiet, steady returning to something truer than the self I constructed in fear.

You have become, for me, a compass that does not shout,

a light that does not blind,

a presence that asks for nothing and yet transforms everything.

And so my gratitude is not loud.

It does not need to be.

It lives in the way I listen more carefully now,

in the way I pause before I speak,

in the way I remember—again and again—that I am not alone on this path.

If I could offer anything worthy, it would not be words.

It would be the willingness to walk what you have shown,

to embody even a fragment of the truth you live so effortlessly.

Until then, I remain here—learning, unlearning,

falling, rising,

and always, somehow,

finding my way back to the shelter of your guidance.

Your servant,

Karṇapūra Dāsa
Initiation: 1975, July—Chicago, USA
Current location: Alachua, Florida, USA
Contact: rtewk1@gmail.com

Nandapatnī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to your magnificent service to your spiritual master, and all glories to your precious mission ISKCON.

In a world that is groaning and heaving its way through the throws of Kali-yuga, your extraordinary gift of ISKCON beams as a transcendental beacon of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

It must have been so special and relishable for you to see western individuals coming to your lotus feet, and you were so generous and beneficent to accept them and train us all in your mission.

Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya:

Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu's prophecy –"After Śrīmān Mahāprabhu's disappearance, the Gaṅgā will rise by His desire and cover almost all of Māyāpura with her waters. One hundred years after that, she will again manifest Māyāpur. (70-71)

"At that time, only the land of Māyāpura will manifest; no houses will remain. Thus that place will remain uninhabited for a long time. (72)

"Again, when Śrīmān Mahāprabhu strongly desires, people will reside in Māyāpura as before.(73)

"All these *ghāṭas* will again be manifest on the bank of the Gaṅgā, and many devotees will come together to construct a huge temple for Śrīmān Mahāprabhu. (74)

"One amazing temple will manifest here, wherein the daily worship of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu will constantly increase. (75)

This is your greatness, Śrīla Prabhupāda. You have delivered the prophecy carried by our beloved Śrīla Bhativinoda Ṭhākur and

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākur. You deserve all the glory by virtue of your venture onto Western shores and the return with your most beloved western disciples to expand the glories of the holiest of dhāmas in India. And yes, you cut the jungles in the West to a level that no others could or would, thus leading the way for the multi branches of Lord Caitanya's tree to blossom and leaf out.

I remain perpetually in awe of the unfolding and perpetually gladdened that you caught me in your net of mercy and allowed me into the ocean of inconceivable transcendental treasures.

May I remain at your feet eternally and may I remain in the fold of the precious Vaiṣṇavas, learning more and more what it is to serve them. May I forever remain at the feet of the holy name and the benediction of the holy Gāyatrī so generously given along with the mountain of gems given in our holy śāstras.

Your servant,

Nandapatnī Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1971, February—Los Angeles, California, USA
Current location: Vṛndāvana, India

Vaiyāsaki Dāsa

Everything you said is meaning more,
And I share it just to please you,
Prabhupāda!

Every truth you taught is sweet and tender,
Every night and day I must surrender,
So I sing this song of love
to Prabhupāda!

Glad you came, holy name
Share it wide, blessed inside
Now I chant the *mahā-mantra*
Prabhupāda!

Harinama, Saṅkīrtana
Morning class, free at last
All my service is for Krishna

Prabhupāda!

Praise the Lord, around the world
Blessed by Him, eternally
So I sing this song of love
For Prabhupāda
Prabhupāda,
Prabhupāda!

Initiation: 1975, July—San Francisco, USA
Contact: vaiyasaki@yahoo.com

Miśra Bhagavān Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you on this auspicious day of your appearance 2026.

You told us that you will be alive in your books. We have practically experienced that in the form of those books you are guiding and enlightening your disciples, grand-disciples, and great-grand-disciples. Though I won't be here to meet your great-great-grand-disciples, we know that your *paramparā* is going to continue as long as your books are available, studied, and unchanged.

You wrote those books for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa and to save the world with Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Our service is to assist you with the distribution of those transcendental literatures. You set the example by distributing *Back to Godhead* on the streets of New Delhi during World War 2, handing out the magazines and asking for a donation. Then after arriving in the United States of America in 1965 you sold your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatams*, going out on saṅkīrtana in the cold streets of New York.

Your method of book distribution was delightful. One day in Butler, Pennsylvania, you lectured at a university. After giving the class, you met with the professor in his office. You handed the professor the three-volume set of First Canto *Śrīmad-Bhgavatam* and said, "This is a gift." While the professor admired the books and was looking them over, you explained, "In our culture when a gift is given, there is generally some reciprocation." Understanding what you meant, the professor handed you $20 for payment.

Mukunda Mahārāja introduced you to the landlord of 26 Second Avenue, who was asking $100 per month for rent. Brilliantly you presented your set of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatams*. The landlord was impressed and said, "You must have worked very hard to publish these." Then you recruited the landlord to become a member of your society. "Mr. Michael and Mr. Carl are members of our society and have agreed to donate $21 per month. You may also become a member."

Mukunda Mahārāja did not know that he was a member that had agreed to give $21 per month. It was the first he heard of it. You continued, "We can deduct the amount from the rent, you don't have to pay anything now." In this way you distributed the books and brought the rent down to $79 per month.

You taught your disciples saṅkīrtana lines like, "After handing the person the book, tell them that they are very intelligent, the most intelligent person you have met all day." You suggested that we praise a person 100 times to preach to them. This year will be my 52nd Prabhupāda Marathon. I have been using the lines you gave us and distributed your books in Europe, USA, Chile, Mexico, and the Philippines. Though millions of people have received your books, there are still billions of people who have not. There is a lot of work to be done.

Going out on book distribution saṅkīrtana is a severe penance and austerity. Please allow me to continue with this service. I am a reservoir of contaminated sinful activities. My only hope is to be saved by the saṅkīrtana of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You and your dear disciples like Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami, Yamunā Devī Dāsī, Bhakti Tīrtha Swami, and all are there with you. I hope to get the mercy of you and your associates by serving you and having your association forever.

Your insignificant servant,

Miśra Bhagavān Dāsa
Initiation: 1975, July—Chicago, USA

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda — Kindly accept my repeated salutations, offered with the deepest humility I can summon. On your divine appearance day, I contemplate the following truths.

All Vaiṣṇavas and their well-wishers celebrate Kṛṣṇa's appearance day—Śrī Kṛṣṇa-janmāṣṭamī—on the night when Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa took birth from the womb of Devakī in the prison cell of Kaṁsa. And indeed, from the *laukika* (worldly) perspective, this event marks a divine moment in history: the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa descending into this world in a form that dazzles the mind and commands reverence.

But from the *alaukika* (otherworldly, transcendental) perspective, a deeper truth unfolds the following day, known as Nandotsava.

On the morning after Janmāṣṭamī, Nanda Mahārāja rejoices in the appearance of his beloved son—Vrajendra-nandana Kṛṣṇa—the original form of the Lord, manifest in the heart of Vraja, swaddled in sweetness and *mādhurya*, in the arms of Mother Yaśodā.

Nandotsava is not only a celebration of Kṛṣṇa's divine appearance, but also the joyful occasion on which His closest devotees express their deepest love for Him—in His original form, in Vṛndāvana.

It is no coincidence that on this sacred day, you, too, Śrīla Prabhupāda, took birth in this world.

On this day of Nandotsava, it is only natural that the hearts of devotees spontaneously overflow with glorification of Kṛṣṇa—the sweet, intimate Lord of Vraja—and by divine design rather than by mere happenstance, as they celebrate His joyous appearance, they are also, sometimes inadvertently and sometimes directly, honoring Your Divine Grace, whose appearance in this world is eternally intertwined with His.

Though Your Divine Grace took birth at a particular point in history, this sacred event transcends time, bearing eternal significance cherished within the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava tradition and beyond. As you explain in your books, while Janmāṣṭamī solemnly commemorates the Lord's divine descent in Mathurā as Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa, it is on Nandotsava that His original, most intimate form is lovingly revealed and joyfully celebrated in the sacred land of Vraja.

There, in the arms of Mother Yaśodā and the heart of the Vrajavāsīs, the Lord is not simply *born*—He is *embraced*. And this is

the Kṛṣṇa whom Your Divine Grace gave to the world.

Initiation: 1975, July—Chicago, USA
Current location: New York, USA

Dayānidhi Dāsa

The holy dust of Manhattan

Dearmost Śrīla Prabhupāda, I bow down to your divine lotus feet.

Every year is more exciting to write to you because I feel closer and closer to you.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I write to you on behalf of the Greek yatra. In Greece it is not so easy to present your books and Śrī Kṛṣṇa's teachings because the Greeks have been 'educated' for many centuries with the understanding that only through Jesus Christ, who they consider to be God himself, can we reach the Kingdom of God. They deeply disrespect any other spiritual path. We faced many obstacles and challenges in the past and present in this difficult country, but still we go out every day to distribute your books and prasādam.

As you said, "you will always have your customers". And every day we meet special people. For sure not many, but every day special souls are saved by your divine books, especially Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā!

Here in Greece I'm experiencing the sweet taste of being a pioneer in a difficult country, a little bit like you experienced in the Bowery. I feel fortunate and blessed by you staying here in Greece and to 'fight' on your behalf. This keeps me young, enthusiastic and focused on your mission.

My constant meditation is on you in the early days in New York. Every day I become more and more absorbed in those difficult early days of preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Manhattan. For me, the streets of Manhattan are the streets of Vṛndāvana, where you distributed Kṛṣṇa consciousness! You are the greatest 'soul seeker' because you left Vṛndāvana and went to the Bowery to be among the drunkards and drug addicts of America. From the garbage of this planet you cultivated roses and lotus flowers. From the vagabonds you bring out saints.

You are the personification of what the holy scriptures speak of a Vaiṣṇava, devotee of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. What a miracle happened on the

streets of New York. This is our ultimate and real holy dhāma. For sure Vṛndāvana is Vṛndāvana, but the mercy of Lord Nityānanda and Gaurāṅga walked on the streets of Manhattan through the unlimited compassionate nature of a greatest Ācārya. You exemplified the meaning of a pure devotee, delivering the lowest.

That's why I say that my heart is not so much in Vṛndāvana as much as on the streets of New York where you faced the most difficult days of your life.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please allow me to serve the sacrifices that you performed in order to save us. I know I'm not qualified to receive that 'special mercy', but please allow me, because otherwise everything else is useless to me. Without the dust of Manhattan that you left there my life is meaningless.

Your servant,

Dayānidhi Dāsa
Initiation: 1975, August—Paris, France
Current location: Athens, Greece
Contact: dayanidhidasacbsp@gmail.com

Tīrthakāra Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

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

When Hanumān, in search of Mother Sītā met Vibhīṣaṇa, the brother of Rāvaṇa, he was utterly surprised that in Laṅkā, the abode of demons, how a pious soul can have his home here. Vibhīṣaṇa said:

> O son of the wind, how I dwell here. My plight is like that of the poor tongue that lies trapped behind the teeth. But wait, now I do feel a hope in my heart — for today I have met you, and one can never meet a saint without the favor of the Lord…

Śrīla Prabhupāda, somehow by good fortune or causeless mercy I witnessed your arrival in August 1975 at New Māyāpur France. The devotees there had worked hard to transform Château d'Oublaise into a place fit to receive you.

I still remember vividly the car with Your Divine Grace coming down the driveway. The elegance which you walked, the kīrtana in the temple room and short lecture. The next morning, ready for your morning walk and inspection of the grounds and buildings, Bhagavān Prabhu announced that only TPs, Sannyāsīs, servants, and a few others were allowed to accompany Your Divine Grace. But I would not take no for an answer and came along and was thrilled to see you survey everything. You left for Paris afterwards and most devotees also went.

In 1976 at Bhaktivedānta Manor, I remember you giving a lecture on the lawn to the visiting Indian guests and devotees. You tasting the Maṅgal sweets in your room with many devotees present, and your lecture over the different planets and oceans in the universe.

Most memorable, besides your arrival in New Māyāpur, is your last visit to Bhaktivedānta Manor in 1977 when Sulochana Prabhu and myself had practiced in advance to carry you in a fabricated chair made by Mohammed Prabhu to your room upstairs. We had about the same length. Although we stopped doing this service, I felt blessed to offer this personal service.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for what you have done to uplift the fallen souls in this terrible age. May I never forget your kindness and compassion.

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your servant,

Tīrthakāra Dāsa
Initiation: 1975, August—Paris, France

Ānandamaya Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

After I wrote last year's tribute, I reviewed it and was embarrassed to realize that I had simply rehashed much of the information of my earlier tributes. I realized then that I was not glorifying you properly; I required some inspiration on how to proceed in future. I started reading my godsibling's offerings, not just a few, but many, and I found inspiration from some of your more advanced disciples. Not only did you train us well, but some took up the practice in earnest and can preach from deep realization. In fact, some were not only spiritually realized, but quite eloquent, as well.

Of course, I am forever indebted to Your Divine Grace for the matchless gift of your *Krishna* book, which inspired me to take up the Vaiṣṇava tradition in good faith. You are the savior of this lost soul, having pulled me out of the mire of misconception. I need only complete the course as you presented it and go back home, back to Godhead. Of course, walking the walk (vijñāna) is always more difficult than merely talking the talk (jñāna).

Your legacy carries on, and I am happy to report that not only your disciples, but your granddisciples and great–grand-disciples chant your praṇāma mantras at ISKCON gatherings. That is a firm testament to you as Founder-Ācārya. Of course the practice has morphed somewhat since your manifest pastimes, but I am encouraged to see some very serious young practitioners.

I am still a foot soldier distributing your books to the Little Free Libraries in my area, and at our *saṅga* gatherings, I am now the old-timer sitting on a chair in the back of the room making comments when it's time for questions and comments. I keep my comments strictly in accordance with what you translated in the books, particularly the Macmillan 72 *Gītā*, what you stated in purports, as well as what you said in interviews; this is new material to many of the younger devotees, and they seem to appreciate the comments.

My body is slowly deteriorating and one day I shall leave it. I am slowly resigning myself to this inevitable event and attempting to increase realization and find some courage. Superimposing

good *japa* over my restless, turbulent and unsteady mind helps me gradually gain a perspective more in line with what it should be, per Gītā, although my mind is still a wretched, dishonorable and disrespectful brat. As I mentioned to someone at a recent saṅga, whether it is 10 or even 100 more births before we get this right and go back to Godhead, we are on the home stretch. We have pulled the plug on the material fan and are watching the blades slowly come to a halt as we make spiritual advancement.

Thank you, forever, Gurudev, for your mercy upon us! Praṇāms,
Your disciple and servant,

Ānandamaya Dāsa
Initiation: 1975, October—Vancouver, Canada
Current location: Soquel, CA 95073, USA

Śrīniketana Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to your divine appearance day, which always inspires us to become more conscious of your divine personality and your wonderful pastimes that you performed while on this planet. It is now 130 years since you appeared on this planet under a jackfruit tree in north Calcutta to benedict the world with the matchless gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Out of all living entities a fortunate handful have been contacted by you. Some exceptionally elevated souls have met you in person. We can imagine what kind of special souls they were. Reading the accounts of their activities and exchanges with you constitutes daily nectar for us.

Others met you via your books, while others met you through your disciples. Again, others contacted you through divine Kṛṣṇa *prasādam*, while others were attracted to the holy names by hearing and seeing the Harināma saṅkīrtana parties. In whatever way it may have been, they were the most fortunate souls in this universe:

brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja
(*Cc.* Madhya 19.151)

According to their karma, all living entities are wandering throughout the entire universe. Some of them are being elevated to the upper planets, some are going down into the lower planets. Out of millions of such living entities one who is very fortunate gets the opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. By the mercy of the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa such a person receives the seed of the creeper of bhakti.

Not only were we one of the fortunate ones able to associate with you in person but, by the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa and yourself, we were accepted as your disciples and given the most valuable gift of devotional service.

Just to imagine that we were so fortunate to get the seed of bhakti makes us shiver. Why were we chosen? What merit did we have? It is inexplicable. The only reply we can give to these questions is that it is by your causeless mercy. *Śrī Gurvaṣṭakam* 1 gives us some idea how it happens:

The spiritual master is receiving benediction from the ocean of mercy. Just as the cloud pours water on the forest fire so the spiritual master extinguishes the fire of material existence. I offer my obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master who is an ocean of auspicious qualities.

Somehow or other we must have received a few drops of this rain of mercy by being at the right place at the right time.

But despite being so fortunate we still lament that we are lacking in so many ways. To come up to the high standard that you have set for your disciples and to maintain it throughout this lifetime is still a great challenge for us.

Trying to serve you and your mission to our best capacity, always expecting your mercy, we shall be at your service until our last breath, Kṛṣṇa willing.

With deepest gratitude from your aspiring menial servant,

Śrīniketana Dāsa
Initiation: 1975, October—Mauritius

Mahāviṣṇupriyā dāsī

oṁ namo bhagavate vāsudevaya,
oṁ namo bhagavate vāsudevaya,

oṁ namo bhagavate vāsudevaya.

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you on this day of your birth, which is wonderful, peaceful, with worshipable memories of you, our divine, spiritual master!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I saw you arrive at the Honolulu Airport in 1975. I was a brand new devotee then and waited with many other devotees for our divine, saintly 'teacher-warrior' to arrive through the check in station at the terminal. Prabhupāda was at the end of a long line of people who also had to check in with their passports, ID cards, etc.

Prabhupāda was flanked by Paramahansa Swami and Śrutakīrti Prabhu on their flight to Hawaii. Those leaving had all their important papers with them, and they moved quickly through two huge glass doors that were painted dark green and opened as soon as you stepped through the threshold.

After some minutes we could see Śrīla Prabhupāda getting closer to the check-in station of the terminal. Our hearts were racing as all the devotees were singing and dancing to the mahā-mantra on the sidewalk leading to the open doors of the terminal.

Every time someone walked through the automatic doors to leave the airport, they were stepping into a form of the spiritual world that they knew very little about. Seeing Śrutakīrti and Paramahansa Mahārāja on either side of Śrīla Prabhupāda, as they stepped through the glass doors and into the KC world that lay before them.

We all hit the pavement, offering our obeisances and as I got up, I was enthralled with the sight of our wonderful, divine Śrīla Prabhupāda, who looked as if his potency had just been announced to the whole world. Everything turned into a soft, golden orange glow before my eyes, and I realized that I was seeing Śrīla Prabhupāda's aura.

With a big smile, he looked all around while making his way to the curb where his car was waiting to take him to the Nuuanu Hare Kṛṣṇa Temple. Devotees were putting so many sweet smelling Hawaiian flower-leis around his neck.

My first glance at him brought so many thrilling ideas racing through my mind and my heart. I knew I was experiencing something so wonderful and reverent. I could never regret this experience of finally seeing Śrīla Prabhupāda, my divine spiritual master for the first time in his physical presence.

I had been giving out BTGs at Waikiki that morning, so I rushed to give some sweet smelling flowers to Śrīla Prabhupāda. I finally settled on gardenias and just as I was about to hand the flowers to Śrīla Prabhupāda at the airport, Gurukṛpā Swami snatched the flower bouquet out of my hands and with a weird, upset facial expression, looked at me as if I had done something wrong in trying to offer Prabhupāda some flowers. (?) Then Gurukṛpā turned on a dime and handed the flowers to Śrīla Prabhupāda, who immediately put them to his nose and face, as if adoring them.

He waved and smiled largely from the car window, putting the gardenias again to his face and taking in the wonderful fragrance of this other worldly flower bouquet. This thrilled me beyond measure.

I had just joined the Nuuanu Hare Kṛṣṇa temple on April 1st, 1975, which I prayed would not become an April Fools' Day for me, but then when Prabhupāda arrived on May 20th, 1975, I believe, he was more than I could ever imagine or even explain.

For all his disciples, he was stellar in every respect. He spent six weeks with us in Hawaii, making statements like, "This Hawaii is so special as there are no snakes, tigers, or other harmful animals here. And the weather is always cool and calm."

I remember sitting at your divine lotus feet when you were giving *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* classes daily in Hawaii. I would get fixated by the movement of your graceful hands, as you spoke of other universes, other millenia, while stating such deep personal knowledge of every aspect of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

You said, "There are many universes and in each universe there are millions of planets. And on every planet, there is Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. And in each Bhāgavatam, there is mention of our ISKCON movement."

I will never forget that moment, as well as so many others, like the time you just finished translating the 4th Canto and talked about the living entities, their desires as they roam, lifetime after lifetime propelled by those desires of the material realm.

As you related a story about Nārada Muni who was speaking to King Prācīnabarhi and as you related this discussion, I began to feel little taps upon my forehead as if you were, throwing ping pong balls against my head to garner my attention more deeply. With your words floating all around me, I also felt like your hands were inside my brain, stretching and pulling one way then another, just like someone pulls taffy or stretches out dough.

Next, there were popping or quietly exploding sounds inside my brain, just as if all my synapses were waking up to your magical, mystical potent sentences. Your words were so powerful and each one was landing so deeply into my heart, moving me to tears.

I was sitting in the corner, the furthest away from you, and I had covered my head with my sari, which I pulled down to cover my face. Then I heard you, Śrīla Prabhupāda say something astounding, as if you were speaking to me only.

You said strongly, "These tears are putting OUT the fire of material existence." Śrīla Prabhupāda looked around the room of about 60–75 devotees, and repeated these words again. "These tears are putting OUT the fire of material existence!" So I thought maybe some others had been moved to tears as well.

During your visit in Hawaii, we marveled at the high quality of so many sincere devotees that have come to ISKCON, attracted by your books and preaching. You predicted this when you mentioned to us, "Those who come to this movement after you, will be far more advanced than you, because they will understand the pure, perfect example without ever having seen it."

It was always so wonderful to be in your presence, to hear your classes that did stretch my brain in many ways. You made jokes that were so cherishable. I do miss your humor, as well.

My goal is to always be with you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, at your lotus feet eternally. While I am not worthy of your divine association and relationship, I am trying to please you in my service to you. With just my poor attempts at this service, still I am filled with gratitude for being your disciple.

May I one day wake up to the full knowledge of your magnificence and be filled with loving devotion and gratitude for having you to guide me in all the rest of my lives into the future.

Your humble servant,

Mahāviṣṇupriyā dāsī
Initiation: 1975, November—Honolulu, Hawaii, USA
Current location: Alachua, Florida, USA
Contact: mvp1081@gmail.com

Narakāntaka Dāsa

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

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

Dearmost Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble and respectful obeisances at your divine lotus feet.

We adore those lotus feet with the heartfelt only desire to serve them eternally.

The tremendous power of time forcefully keeps turning the blades of the churning mixer that is this material Cosmic Creation.

Anything coming into existence immediately starts to deteriorate with the inevitable dawns and settings of the sun, till it becomes nil.

But Your Divine Grace's glories are not deteriorating.

Not at all!

On the contrary your glories increase and increase, more and more, exponentially at every Tick-Tock of the Time's Clock.

You reside in Krishna's heart, thus you are merged in that transcendental anxiety felt by Śrī Krishna for the condition of the fallen soul; His part and parcel. Forgetting how much He loves her, uselessly suffering she loiters here and there within the material atmosphere. You are feeling Śrī Krishna's transcendental compassion toward the fallen soul. Unlike the material compassion that only mourns about the suffering of the mortal creatures, Śrī Krishna's transcendental compassion is manifested in His longing desire to bring His part and parcel back home, to rejoin Him in His eternal blissful pastimes.

O' dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you actually "are" the personification of such intense Lord Krishna's transcendental compassion. So much so that you infuse it in whoever comes in contact with Your Divine Grace. Please allow us to be your servants in satisfying that longing of the Lord.

"**Alas!**", cries out the sinful soul,
"Why am I in this hell?
I'm swallowed by this dark black hole,
Where cries as echoes dwell."

Taking her way through countless forms
To fill this human frame,

The fallen soul perceives the thorns
Of this material game.

She reaches into empty air
To find a solid hand;
But finds a vacuum of despair
Where ghosts of shadows stand.

Now questions from millions of years
Filling the outer shell,
A tiny spark of thought appears
That could those doubts dispel.

But world's cacophony rings loud;
Allured, she turns astray,
And blinded by the mortal shroud,
Again she falls as prey.

Thus, sinking back in the dark frost
Through endless forms of grief,
Once more that human chance is lost
To find the soul's relief.

Śrī Krishna sees the soul depart,
Forgetful of her place;
His sweet eternal, loving part,
Now lost in time and space.

But Śrī Krishna's deep connection,
Makes Him feel the soul's strain.
As with a finger's infection,
The whole body feels pain.

That Arjuna's felt compassion,
The one Śrī Krishna scorned,
In the world's religious fashion,
Those who suffer are mourned.

It may nourish worldly *sattva*;
It's not for Krishna's sake,
Nor for transcendental *tattva*.

The soul does not awake.

The Lord wants us with Him so much,
Much more than we can think.
Sends you to break the Māyā's clutch
And thus restore the link.

O' dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
You're that Krishna's longing;
You're the death of *māyāvāda*,
Our sense of belonging.

O' Prabhupāda, our dear Lord,
If we could but reflect
That true compassion you have poured;
Even a tiny speck.

So many truly need saving!
Make us become your rays,
To sate Lord Śrī Krishna's craving
For souls to join His plays.

Just as a cintāmaṇi stone,
Turns iron into gold,
You turn our feeling, sad and lone,
To longing for His fold.

You're here, to change our rebel mood
That, as a painful dart,
When māyā holds the soul subdued,
Keeps piercing Krishna's heart.

You are the Lord's compassion's form,
So powerful! So strong!
You drag lost souls just like a storm
To where they do belong.

You're making every soul aware
Of how Śrī Krishna feels,
Since you, yourself, are Krishna's share
That He, Himself, reveals.

Without Lord Sri Krishna's presence,
Gaurāṅga sees all void.
Nonetheless, feeling that absence,
He's purely overjoyed.

We feel that separation too,
We miss your 'face-to-face';
Yet we shall always be with you,
Craving '**Your Divine Grace**.

Holding very dear that intensely unifying feeling of separation, we pray to the most magnanimous Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi to never let us forget your divine instructions and to kindly let us be eternally engaged in serving your lotus feet so that, even if we miss you so much, yet we shall always be with Your Divine Grace.

Your humble respectful servant,

Narakāntaka Dāsa
Initiation: 1975, November—Rome, Italy
Current location: Radio Kirshna Centrale, Terni , Italy

Bhutiha Dāsa

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

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

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

My respectful obeisances to you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvatī Gosvami. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and liberating the western lands that are immersed in impersonalism and voidism.

You have traveled far to come here to the West. You have been very kind in bringing us this supreme knowledge that frees us from the illusion of material consciousness. We, your disciples, continue

to follow your teachings so as not to lose our path to the spiritual world and to Krishna.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda Vishva Guru.

Your servant

Bhutiha Dāsa
Initiation: 1975, December—Italy

Anuttama Dāsa (1976, Vrindavan)

nama oṁ 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,

Among the many, many amazing things that you accomplished in your life, perhaps the most amazing for me is that you just got on that boat (the Jaladuta).

You were an elderly sādhu, situated in Vṛndāvana, the most sacred place in the world for devotees of Lord Krishna. You knew from śāstra how degraded this age was, especially in the west. You knew how difficult it would be to teach Krishna *bhakti* to foreigners. You knew that westerners were proud of their temporary opulences and thus disinclined to hear a message extolling them to surrender to God. You knew that others before you had gone west and failed. You knew that you too might fail.

Yet, you came. Despite the lack of finances, the lack of institutional backing, the lack of welcome, the lack of practically everything any reasonable person would require before undertaking such an arduous journey. Yet, you came.

It's typical for disciples to glorify their gurus on Vyāsa-pūjā Day. But today is not a typical Vyāsa-pūjā Day. This is the Vyāsa-pūjā Day of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the Founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON. No other day of glorification of guru comes anywhere near to being this important.

Without you, there would be no Krishna movement outside of India. There would be some Hindu temples; a few would have

Krishna Deities. Other sādhus would have come west; some would have written and sold their books. But there would be no *movement.* Only you had the expertise, the wisdom, the compassion, the tolerance, the vision, and the determination to bring the message of *bhakti* to the modern world. No one could have done what you have done. No one can compare to you and your achievements. No one.

And I, an aging servant who is duty bound to try to understand you, to glorify you, to appreciate you, and to try to amplify your message—I struggle to understand even why you got on that boat. How deep must be your love for the Lord! How much faith you must have in his holy name! How surrendered you must be to His will! How strong a desire you must have to fulfill His mission and deliver the souls lost in this material world!

Reflecting on your astounding success, I am struck by how you inspired millions to give up their materialist ways and dedicate their lives to the Lord. And I am left wondering, still: How is it you got on that boat? Where would I be if you did not? How can I hope to repay the debt I owe you?

Your servant,

Anuttama Dāsa
Initiation: 1976—Vṛndāvana, India

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this most auspicious day of your appearance, I pray that I never forget that you have lifted me up from the darkness of ignorance by your causeless mercy. I really had no concept of who I was when I read *Rāja Vidyā*, the first book of yours I came in contact with. By your grace, I now have a better sense of my true identity as your eternal servitor.

In previous Vyāsa-pūjā offerings, I recounted when I first saw you in person in Chicago, how difficult going out on saṅkīrtana was for me, and how I ended up happily engaged at Gītā Nagarī.

After I left Gītā Nagarī, I went back to school for a two-year degree and got my career going in electronics. I wasn't much of a devotee in those years.

Around the year 2000, by your grace, I began my journey back to Kṛṣṇa. At that time, I tried to be thoughtful about what my service would be while keeping a full-time job in Baltimore.

My logic was that my main service at Gītā Nagarī was training and working oxen, so I should find a small patch of tillable land within driving distance of work and get a team of oxen to continue that service. My wife was on board with the idea, and so, once again by your grace, we found the ideal property for this venture. I hired an Amish man to build a barn at my new home, built in the old American style, where the animals bring in loose hay and hoist it up with pulleys and trolleys, which is simpler as it requires no hay-baler.

Once the setup was complete, in September of 2013, I purchased two Brown Swiss calves and named them Buck and Jake. My mentor and temple president at Gītā Nagari, Paramānanda Dāsa had said that ox team names should be short, one-syllable words that sound distinctly different from one another. As they grew, I trained and worked them somewhat. I didn't accomplish all that much with them in terms of plowing or mowing hay as we had done at Gītā Nagari because I was working full-time in Baltimore city at the time.

One benefit of having Buck and Jake was that they became very popular in the neighborhood and with passersby from nearby areas. Cars would stop on the road to look at them and photograph them nearly every day, and co-workers, friends, and family members would regularly inquire about their well-being. It was always bewildering to me that these people, most of them beef-eaters, would express

such genuine concern for Buck and Jake. Hopefully some of those people have begun thinking about *who* they are eating rather than *what* they are eating.

About a year ago, we lost Buck at twelve years old. He was a huge, stately animal, carrying the bloodline of Snickerdoodle, the most decorated Brown Swiss cow in the history of the breed, a stunningly impressive animal in her own right.

That left Jake alone, and as a herd animal, the solitude was hard on him. Acquiring a matched partner would have been ideal, but dairy farmers don't keep their bulls, so there were no options for that. Ultimately, I decided the best thing for Jake and for my service was to get another team of oxen. So here I am, now in my seventies, starting again, this time with Guernseys, a smaller breed better suited to my age.

I pray I can do something special with Rick and Pete, the new Guernsey boys. There are yokes and bows to make as they grow, they must be well trained, and I need to stay fit and healthy for some years to come. All I can do is apply myself and depend on your grace and Kṛṣṇa's.

Yes, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I pray for your blessings and for your loving smile as I feebly attempt to serve your lotus feet in this way.

Your servant,

Īśvarīpati Dāsa
Initiation: 1976, January—St Louis, Missouri, USA

Anīha Dāsa

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my prostrated obeisances in the dust of your divine lotus feet.

Have we left it too late? You repeatedly warned about the inevitable result of our godless civilisation:

> Men do not understand that because they unrestrictedly kill so many animals, they also must be slaughtered like animals in big wars. This is very much evident in

> the Western countries. In the West, slaughterhouses are maintained without restriction, and therefore every fifth or tenth year there is a big war in which countless people are slaughtered even more cruelly than the animals… This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is the only means by which the sinful activities of men in this Kali-yuga can be counteracted. (*ŚB* 4.26.5, purport)

The expansion of Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world, from your arrival in New York and continuing through to the early 1980s, was followed by thaw in the Cold War and fall of communism in the Soviet Union. The decades since, that saw a decline in the expansion of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, have been followed by a threat of nuclear holocaust we have not seen since the early 1960s.

Despite heroic service from many devotees, the fact remains that in the Western world fewer books are being distributed, fewer are going out for Harināma Saṅkīrtana, and less prasādam is being distributed, than forty-five years ago.

Viṣṇujana Mahārāja wrote in a 1974 *BTG:* "Śrīla Prabhupāda has said that the time is coming in the world when there will be so much chaos that people will be forced to come to us… then they will remember, 'Oh, this was told to me long ago by the devotees of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. I should have listened to them.'" But how will this happen when in most places people never see Hare Krishna devotees and know nothing about Krishna consciousness?

Nations all over the world are preparing for war by increasing weapon production. You said the production of the atom bomb means one day it will be used. Have we left it too late to avoid nuclear war? You told us even after the war Lord Caitanya's movement will continue, but is it not shameful that you gave us the formula to prevent nuclear destruction and we were unable to follow it?

If our cities are to be turned to dust within a few short years, should we not urgently return to basics and use all our resources to make the Hare Krishna movement famous once again for street chanting, book and prasādam distribution, in addition to fulfilling your desire for self-sufficient farm communities where we can give shelter to devotees and non-devotees alike, and in this time of crisis put everything else on the back shelf?

> My advice to you under the circumstances is that at least for one hour you must all go to have Saṅkīrtana outside

> on the streets or in the park. That is your life and soul, first business… Temple worship is not so important. If need be, the whole temple can be locked, but the outdoor kīrtana cannot be stopped. (Letter to Rayarama, May 17, 1969)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in your mercy we trust!

Your wretched servant,

Anīha Dāsa
Initiation: 1976, February—France
Current location: Leicester, UK

Haridāsa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace on your Vyāsa-pūjā celebration day.

Mrs. Ellen N. "Penny" Ritts was the reporter who interviewed you at the Agarwal's home in Butler, PA, after Sally Agarwal contacted the *Butler Eagle* newspaper about your arrival in town. How could this reporter have known she was not interviewing just an ordinary Hindu missionary, if there was such a thing, or simply an ambitious author promoting his writings?

How could she have known the stature of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda the Founder Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness and greatest exponent of Krishna consciousness in the Western world... your glorious nature and activities were as yet unknown in the West, but it wouldn't be long. So after meeting you at the Agarwal's home, Penny Ritts did the best she could.

Her article appeared in the *Eagle* on September 22, 1965, five days after your arrival in Boston. You found the article, which was accompanied by a charming picture of you, worthy enough to send friends and followers in India, including your godbrothers. For fortunate Penny Ritts, that article earned her a place in the transcendental history of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement.

Penny Ritts wrote something else in the paper that day. It was titled: *A Prayer*. It was a piece she wrote regularly that appeared on the front page of the Eagle with no byline. On the bottom of the

page, well below the headline announcing a truce between India and Pakistan, and placed between an article about an escaped prisoner and the local weather, she wrote:

> **A Prayer**
> GOD, we thank Thee for the
> right to choose the way we
> tread each day. Make us wise
> and brave, we beseech Thee.
> Help us to decide at each fork
> in the road today how to use
> Thy good gifts in accord with
> Thy will for us and thus to
> become useful servants of ev-
> eryone with whom we come
> in touch; for Jesus' sake.
> Amen.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, this prayer reminds me of you and your teachings, and I wish to make it mine by adding Your Divine Grace's name to it as the person for whose sake I try to serve God, Śrī Krishna, and thus all others. I hope you approve.

Your servant,

Haridāsa Dāsa
Initiation: 1976, March—Māyāpur, India

Jagannātheśvarī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I bow down at your lotus feet. Thank you for accepting me as your disciple. Though I am not worthy, you have pulled me out of the mud and given me shelter within your family. Words cannot describe the depth of my gratitude.

Gratitude is not enough, however. To be a real disciple means to reciprocate by serving you and your mission. You have empowered us to do this, and together with that power comes great responsibility.

When we were young, we were always busy serving your mission. Your presence inspired us with unending bliss and enthusiasm.

Although we cannot dance as we did before and may not see you before us anymore, you are nevertheless still present, overseeing your movement, and there is still much to do. Your Western mission has become depleted and needs revitalisation.

You taught us to use our brains to develop novel strategies for spreading Krishna consciousness. When you started up in America, you never tried to impose Indian culture on Western people. That's how you became successful. Let us follow in your footsteps by stepping out of our comfort zone and into others' comfort zones, finding personalised ways to share Krishna with them. I hope and pray to continue serving you by advancing your mission in whatever way I am able until my last breath.

Your forever daughter,

Jagannātheśvarī Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1976, April—Vṛndāvana, India

Jagatām Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Prabhupāda, Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākur's quote, "Your mercy is all that I am made of" has been my constant pillar of thought throughout the past 51 years. As I attempt to stay fixed in my practices, and as I mature by your grace in this wonderful bhakti process, I've noticed that that thought has become more and more important to me.

My realization is that without your mercy, and without the mercy of our ācāryas and high-class devotees, it's not possible to advance.

I am a wretched soul, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I brazenly hold on to your exquisitely soft, beautiful and accessible lotus feet and beg you not to let me go — your mercy is all that I am made of!

I love you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. ALL GLORIES TO YOU!

Your miserly but hopeful servant,

Jagatām Dāsī
Initiation: 1976, April—Kṛṣṇa Balarām Temple, Vṛndāvana, India

Arjuna Dāsa (1976, Vrindavan)

My dearmost spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances in the most sacred dust of your lotus feet. All glories to thee, O lord and master, my saviour and the foremost uplifter of all the fallen souls of this world.

Thank you for engaging me in the service of your glorious ISKCON for another year, even though I remain so fallen and unworthy. There's never a dull moment in your Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. It's an intense learning curve of ecstasy and agony. The ecstasy of loving your lotus feet and your beloved Lord Kṛṣṇa and joyfully serving your lotus self and all your ISKCON followers.

Being mercifully engaged by you in serving your Kṛṣṇa and all His devotees, and for allowing me, so unworthy, to loudly chant my heart out during saṅkīrtana, to honour Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma's mahā-prasādam, associating with the advanced sādhus who are your disciples and sincere granddisciples and members of your glorious ISKCON.

O dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, reading your amazingly enlightening BBT books — such a bright lighthouse in this dark ocean of material existence. Then there's the agony of feeling myself so unworthy, of being simply a rascal, a nonsense, a botheration, a sinful *vishayi*, vainly trying to enjoy independently from your Śrī Hṛṣīkeśa, the Lord and master of all our senses.

Then being so profoundly embarrassed by the stain of my egoistic rascaldom. The weighty feeling of being a despicable botheration to the Divine Couple, feeling more sinful than Jagāi and Mādhāi, and lower than a worm in stool. Thus experiencing acute suffering and depression when a bout of our own past sinful karma comes around to give us a severe beating.

However, this feeling of mortification actually opens the door of transcendence, when it reaches the point of one becoming paralysed and stunned into even suspending breathing. Then one finds one's consciousness stretching out into infinity, astonished that every breath is not as essential as one has been conditioned to believe. Then in those momentary lapses of time, one understands what it is to taste immortality. When the intensity of these moments beyond time becomes a recurring phenomenon, such occurrences become the seeds of entering samādhi. That's why sādhus are described as being śānta, peaceful within. Such lasting inner peace is your greatest

boon, the summum bonum of human achievement, meaning that one has attained the highest good, the ultimate, supreme goal in life and the actual purpose of self realization.

It is the stepping stone platform from where one steps inside thereby being able to love, see, touch and talk to and hear the darling of our hearts. Thus great devotees like Queen Kuntī welcome adversity, tribulation and suffering into their lives, as these become moments of great impetus to dive deeply within and to find you there, my eternal Lord and Master, together with your all attractive Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the soul of all souls who is *karuṇāmṛta pāthodhi*, *sudhāmne namo namaḥ, dīnoddāraika guhyāya, kṛpā-pāthodhaye namaḥ*: "To Him who is an ocean of nectarean compassion and whose abode is most attractive, I offer my obeisances unto His lotus feet again and again! He is the only uplifter and deliverer of all us fallen souls like myself, and how He does this is not known to everyone."

To your Kṛṣṇa, who is such an ocean of mercy, I eternally offer my humble and respectful obeisances! Then, falling at His lotus feet, hugging Him and loving Him with all one's might, heart, mind, intelligence and self. By doing so one gradually comes to realize that Kṛṣṇa is never alone. He is always in the company of His better half, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Just the mere glimpse of Her presence totally melts the last shreds of one's egotistical independence and habitual conditioning of ignoring Kṛṣṇa and exclusively focusing externally on one's tiny hopes and aspirations. Such realization is the sweet cherry on the cake of living spiritually by being busy all day in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and actively trying to engage in devotional service. Consequently, one comes to the point of actually appreciating the constant appearances of life's difficult moments and strenuous times. Bhakti-yoga is an interesting albeit extremely joyful science indeed.

Then one comes to deeply appreciate Kṛṣṇa's instruction in *Bhagavad-gītā* 18.57, *mac-cittaḥ satataṁ bhava* — just always think of Me. This is the foundation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. *Je t'aime, je t'aime, je t'aime!* Where even the inner walls of one's heart drips with tears. *Teṣāṁ satata-yuktānāṁ bhajatāṁ prīti-pūrvakam, dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ yena mām upayānti te*, *Bhagavad-gītā* 10.10: when one is thus always engaging oneself, loving the Lord of one's heart with all one's might, He gives us the intelligence, the intuition, of how to quickly come back to thinking of Him and thus being with Him. *Upayānti* is an interesting word, indicating that going back to Him isn't downwards into one's heart as going that way is actually

going upwards, as we are all living upside down here, hanging like fruit-bats on the tree of life, our senses like tubes and cables keeping us on carnal life support. We move around like cosmic machines, where cosmic whistles and grunts, pants and pauses are just our 4-dimensional movie screen changing scenarios in the timeless and spaceless ever ongoing now of our souls. Then we think, *Jīva jago*! wake up O sleeping soul, we are not these cosmic bodies, dreaming that we are dreaming our everyday day dream of this temporary present life and our infinitely variegated but immediately forgotten night dreams. Where waking up entails going upwards within.

Living with you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, through hearing daily your transcendental sound vibrations in your recordings and realizing your ever living ever loving presence in every replay. Such a wonderful life. Thinking this world is actually such a wonderful creation. Verily, we could go on like this forever. Then, bam! Death comes to shake us, to warn us, to wake us up, to remind us of his ultimately coming to end our dreamlike-life, and we can but lovingly run into yours and your Kṛṣṇa's merciful embrace, thinking, hoping, I love youuuuuu! The 'uuuuuu' becoming a clarion call that carries our consciousness up to your lotus self together with Him, your beloved Lord and master, Kṛṣṇa, Who is always in our heart and we can immediately experience His loving embrace. Then what can we do but blissfully chant, *Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.*

Then I remember the brilliant and enlightening description of how to chant the holy names, during the questions and answers at the end of a class you gave on the *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.13, titled "Life after Death," given in Bad Hamburg, Germany, on the 22nd of June, 1974, where you explain:

By chanting the holy name of God, you associate with God. God is Absolute. He is not different from His name. So when you chant God's name, it means you immediately become in touch with God. And by chanting more and more, your association becomes more and more intimate. Then everything is disclosed to you. This is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* 10.10: *teṣāṁ satata-yuktānāṁ bhajatāṁ prīti-pūrvakam, dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ yena mām upayānti te*: If you keep in touch with God with faith and love, then God is within yourself. He will give you intelligence on how you can go back to home, back to Godhead.

There are many different processes or yoga systems to

be in touch with God, but for the people in this age, this is the easiest method, to be in touch with God simply by chanting His holy name. I have already explained that God and His name, is one, is Absolute. In the material world your name and you, as a person, they are two different things. That is the difference between God and you. So therefore, by chanting God's name, you actually contact with God. But in the material world this is not possible. Suppose I am thirsty; I want water. If I chant "water, water," it will not act. But in the case of chanting the holy name of God, it is as good as to associate with God. Try to understand. That: *nāma cintāmaṇī kṛṣṇaś caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ/ pūrṇaḥ śuddhaḥ nitya-mukta, abhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ* [*Cc.* Madhya 17.133]. The name of God and God is equally *pūrṇa*, perfect; *śuddha*, purified; *pūrṇaḥ śuddhaḥ nitya*, eternal; and *pūrṇaḥ śuddhaḥ nitya-mukta*, and liberated from material contamination. So it is not the question of argument. You can try. There is no loss on your part. Chant the holy name of God and see the result yourself.

In India also sometimes "Kṛṣṇa" is pronounced as "Kṛṣṭa." Or you announce as "Christo." It does not make any difference. Because God will take your mind, not your pronunciation. If you mean to pronounce God's name, even if it is not, I mean to say, formally or perfectly pronounced, still, God will understand that you are trying to chant His name. That is your perfection. "Christo" or "Kristo" or "Kṛṣṇa," if He understands that you are hankering after Him, He will give the resultant action. And this is the easiest process in this age for God realization.

Thank you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, for such profound divine knowledge.

I humbly beg to place my ever-grateful heart at your lotus feet and beg to remain, your servant,

Arjuna Dāsa
Initiation: 1976, April—Vrindavan, India

Atītaguṇa Dāsī

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

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

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

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your golden lotus feet. It is difficult, but also easy to write a glorification to you because you exemplify all the wonderful qualities of a devotee. I could write hundreds of pages exalting your incredible self.

I feel like I was not in your wonderful association enough. When I was in your personal presence, I was too embarrassed and shy to talk with you, but I felt your wonderful love for all.

You came to Melbourne, Australia, in 1976 and initiated about fifteen of us. I had been praying for a long time that I would be personally initiated by you. It seemed like an impossible dream. But you came and that day was truly remarkable. Just being in your presence was just so wonderful and enlightening. You brought the spiritual world with you.

At the time of initiation, I felt, in your presence, that my world had changed into the spiritual kingdom. I was coming from the *karmī* world before entering your temple, and by your mercy, I entered the spiritual kingdom. I came from the material world with all its superficial enchantments and you and your disciples introduced me to the wonderful spiritual world.

At the time of initiation, in your sublime presence, I felt that my world had changed. You had changed me into Lord Krishna's devotee. Anyway, now I'm trying to be your worthy disciple and surrender completely to you.

Every day, we hear of different problems in the world. We pray that the Golden Age comes soon and so many devotees will manifest.

The only hope in Kali-yuga is Harināma saṅkīrtana. We want everyone to be able to take part in this. Distributing your books is so enlivening that I want to do it as much as I can in this life.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your books are the law books for the next 10,000 years. I understand that when I read your books I am able to associate with you in a sublime way. I feel that when I read your

books you are taking me into the spiritual world.

You are the most wonderful person to have come into my life, and I want to thank you for encouraging me in so many ways.

Your ever grateful disciple,

Atītaguṇa Dāsī
Initiation: 1976, April—Australia
Current location: Śrīdhām Māyāpur, India

Baḍa Haridās

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you.

Thank you for saving me. As you said, "by the grace of Kṛṣṇa we get guru and by the grace of guru, we get Kṛṣṇa".

By Kṛṣṇa's causeless mercy, you appeared in the life of this tiny, lost *jīva* and changed everything. Everything good in my life is a result of your mercy: The association of devotees, the holy name, Harināma Saṅkīrtana, the beautiful *Bhāgavatam*, devotional service, and the desire and hope within my heart to reach the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Your words soothe my heart and guide my life. Otherwise the darkness and illusion are insurmountable.

My body and mind are aging, and I have been very slow in actual spiritual progress. But, by your mercy, I have stayed on the path.

And, by your grace, I'm gradually able to appreciate more and more what an amazing gift you have placed in my hands.

Certainly, one of your greatest contributions is your commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīla Vyāsadeva's final and most important work. It is the authorized commentary on *Vedānta Sūtra* and Gāyatrī mantra, the synthesis, conclusion and ripened fruit of all of the vedas. The supreme Purāṇa, which, like the sun, illuminates all the others. By hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Bhagavān* in his fullness as Śrī Kṛṣṇa is revealed in the heart.

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

"This beautiful *Bhāgavatam*, compiled by the great sage Vyāsadeva [in his maturity], is sufficient in itself for God realization. What

is the need of any other scripture? As soon as one attentively and submissively hears the message of *Bhāgavatam*, by this culture of knowledge the Supreme Lord is established within his heart."

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and his followers recognized the singular importance of this great work and broadcast its message through all of their writings. Understanding the mission of Lord Caitanya, you dedicated your life to translating and sharing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Your commentary made this ancient work relevant, understandable and exciting to persons who otherwise had no access or qualification. You made the great goal of Kṛṣṇa-prema tangible.

I pray that I can spend the rest of this life hearing and chanting Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in the association of devotees. I pray that I can realize its true essence and share that with others.

Thank you for the gift of the pure holy name. Thank you for the service of sharing the mahā-mantra with others. I pray that I may, one day, chant purely.

You taught us that we should try to give Kṛṣṇa and love for him through the chanting.

"We want to give them something — Kṛṣṇa."

I certainly cannot give Kṛṣṇa, but, by your blessings, I've had some experience of how Kṛṣṇa can manifest in the *kīrtana* and melt our hearts. Please continue to inspire me and guide me in this sacred service.

Please let me truly understand you and your mission. I pray to, one day, do some small service for you.

Your aspiring servant,

Baḍa Haridās

Initiation: 1976, April—Los Angeles, California, USA

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to your extraordinary service to our Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava paramparā.

When I first joined your saṅkīrtana mission in 1975, I began to read the teachings of Lord Caitanya, including his visit to approximately 88 or more temples in South India, during the period of 1510–1512. I became fascinated to read about where Lord Caitanya offered his respects to the Deities of Laxmi Nārāyaṇa, Laxmi Narasiṁha, and Lord Śiva and Pārvatī. For the last 51 years I have been hankering to visit those holy places. I decided that this year had to be the year I made this journey, because now that my body is in its 70s, how much longer do I have to make such a pilgrimage, or even have a body that can do so?

You described in your *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that after Lord Caitanya left Jagannātha Purī, he went to Ālālanātha and began his South India Tour from Kūrmasthāna, where the only Deity of svayambhū Lord Kūrma is found in India. After visiting there, I proceeded to Siṁhācalam in Viśākhāpatnam, where you had visited your godbrother Bhaktivaibhava Purī Swami many decades before. Śrutakīrti Prabhu told me that in 1975, you told him to rent a jeep so that you could go on a tour of South India and visited Nellore, Viśākhāpatnam, and one other city, but due to your demanding schedule, you had to cut it short.

I could write pages on the 20 temples I went to where Lord Caitanya had visited. I travelled for six weeks on nine trains, and I wish to first thank you for providing the roadmap in the pages of your *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* on how to reach these places. And thank you very much for all the ISKCON Temples you established as spiritual oases, where I could reside for a few days at each stop, to benefit from the association of your devoted grand-disciples and have tour guides to visit the many Deities.

There were only two temples I was not allowed to enter to take darśana and that was Mīnākṣī in Madurai and Guruvayur in Kerala. I recalled how you had made statements against those who prohibit your followers from entering these temples.

You explained that in the 1930s, your guru mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura organized a large educational exhibition in Calcutta through his Gauḍīya Maṭha to graphically

expose the materialistic mindset of some religious practitioners. He ordered the construction of a specific diorama. The visual display showed a traditional Vedic priest or brāhmaṇa sitting at an altar arranged for spiritual worship. However, instead of worshipping the sacred Śālagrāma-śilā, the priest was gripping the holy stone and using it to smash open common betel nuts (*supāri*).

The backlash was that the diorama was so intentionally provocative that a group of wealthy, aristocratic brāhmaṇas in Calcutta took offense and filed a civil lawsuit against the Gauḍīya Maṭha to try and shut the exhibition down.

The philosophical lesson here was that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura used this shocking visual to deliver a direct, heavy strike against materialistic religion (*karma-kāṇḍa*). He explained that when people approach the Supreme Lord solely to ask for material wealth, health, food, or worldly benefits, they are treating God exactly like a nutcracker. They view the Supreme Lord merely as a tool to crack open their material desires and satisfy their bellies, rather than offering genuine, selfless Kṛṣṇa conscious devotion.

Similarly, you carried this analogy to the West. You often reminded your disciples that Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the supreme master to be served, not an order-supplier or a tool for personal utility. You taught that true spiritual life begins when one stops asking God, "Give us this day our daily bread," and instead asks, "What can I offer to serve You?"

This history is recorded directly in the transcripts of your spoken lectures and informal room conversations with your disciples. During a room conversation, May 3, 1976, in Fiji, this transcript contains the most descriptive, step-by-step breakdown of how the diorama was organized and the subsequent legal reaction from the materialistic brāhmaṇas. During an intimate discussion with your disciples regarding the purpose of installing spiritual exhibitions and dioramas, you explicitly credit your guru:

"My Guru Mahārāja [Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta] structured an exhibition...He put a diorama showing a brāhmaṇa sitting with an altar. He has got a Śālagrāma-śilā. And he is cracking betel nut with the Śālagrāma-śilā. This was represented."

You go on to describe the exact backlash of a legal conflict:

> The smārta brāhmaṇas became very angry. They brought a lawsuit against Gauḍīya Maṭha: 'They are insulting our brahminical culture!' But Guru Mahārāja explained, 'We are

not insulting. We are showing what you are actually doing. You have made Śālagrāma-śilā a nutcracker. You don't worship Him; you utilize Him for your sense gratification.'

During a *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* lecture, June 30, 1974, in Melbourne, Australia, you used this story to dissect the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.9, which explains that material gain should never be the goal of religious practice.

In this lecture transcript, you contrast pure devotional service (bhakti) with standard material religiosity (karma-kāṇḍa). You explain that going to a temple or church just to ask God for food, wealth, or daily bread is an identical mentality to using a sacred item for a mundane chore.

You state that just as it is foolish and highly disrespectful to use an invaluable, Śālagrāma stone to do the crude job of an iron tool (a nutcracker), it is a waste of human life to use the supreme source of all existence just to fix minor temporary material problems.

During a *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* lecture on December 22, 1976, in Poona, India, you were training your disciples on how to build the "Museums of Vedic Culture" and diorama exhibitions across the West. You referred back to your guru's methodology, reminding the devotees that dioramas should not just be pretty to look at…they must be highly philosophical and deeply provocative. You cited the Śālagrāma nutcracker exhibition as the perfect example of using art to shatter illusions and expose religious hypocrisy.

When the Jagannātha Purī Temple servants refused to respect your disciples and allow them to take darśana of Lord Jagannātha, you were not tolerant of such an offence, but you criticised them. You said that the local pūjārīs and administrators think that the Lord is "Purīnātha" or "Orissa-nātha" and not Jagannātha. To show your loyalty and solidarity towards your disciples, you refused to enter into the temple. You said that we would build a temple near the Purī temple, have a big kīrtana, and Lord Jagannātha would leave their temple and come to ours. You once said to be humble means to be bold for Krishna.

Thank you again and again, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for being so bold to cross the Atlantic Ocean to find many of us, providing us with the roadmap to visit the holy places of pilgrimage and to create new temples for us to reside in as we go on pilgrimage. I was asked to lead kīrtanas and give classes at all of them and became very enlivened to continue to distribute your original books in the West.

I was invited to do Harināma and give classes at all of your temples. I chanted the Hare Krishna mantra at all the temples I visited, even though I never heard the Hare Krishna *mantra* in all of those ancient temples. Now I understand why Lord Caitanya did his two-year tour, to get everyone engaging in the Yuga dharma of chanting the Hare Krishna mahā-mantra.

If it is your desire, please allow me to return there to do more kīrtana in the near future, and benefit from the association of all your sincere devotees.

Praying to be your eternal servant, life after life, wherever you may be.

Your aspiring servant,

Gaura Dāsa
Initiation: 1976, June—Detriot, Michigan, USA

Cakrī Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

I am so grateful that I met you in this lifetime. I was wasting my time and not very happy. But by your mercy I discovered the real purpose of life. Your books were the key. And, your disciples were enthusiastically distributing them. I was fortunate to receive some of your small books, which enlightened me about the real purpose of life. Then eventually I received the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Your books alone were enough to convince me to become a devotee. Your books are so powerful. You were actually experiencing what you were writing about, as you were directly in touch with Krishna. That direct touch clearly comes through when we read your books. We can feel the presence of Krishna and His divine energy. It's in every page, and every word of your books. I experienced that very clearly, early on, when reading your *Krishna Book.* It's clear to me that you were directly in touch with Krishna, and actually seeing His divine pastimes. And you were transmitting those realizations to us. Thus directly reawakening our original spiritual Krishna consciousness. You gave us this understanding in the beginning of our spiritual lives, so we would know Who Krishna is, His glories, and why we

should worship Him.

I'm currently hearing some of your early activities, in America, from the *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*. My wife has a weekly reading of the *Līlāmṛta* with a number of devotees. I'm hearing some of these pastimes as well. I can see that you went through so many hardships to follow the order of your spiritual master, to spread Krishna consciousness in the Western countries. You didn't care about your own safety or well-being. You were only thinking of our well-being, and wanted to give us something that would make us eternally happy. You sacrificed everything to achieve that goal. This increased your glories even more; that you tolerated so much suffering to deliver Krishna's message.

You have explained that a Vaiṣṇava is just like the ocean. Just as the ocean gives unlimited amounts of water, the Vaiṣṇava has unlimited amounts of mercy to give. You showed this quality, by giving unlimited amounts of mercy when you were here, to all living beings. You're still giving that mercy through your movement, your books, and your followers. You have given us the opportunity to assist you, and be an instrument in your mission. That is also your mercy. I pray that whatever time I have left, I can assist you in your most glorious mission to re-spiritualize the world with Krishna consciousness.

Begging to be your servant,

Cakrī Dāsa
Initiation: 1976, June—Detriot, Michigan, USA
Current location: Dallas, Texas, USA
Contact: chakridas@yahoo.com

Bhaja Govinda Devī Dāsī

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to your lotus feet, which are the source of my refuge and shelter.

Another year has passed and I am feeling most grateful to be able to serve you. In this past year, many of my godbrothers and godsisters have gone on to serve you on another platform. We are getting on and realize that we too will have to face that final test. You have given us so many instructions on how to face this final test. I

pray for your most gracious mercy that I will be able to take shelter of the holy names and your mercy. I pray that Kṛṣṇa's names will forever be present in my mind and on my tongue.

Every morning we offer our prayers to you and feel most fortunate to be able to do so. Please continue to give me shelter at your lotus feet and bestow your causeless mercy upon this fallen soul.

Begging to eternally remain in your service,

Bhaja Govinda Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1976, July—Florida, USA
Current location: Alachua, Florida, USA
Contact: bhajago@yahoo.com

Jaya Mādhava Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Once again this fallen soul is eternally thanking you for your endless and causeless mercy to me, your fallen disciple. Everything that is auspicious to me in my life is only because of you.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a deeply appreciated blessing from Your Divine Grace. You alone blessed us with the most valuable gifts in human life.

My eternal thank you is chanting the *mahā-mantra*, studying your original books, the possibility of preaching Krishna consciousness to devotees and newcomers alike.

Travelling all over the world to preach for your ISKCON and distributing your books and teachings is a blessing of incredible value.

Taking Kṛṣṇa prasādam (cooked in ghee), distributing prasādam, following and teaching your standards and practices to devotees in Russia where I am now a citizen is indeed a blessing.

My devotee wife and family are your blessings. Without them I'd be lost.

Thank you for your wonderful disciples, my godbrothers, godsisters, and granddisciples. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for ISKCON Temples. Devotee association and friendships are priceless.

Some time after you left us physically many mistakes were made. Nevertheless I stayed in the house you built named ISKCON. It is the one gift that is still priceless despite the problems.

ISKCON is the house you built for us, your disciples and followers. There is no other. May I repeat this realization of mine. There is no other ISKCON that is equal or better than the ISKCON society that you created. My conviction is strong on that point.

Thank you for building an ISKCON, a house in which the whole world can live. Thank you for your original books and mahā-mantra, devotees and temples and farms. Gurukulas, prasādam, devotees.

Time is passing quickly, more and more of us, your disciples are leaving the planet. As the world sinks into massive chaos and endless wars, huge economic disasters, inflation, joblessness, homelessness, unable to survive, and no one is escaping.

There are too many demonic leaders in the west as you warned us fifty years ago. You warned us that America would be finished in 50 years and we see that happening now right before our very eyes, in real time. It's becoming true, and it is high time to establish real varṇāśrama farm communities for everyone all over the world now.

I pray to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to ask Lord Kṛṣṇa to intervene and protect all His devotees all over the world in these dangerous times.

I ask your prayers for the protection of your sincere Russian devotees and the land they live in to be protected from the big asuras in the west and elsewhere.

On the 2026 holy and sacred day of your appearance, I ask you to bless me to continue to serve in Krishna consciousness, and preach on your behalf in Russia.

My head is eternally at your divine lotus feet, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your servant,

Jaya Mādhava Dāsa
Initiation: 1976, July—New York, USA
Current location: Novosibirsk Siberia-Russia
Contact: jayamadhavadas@hotmail.com

Vaikuṇṭhadeva Dāsa

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

The very first time I learned of you, I knew I had found my guru. I had heard the chant before, I had heard Krishna's name before, but nothing registered until I held your original MacMillan *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* in my hands for the very first time. The devotee who

gifted me that book blessed me in innumerable ways that evening.

Although I had been searching in earnest for the truth for a few years, reading every spiritual and quasi-spiritual book I could get my hands on, including the Bible, Torah, and a number of touted books on yoga and meditation, nothing even scratched the surface of my deeply disturbed consciousness. I was more certain than ever that I was truly defective in every way — life had become a meaningless sequence of painful experiences — and that there likely was no God, nor did I feel I belonged here. And then I read *your* words!

Everything changed that night! With your *Bhagavad-gītā*, for the first time in my life, I knew I held the truth in my hands, and eventually, after many years, in my heart. Up until then, I had been a distracted reader, sometimes reading a page of a textbook, or some other treatise about yoga and consciousness, only to realize when I got to the bottom of a page that I had already just read that same page moments before!

Each time I reached for your *Gītā*, however, it was as though the Supreme Personality of Godhead was speaking directly to me, His words bypassing my addled brain completely and penetrating the deepest levels of my consciousness. I was inhaling entire pages at a time, the words seemingly jumping off the page and directly into my heart! And, for the first time ever in my life, I had no doubt! Knowingness permeated my being.

During this period, I had numerous mystical experiences in which I would feel completely puzzled by some thought or experience; I would reach for the *Gītā* for answers, and the *exact* explanation that completely satisfied me would be in the purport on the very page I opened it to! And *that* happened too many times to have been a coincidence! And this is only *one* aspect of your mystical potencies; to directly channel the Supreme Personality of Godhead's words onto the page and penetrate readers' hearts.

From those days forward, I was never confused by the incoherent ramblings of impersonalists and always took delight in how you could effortlessly and elegantly smash their arguments to smithereens with just one simple comment. I was likewise amazed that in those very pages, you magically answered *all* of my endless questions about the meaning of life, my purpose, why we suffer, where we came from and where we are going, all the "whys" my parents and teachers could never explain – and as often as not – by simply opening one of your books to *any page*! Again – no accidents!

I remember how supremely esoteric and yet, so inescapably logical your disciple's explanation on how material things have a beginning, a middle and an end, while *spiritual* things eternally expand! As an illustration of that principle, he mentioned how when Krishna looks at Rādhārāṇī, she becomes more beautiful. And when He sees Her becoming more beautiful, He falls in love with Her even *more*! And when She feels his increased love, She becomes yet even *more* beautiful! And that cycle continues infinitely – for all eternity! That was quite a concept for a teenager to embrace, yet here we are, fifty years later, and my love for you has continued to grow since that amazing day!

Then, two and a half years later, you changed my heart forever with a single, loving and compassionate glance! Within that single glance, *in less than a second*, you conveyed everything I had been eager to hear my entire life. Even though you saw to the depths of my thoroughly demoniac soul, it was clear that despite my unworthiness, you loved me *unconditionally* as the true father I'd been searching for my entire life, and you were going to take me *all the way home*! In my young life, I had never felt anything even remotely like that before (or since), and I reflexively burst into tears, knowing that my long journey back to Godhead had finally begun! And…I was not alone in this extraordinary experience. I have heard similar accounts from many other devotees!

I had no idea what lay ahead, or what difficulties I would soon experience on this path, especially after you departed. But as long as you were physically on the planet, I felt safe, loved, and appreciated, just knowing you were here. And apparently, after your departure, Krishna had more purification in store for me. Even though your mercy was overwhelming, I was too weak to feel it when not in your presence. It would take many years of suffering, before one of your senior devotees took pity upon me and kicked me back to the shelter of your lotus feet. And even though I would forget you again and again, you never forgot me! Someday, I pray to do something that will make you proud!

I owe you my life, Śrīla Prabhupāda! And the next life, and the next life after that! This material world is a hellish place. And in this hellish place, there are especially hellish places! And you voluntarily chose to come to one of the most hellish places on this entire planet to deliver sleeping souls you had never even met! You took the lowest born and turned them into *brāhmaṇas*! Certainly, your mercy

knows no bounds! The only thing I can offer you in return is my love and deepest gratitude. I remain,

Your fallen son,

Vaikuṇṭhadeva Dāsa
Initiation: 1976, July—New York, USA

Jayagurudeva Dāsa

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

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Very dear to Lord Krishna
Very close to Lord Krishna
Blessed by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī
Blessed by Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī

We came from nowhere
Heading nowhere
Insignificant fallen *jīva* souls
Our only asset is that Śrīla Prabhupāda
Accepted us and gave us protection
Only due to His causeless mercy
The compassionate Vaiṣṇava
Can we become recognised
By Lord Krishna
By Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī
By Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī
Without the compassion of a Vaiṣṇava
We are nothing
Just fallen conditioned souls

Prayer to the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Krishna

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Long ago, in the 1980s, I visited a small church in Ticino, Switzerland. I was distributing your books in the local villages. I composed a melody to the Bengali poem you wrote in August 1965. I played the melody on the church harmonium, and sang along. At the time you wrote this beautiful poem you were all alone, on board a small ocean freighter called Jaladuta from Calcutta to New York City, crossing two oceans and three seas. With 40 Rupees in your pocket, and a few boxes filled with your Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam First Canto trilogies, you signed off the poem as an *insignificant beggar A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami*…

Here`s my recording of your song I called *'Friend of Lord Krishna'* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkypdCY1c-M&list=PLMKZXre4n39XOVVDj7GNs9AKIO5XV3mhl&index=6

Recently, reflecting on this song, I was struck with the prophecies you have made in the opening verses: "…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..."

Within mere 61 years, your prophesies became reality by the strong desire of your great, saintly spiritual master! In the early days of ISKCON, you even said that some of your disciples had been sent to you by your great saintly spiritual master. That was your humility… pure Vaiṣṇava humility. Indeed, it was this profound, transcendental humility that distinguished you from any person I have ever met in my life. I assume most of my godbrothers and godsisters have had the same experience.

Your humility was disarming — we wept just by seeing your radiant, blissful demeanour. Your first disciples literally fell in love with you! They could give their lives for you. They worked day and night, just to assist you in your mission to serve your great, saintly spiritual master.

Praying to be always be engaged in assisting you in your mission.
I beg to remain your humble servant, life after life.

Your ever indebted servant,

Jayagurudeva Dāsa
Initiation: 1976, August, New Māyāpur, France

Gaura Keśava Dāsa

oṃ asmad gurubhyo namaḥ ।
asmat parama-gurubhyo namaḥ ।
asmat sarva-gurubhyo namaḥ ।

"My respects to my teachers, My respects to their teachers, My respects to all teachers."

rādhā-kṛṣṇa samārambhāṃ
kṛṣṇa caitanya madhyamām ।
bhaktivedānta paryantāṃ
vande guru paramparām ।।

"I offer my respect to that guru paramparā which starts with Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa, with Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya in the middle and progresses to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda."

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, while reflecting on your teachings I am constantly amazed at the way you always praised all the Vaiṣṇava Sampradāya Ācāryas and their teachings. While you waste no time in criticizing the Advaita or Māyāvāda doctrines of oneness, spread by Ādi Śaṅkarācārya. With true interdenominational preaching you were always on the side of personalism and against impersonalism. At times you even exalted prophets of non-Vaiṣṇava faiths. Thus you endeavored to present a truly non-sectarian personalist message in all your preaching.

I came across a nice example of this when reading your teachings today:

Dated: November 22nd 1974
Location: Bombay
Letter to: V. S. R. Chakravarti
74-11-22
V.S.R. Chakravarti

24, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar Road
Madras-18

'Dear Sri Chakravarti:

The book compiled by your father V.R. Srisaila Chakravarti, namely "The Philosophy of Sri Ramanuja," given to me by you on 2/11/74 was very interesting to read. Of course we Gaudiya Vaisnava follow Srila Ramanuja's philosophy almost in the same manner. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu gives the identification of jiva soul as the eternal servant of Krishna and is situated as marginal potency of the Lord based on the philosophy of *acintya-bheda bheda-tattva*. This is almost similar to *Visistadvaita vada*. Vaiṣṇava philosophy is now being pushed on all over the world under the Hare Krishna movement, and we feel Sripada Ramanuja a great support for the Vaiṣṇava philosophical understanding. It is like a combination of *nyaya sruti* and *smrti prasthans*. The *Bhagavad-gita* supports the *Vedanta Sutra brahma-sutra-padais caiva/ hetumadbhir viniscitaih* [Bg. 13.5].

To the *jiva brahma* identification is one part of *acintya-bheda bheda-tattva*. As spirit soul or identical brahma, or *jiva brahma* is identical with the Supreme Brahma or the Param Brahma. In this sense *jiva soul* is *avheda* or non-different from the param brahma. But on account of the Param Brahma being the supreme, the biggest, the identical brahma or *jiva brahma* being very minute, it is different from the Param Brahma. The summary is that the simultaneous one and different *jiva brahma* is simultaneously one with and different from the Param Brahma. Because it is appreciated simultaneously which is very difficult to comprehend by the common man, this philosophy is called *acintya-bheda bheda tattva*, inconceivable. This is supported by the *Katho Upanisad* 2/5/13 *nityo nityanam cetanas cetananam/ eko bahunam yo vidadhati kaman.* This is almost similar to the *visista-dvaita vada*.

So far I am personally concerned, following the footsteps of my guru maharaj Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura Prabhupāda, we accept the principles of all the

acaryas, although officially we belong to the Madhva sampradaya. Our sampradaya is known as the Madhva Gaudiya sampradaya. We find great shelter at the lotus feet of Sri Ramanujacarya because his lotus feet are the strongest fort to combat the mayavadi philosophy.

I hope the book '*The Philosophy of Sri Ramanuja*' published by you will be a great help to the Vaisnavites all over the world.

Thanking you once again.

Yours sincerely,

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami,

ACBS/bs'

Always encouraging to the personalists yet uncompromisingly critical of the impersonalists.

jīvera nistāra lāgi' sūtra kaila vyāsa
māyāvādi-bhāṣya śunile haya sarva-nāśa

Śrīla Vyāsadeva presented Vedānta philosophy for the deliverance of conditioned souls, but if one hears the commentary of Śaṅkarācārya, everything is spoiled. (*Cc.* Madhya 6.169)

PURPORT

Factually, the devotional service of the Lord is described in the *Vedānta-sūtra,* but the Māyāvādī philosophers, the Śaṅkarites, prepared a commentary known as *Śārīraka-bhāṣya,* in which the transcendental form of the Lord is denied. The Māyāvādī philosophers think that the living entity is identical with the Supreme Soul, Brahman. Their commentaries on the *Vedānta-sūtra* are completely opposed to the principle of devotional service. Caitanya Mahāprabhu therefore warns us to avoid these commentaries. If one indulges in hearing the Śaṅkarite *Śārīraka-bhāṣya,* he will certainly be bereft of all real knowledge.

The ambitious Māyāvādī philosophers desire to merge

into the existence of the Lord, and this may be accepted as sāyujya-mukti. However, this form of *mukti* means denying one's individual existence. In other words, it is a kind of spiritual suicide. This is absolutely opposed to the philosophy of *bhakti-yoga. Bhakti-yoga* offers immortality to the individual conditioned soul. If one follows the Māyāvādī philosophy, he misses his opportunity to become immortal after giving up the material body. The immortality of the individual person is the highest perfectional stage a living entity can attain.

This is also nicely encapsulated in your praṇāma mantra:

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

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

Your servant,

Gaura Keśava Dāsa
Initiation: 1976, August—Sydney, Austrailia

Ātmātma Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Thank you again and again for the transcendental gifts you have given to this world. The greatest jewels anyone can receive.

Searching, searching, and then I found the mercy you were giving to all around.

Simply Wonderful…a taste beyond this world, but more than this was the knowledge divine and given just in time.

This body was a gift to carry the soul within to you, the *Ācārya* of this time.

Without you where would we be? You came to set us free.

You revealed from within what I had been seeking, the Lord of

the heart and His eternal kingdom.

The Supreme Lord of all that be, a Cowherd boy with lots of boy and girl friends. Their eyes shone with delight when Kṛṣṇa came within their sight.

The pasturing grounds, so green and pristine with cows as far as one can see. The cows, when Kṛṣṇa seen, would rush across the land so green. His lotus feet, that was their greatest treat.

The Lord so loving and carefree, the goal of all to be set free. Just loving Him nothing more opens the door. Bhakti, the key to all, from this we do not want to fall.

Prabhupāda, our pure savior, you have given us the keys.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for the greatest gift of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

The goal of life the Lord within from whom we can be freed from sin.

Pure devotion, the goal of life. He can free us from our strife.

The holy names given freely, a sound so pure and divine.

Before my eyes were opened, the vision of the Lord I was given, an old man with a beard.

But of course, now I could see He is an eternal youth, and so are we.

Beautiful beyond compare. The Lord of the Heart is really there.

No longer searching, I had found the perfect person to set us free.

Prabhupāda, Your Divine Grace, the Ācārya of this age.

Now I can see the answers to every question.

The message so pure and sweet is for the soul the perfect treat.

Books presented in many languages for the world to know which way to go.

I bow down to you Śrīla Prabhupāda, the greatest Ācārya of this age.

The impossible mission, impossible no more, you came and opened the door.

Your books, with the message for the soul … nectar so sweet.

How many have you saved with knowledge of the divine.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the answer to my prayers. The gifts you have given free us from this prison.

I bow down to you Śrīla Prabhupāda for the greatest gift, Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, that are so sweet.

The holy names have come just like the rising sun. They dispel all ignorance and darkness. A song given to set us free.

There you were in Vṛndāvana, health was not so good. Had we

known your desire we would have come but we were not told.

But from your bed you said, "I am going to England".

You had travelled around the world 14 times. Opened Temples, translated huge volumes of transcendental books. Accepted so many lost souls, and now what more.

Landing in England, you came to the Manor named after Your Divine Grace.

As you were being taken on a palanquin to your rooms, you told me, "It's a little difficult".

But I could understand that you are coming for the satisfaction of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. His desire dating back many decades was to have Kṛṣṇa consciousness established in England.

What a great success. Transcendental books were being distributed all over the UK. A beautiful temple had been established with magnificent Deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Londonīśvara, right in the centre of London. *Harināma kīrtana* was being chanted, not only in London, but all over UK and Europe and around the world

We were on travelling *saṅkīrtana* when we got the message, "Prabhupāda is coming". The message was spread and Bhaktividanta Manor filled up with devotees from all over Europe.

How satisfied Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī must be. His desire was now accomplished by His pure disciple A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda, again and again for coming and picking us up out of the lap of Māyā.

I am your eternal servant,

Ātmātma Dāsa
Initiation: 1976, September—London, UK
Current location: Alresford, Winchester, UK
Contact: atmatma@gmail.com

Jānakī Devī Dāsī

Hare Krishna!

nama oṁ 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,

We once again come before you to offer our respects and homage unto you on the occasion of your holy appearance in this mortal world.

You are my dear beloved Spiritual Father, who has been my guide and inspiration since I first came across your books in 1975, and had the immense good fortune to be in your divine association in 1976 and 1977 when you visited Bhaktivedānta Manor in England.

> The value of a moment's association with the devotee of the Lord cannot even be compared to the attainment of heavenly planets, or liberation from matter, what to speak of worldly benedictions in the form of material prosperity, which are for those who are meant for death. (SB 1.18.13)

You have given us, and indeed the whole world, the greatest gift – the opportunity to become free from the endless cycle of birth and death and to attain the highest goal to be able to enter Goloka Vṛndāvana, the topmost kingdom of God – where the residents of Vraja engage in personal loving service to Śrī Krishna and His beloved consort Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Never before has this supreme destination been so readily available and open for all – if we would just take the time and inclination to realize the value and accept this most glorious of gifts.

Krishna, as *paramātmā* within the heart, gives us the spiritual master – who in turn gives us Krishna through his guidance and instruction. May we always take full advantage of this wonderful opportunity to engage in devotional service and purify our lives so we can reawaken that lost but most important relationship with the very soul of our soul, Śrī Krishna.

Śrīla Prabhupāda is always showing us – through his personal example, and with the teachings he has left us through his translations and purports of the wisdom texts he so carefully and painstakingly made available to us – guiding us how to know and offer our love to God – to Krishna, the all attractive Supreme Personality of Godhead. All other relationships are temporary, but these spiritual relationships are eternal, full of knowledge, full of bliss. This is where our true happiness lies – not in pursuit of worldly name, fame and fortune, which are all fleeting moments in this drama of our life – and the Vedic scriptures remind us we have

had hundreds of millions of such lives.

Let us offer this one life to Śrīla Prabhupāda – let us do something to please him, to help him in his mission.

In this mood, last year I made a trip to Malaysia – a place where myself and my husband – Rāmaśaraṇa Dāsa – had spent a number of years in the 80s helping to establish ISKCON in its fledgling years.

This time I travelled alone – but was very warmly welcomed by the local devotees and immediately felt a part of this wonderful family that Śrīla Prabhupāda has kindly and expertly made available all over the world. Now so many centres, temples, Deities, restaurants, farms, festivals, Rathayātrās, so many lovely, dedicated devotees, eager to serve, eager to carry on this message of love of God, this gift of grace and faith that Śrīla Prabhupāda has so freely and compassionately given to us all.

Now I am embracing the Vānaprastha āśrama – the great Vānaprastha adventure! Now I find myself somewhat freed from the cumbersome ties that bind us in the Gṛhastha āśrama – passing those responsibilities over to the next generation – sharing with them whatever wisdom we can whilst also having the freedom to travel and encourage the younger generation of devotees to stay strong, grounded and focused in their devotional service. Reminding them of the tremendous gifts Śrīla Prabhupāda has given us and encouraging them to be resilient in the face of challenges – always keeping the great legacy of Śrīla Prabhupāda intact and ready to hand over to the next generation.

As our own bodies grow older, we appreciate more and more the great sacrifices you made to please your spiritual master – by bringing these teachings to the west, alone and with no resources. On his order and with great faith you made that journey. And now we can see the bountiful fruits of those seeds of devotion you sowed.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please bless our humble efforts to serve you, may we be useful instruments in your hands, please guide us and protect us so that we may act as your puppets – make us dance, make us dance, make us dance as you like. So that your name, fame and glory may be spread throughout the lands and your message of love and devotion be joyfully received throughout the world. Hare Krishna.

Your aspiring servant,

Jānakī Devī Dāsī

Leicester UK, 12th April 2026
Initiation: 1976, September—London, UK

Yogīndra Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

By your blessing, I was able to visit Vraja again this last Kartik 2025 and take part in the parikramā arranged annually since 40 years by HH Lokanātha Swami, whose padayātrā was so important to you in your final days here on earth. Thank you for providing my unworthy self with this Krishna conscious association.

When the Vraja maṇḍala parikramā devotees came to Vraja's Kedarnath, I was fortunate to hear from Rādhā Ramaṇa Swami a quote from Rūpa Goswami's *Upadeśāmṛta* verse 8:

tan-nāma-rūpa-caritādi-sukīrtanānu-
smṛtyoḥ krameṇa rasanā-manasī niyojya
tiṣṭhan vraje tad-anurāgi-janānugāmī
kālaṁ nayed akhilam ity upadeśa-sāram

"The essence of all advice is that one should utilize one's full time – twenty-four hours a day – in nicely chanting and remembering the Lord's divine name, transcendental form, qualities and eternal pastimes, thereby gradually engaging one's tongue and mind. In this way one should reside in Vraja [Goloka Vṛndāvana-*dhāma*] and serve Kṛṣṇa under the guidance of devotees. One should follow in the footsteps of the Lord's beloved devotees, who are deeply attached to His devotional service".

Rādhā Ramaṇa Swami's translucent presentation inspired me to delve into your purport to this "essence of all advice". You begin the purport by emphasizing the importance of training the mind to remember Lord Krishna which will be tested at the moment of death. You proceed in the purport to quote Rūpa Goswami's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.294–295 wherein, already in the neophyte stage of *sādhana*, the beginner is advised to submissively emulate the feeling of and follow in the footsteps of a particular associate of Lord Krishna in Vraja.

You then proceed to quote verbatim Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta

Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's commentary on this verse which begins by advising the beginner to "… give up all material motives and train his mind by following the progressive regulative principles, namely chanting and remembering Kṛṣṇa and His name, form, quality, pastimes and so forth … In the neophyte stage one should always engage in hearing *kṛṣṇa-kathā*". Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Ṭhākura then delineates various stages of remembrance of Lord Krishna's name, form, qualities and pastimes until the aspirant eventually chants the holy name in ecstasy at which point remembrance of Krishna becomes constant. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta then asserts, "At that time he can perfectly and clearly understand his eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa."

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta's commentary on *NOI* verse 8 continues to delineate attachment – *rāga* – in the five *rasa* relationships beginning with *śānta* with four examples: "... Kṛṣṇa's cows or the stick or flute in the hand of Kṛṣṇa, or the flowers around Kṛṣṇa's neck". Then the four higher relationships are described with names of prototypical eternal associates of Krishna in each *rasa* culminating with "… Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī or Her lady friends such as Lalitā and Her serving maids (*mañjarīs*) like Rūpa and Rati". Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta concludes his commentary and ends your purport with: "This is the essence of all instruction in the matter of devotional service."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I reflect that the first time I was in your vicinity (New Māyāpura, France, August, 1976) as an aspiring, uninitiated *bhakta* amongst hundreds of your disciples, an incident occurred which, without going into details, drove home for me once and for all, the message; you wanted your disciples to be accountable to senior godsiblings. I have concluded in connection with *NOI* verse 8 that this message is not merely an institutional formality but the "essence of all advice". Smita Krishna Swami has, from the start, been for me a very important link to you. Another, although not a godsibling, is Smita Krishna Mahārāja's trusted friend, Yadunandana Swami, who wrote in 2019 in *Narottama śikṣā*:

> For practitioners, the *siddha-deha* can be achieved … by revelation of the Lord from within the heart (Śrīla VCT, *Rāga-vartma-candrikā* 1.9) … From his [Śrīla Prabhupāda's] books it is seen that he prefers to 'play it safe' and give preference to the third option given by Chakravartī Ṭhākura [as opposed to obtaining *siddha-deha* from guru or sadhu], i.e. that *siddha-deha*, or prior to it, the inclination

> to serve Krishna in a particular relationship should be developed and revealed by the Lord in a natural way when the practitioner has become sufficiently perfect in his or her practice of devotional service. (pg. 104)

Yadunandana Swami further relates:

> I directly heard from Bhakti Caru Swami that he was witness when one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples expressed a desire to see someone offering to reveal to him his eternal spiritual identity (*siddha-deha*). At first Śrīla Prabhupāda became furious to the point that his lip was visibly trembling. He did not appreciate that this disciple was taking this matter so cheaply. Then he became calm and told the disciple, "When you are ready for it, I'll come to you in person and reveal it to you." (ibid.)

I bow down to your divine lotus feet on this 50th anniversary year of my extreme good fortune of obtaining Your Divine Grace's initiation as my eternal master, instructor and well-wisher.

May I always remember your instructions, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and recite them without encumbrance.

Your grateful servant,

Yogīndra Dāsa
Initiation: 1976, September—Stockholm, Sweden
Current location: ISKCON Sweden
Contact: yogindra.acbsp@pamho.net

Varāharūpa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

In 1974, we headed to San Francisco from Vancouver Temple to see you. Vancouver Temple was filled with stalwart devotees such as Bahudak, Pārtha, Sthāṇur, Patraka, Padmapāṇī, Madhu Paṇḍita, Janaspriya, Prasasya, Ānandamaya, Nātha, and others, as well as wonderful mātājīs and children. Your servant Mahīdhara drove four of us: (himself, Budhamaheswar, Rabīndra and myself). When we arrived in San Francisco we stayed in a hall for the visiting devotees. Viṣṇujana Swami, (whom I knew slightly) sent his helper to me with

a garland he had received from you. The devotee beside me was crying because of this mercy, so I gave the garland to him.

Later, in the Temple room, we were chanting *japa*, quietly awaiting your arrival. The door burst open and a devotee energetically walked in, and held the door open for you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. The mood became surcharged with gravity, anticipation, anxiety and happiness, all together.

After your class, the devotees formed an aisle through the temple room. As we stood two and three deep, you stopped here and there to give special *darśana* to devotees. When you reached the spot where I was, you stopped to talk to a devotee in front of me. This devotee was shorter than me so I found myself looking directly at you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, just an arm's length away. Your lustrous brown eyes held me in awe. My staring must have been somewhat rude, but I could not help myself. When you finished talking to that most fortunate devotee you gave me a stern look that filled me with fearful ecstasy.

Now my only fear of death is that I may forget that moment which I have held in my heart and mind's eye for more than fifty years.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my prostrated obeisances again and again eternally.

Varāharūpa Dāsa
Initiation: 1976, October—Seattle Washington USA
Current location: Vancouver, Canada

Ātmārāma Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you on this occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā.

Once again I offer my respects and gratitude for the path of service you have laid out so carefully and demonstrated so perfectly – "clear and fresh as morning dew".

Over these many years it has become increasingly obvious that the lasting strength of the Krishna consciousness movement – both within and without – lies not in any personal attribute, but simply in the steady commitment to your instructions and example, so firmly grounded in siddhānta and paramparā.

You consistently taught us to place service first and be ever

cautious of premature reaching. "First deserve, then desire". That emphasis on *service above all* has proven critical in keeping devotional life stable and preserving its integrity across the many changing circumstances and stages of life.

With time we come to appreciate more fully that to remain properly situated as a disciple — loyal, disciplined, and useful — is itself the greatest of all achievements. There is no need to seek anything beyond faithful service to the spiritual master and the mission given.

Whatever connection I may have been able to maintain with the Kṛishṇa consciousness movement and with Krishna consciousness itself, it has only come from trying to stay aligned with this idea. Despite my many shortcomings, please allow me to continue assisting your mission in a simple and straightforward way, in this life and beyond, without any deviation and without any presumption.

Your humble servant,

Ātmārāma Dāsa
Initiation: 1976, November—Melbourne, Australia

Nidrā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my respectful obeisances. All glories to you and your beloved Vyāsa-pūjā day.

Every quality of a Vaiṣṇava you have in full. Devotees glorify you for this extraordinary greatness and describe qualities that they feel are most dear to them.

One is your love that you give to all. By this love, you encourage thousands to surrender to chanting and dancing and hearing from your books. So many of us dropped our conditioned attitudes of distrust, skepticism, and many mental concoctions. That is a miracle. Such anarthas were deep rooted, and yet you were able to win our hearts by your love. This experience of pure love was transforming ourselves into faithful and happy devotees.

Parents, friends, relatives, colleagues and mentors were amazed to see the change of heart. Many of them also changed because of your loving influence.

For this and everything else that you have given, we are so

grateful and want to surrender fully.

Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda! Please bless us to be eternally serving you and all servants of Rādhā Govinda.

Your aspiring disciple,

Nidrā Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1977, January—Denver, USA
Current location: Denver, Colorado, USA
Contact: nidra.devi@gmail.com

Tāmra Dāsī

Dearmost Śrīla Prabhupāda,

My unlimited gratitude-filled *praṇāms* are ever bowed to your sweet, lotus feet.

You carried the news of Kṛṣṇa acting as His divine potency on this Earth! Meeting You was for us the same as meeting God!

You made us hear about Kṛṣṇa in a way only possible for someone who knows Him directly. And not only Kṛṣṇa, your message includes the entire 'Advaya-Jñāna-Tattva' which includes Śrī Vṛndāvana Dhāma, Mathurā, Dvārakā, Nabadwip, Purī — all associates — and everything in existence! The result of any person being touched by you whether past, present, or future, is that they become fully spiritualized.

You wrote in one purport:

"Those who are actually great souls have surrendered to the internal potency of the Lord and can similarly connect others to the internal pleasure-giving potency."

It has been many days since you left this earthly plane, but we feel your presence tangibly in the living sound you established everywhere.

It is easy to enumerate your accomplishments in this world, but the indebtedness I feel for the ever-expanding fortune of having you as my spiritual master is what I wish I could express.

It has been nearly 50 years since you accepted me as your disciple. My desire to develop real tolerance and humility and chant the pure holy name is increasing, though still so far away!

Not only did you spend every second giving Kṛṣṇa with each of your actions, lectures, interviews, morning walks, and books,

but another treasure you gave is your *bhajan* recordings of prayers written by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur, Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākur and other Vaiṣṇava saints.

These songs are accessible through your heart-rending chanting — often accompanied by an explanation that carries the listener directly into the presence of the author.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, your explanations are so simple, free of complexity, and deeply appealing to the heart, that anyone who gives even a little attention can be swiftly taken from illusion's grip — and not just for the time being — but permanently!

You assured us that although in this world so many promises may be given that later on prove to be false — *nitāiyer caraṇa satya, tāhāra sevaka nitya* — the lotus feet of Nityānanda Prabhu are SATYA and will never prove to be false! Similarly Śrīla Prabhupāda, we experience that everything you ever told us has proven to be *satya* — TRUTH — while everything that our temporary minds and worldly influences ever proposed have all proven to be false to the fullest extent!

You gave access to the ever-expanding ocean of happiness via the sweet chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra — *ānandāmbudhi-vardhanaṁ prati-padaṁ pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanaṁ sarvātma-snapanam* — As long as we adhere to that with our sincere body, mind, and words, we will find ourselves firmly connected with your lotus feet!

You are the perfect spiritual master and the perfect disciple as well. Everything you taught was by your own example. My prayer is to somehow become a fit disciple of you.

It is completely unnatural for a nitya kṛṣṇa dāsa to remain in the service of māyā. By only one drop of your grace, this eternal servitor may be rescued from the jackals of māyā — free to serve forever in *anugatya* of the beloved eternal associates of the Lion among gopas.

gurudeva! kṛpā-bindu diyā
I pray for this mercy!

Your unqualified but eager disciple,

Tāmra Dāsī
Initiation: 1977, February—Seattle, USA

Jaya Śrī Śrī Nityānanda Gauracandra!

Dearmost Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humblest obeisance at your lotus feet.

I pray for your merciful attention to continue to move me to the beautiful clarity you have dedicated your life to demonstrating for all fallen souls such as me, the divine news in your books and every word and move you made. It allows the big move from resistance to surrender—for us here caught in Māyā's Station. For the heavy training needed by us against our separatist position against reality the beautiful Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in order for us to smoothly progress towards natural devotion for the Divine Realm.

You have clearly shown that we in the physical world of karmic action and reaction have appeared here because of underlying envy of the position of God. Especially those who do not want to accept and worship God are, to some degree, of the envious quality who cannot abide any other than himself or herself to be God…or Number One! It is the "I-Me-Mine" emphasis at work…the great delusion that keeps us all down.

Not only have you shown us this, but you have mercifully shown an open heart as our place to reside in, to be corrected toward sweet devotional surrender!

For otherwise we end up here in Māyā's prison-house of the physical world of endless saṁsāra, the repetition of birth, disease, old age and death, continuously acquiring the five main material destructive qualities that misguide our free will.

But with the unlimited gift of personal grace with which you have so wonderfully inspired us, along with the topmost manifest joy of practice, such as honoring prasādam; reading and studying your translations of the eternal Vedic records of perfect divine knowledge; the joys of chanting japa of the Lord's holy names, and offering divine kīrtana for the Lord's pleasure. As well as the bliss of association with many other souls also thus becoming perfected, you have brought us the means to overcome the misfortune of our acquired destructive qualities.

I list here below the main qualities gained—with difficulties overcome:

Patience (dissolving anger);
Humility (rather than pride);
Generosity (dispelling envy);
Temperance (diffusing greed);
Clarity (cancelling delusion).

And it is certainly noted that our gratitude for your descendance into our midst, by the order of your divine Śrī Guru, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, for our rescue. No words are adequate to express the glory of your divine service to him, from which such benefit will eternally manifest for mankind.

By your grace, at 85 I have begun to love and thrive...

All glories to Your Divine Grace! Hare Kṛṣṇa!!!!

Your heartily-grateful disciple,

Karuṇākṣī Dāsī
Initiation: 1977, February—Seattle, USA
Current location: Oakland CA (at present) / Vṛndāvana, India
Contact: msdidimaa@yahoo.com

Kilimbā Dāsī

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

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

To my beloved eternal spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

All the abiding fortune in my life is via your mercy.

All the substance of the hopes and dreams of my eternal soul are percolated through the absolute good of your compassion. Via your sacrifice of having taken that sea voyage to reach America's Eastern shore with your beloved guru mahārāja's order to you from the 1930s … to spread these teachings throughout the English speaking world tucked into the core of your heart. Powerfully propelling you forward into the so-called unknown, where your sacrifice was actually being held, protected, supported and granted all-success by Lord Krishna, who is the Source of all of us.

Your strong faith in your guru mahārāja's order has become

the powerful wind in the sails that now propels all the souls whose hearts you touched and transformed throughout your 12 miraculous years of fearlessly and valiantly spreading Krishna consciousness throughout the entire world.

To have been allowed to have your darshan in the 10th year of this magnificent marathon is the root of my own greatest wealth! My mother and sister will both agree with this statement for themselves, without a doubt.

You are present in my heart and in my life every day as myself and several others gather to read and hear your magnum opus essence of preaching Lord Chaitanya's message in the form of the great work you dictated and completed on November 10, 1974 in Bombay, India.

We cling to *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* like our lives depend on it and are astonished by all the gems we find, no matter how many times we've read through this great work. Your mercy is the life of our lives.

I offer humble obeisances to your lotus feet with all limbs and heart, falling flat in gratitude. I pray to you to somehow reciprocate your gifts with this life you have so greatly blessed and in all future lives! May you be happy and may you be pleased to bestow the blessing of pure loving devotional service upon me, and upon all of those who were touched by your divine mercy as well as all those who will continue to come into contact with your ever-living, merciful presence.

* The intention this time around reading *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is Investment in my mother's especially focused remembrance at this late stage of her life and as an offering to you in reciprocation for your having given us this opportunity.

Your eternal servant in aspiration of Śrī Rādhā Dāsyam,

Kilimbā Dāsī
Initiation: 1977, February—Seattle, USA
Current location: Oakland, California, USA
Contact: kilimba@gmail.com

Manohāriṇī Devī Dāsī

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

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

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I often wonder, how have I been fortunate enough to receive your mercy? You came to pluck us from the jaws of this material world. You armed us with all we need to win this battle by chanting the mahā-mantra:

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Expertly, you so scholarly translated and explained the Vedic scriptures for the benefit of the entire world.

You have reminded us of who we really are…not this temporary body, but the eternal soul within, part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. Still, I struggle, but I am forever indebted to you and your guidance.

Daily we are seeing the advancement of Kali-yuga upon us. So much occurring in this world that not long ago felt unimaginable. We are reminded to hold fast to your instructions of following the regulative principles, chanting the mahā-mantra daily, and offering service to the Lord.

Gurudeva, I will always endeavor to thank you for the merciful gifts you have given to this fallen soul.

Aspiring to be your servant,

Manohāriṇī Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1977, March—Chicago, USA
Current location: Ontario, Canada

Śyāmasundara Dāsa (1977, Māyāpur)

My dear, most revered and beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda. Please accept my prostrated obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace.

Today, on the auspicious occasion of your 130th appearance day, I want to meditate on your mystic powers.

After reading your edition of the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* and *Kṛṣṇa Book,* I sincerely prayed to Lord Kṛṣṇa every morning and evening to please send me a guru. I didn't know who you were. I just knew from your books that I needed a guru.

As we read in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, it is by Kṛṣṇa's mercy that we get a guru who then brings us to Kṛṣṇa.

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

According to their karma, all living entities are wandering throughout the entire universe. Some of them are being elevated to the upper planetary systems, and some are going down into the lower planetary systems. Out of many millions of wandering living entities, one who is very fortunate gets an opportunity to associate with a bona fide spiritual master by the grace of Kṛṣṇa. By the mercy of both Kṛṣṇa and the spiritual master, such a person receives the seed of the creeper of devotional service. (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta 2.19.151).

After a few weeks of fervently praying like this, Lord Kṛṣṇa sent some devotees, and I immediately surrendered and joined their traveling party. However, because I joined late in your manifest pastimes, I had minimal physical association with you. In 1977, at the Gaura Purnima festival, I saw you from a distance coming down the stairs from your quarters. And another time, I sat at the back while you gave a class on the pastimes of Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva. The closest I ever got was once in Juhu in April 1977, when you came down from your newly constructed quarters into the foyer to have an impromptu guru-puja of sorts. Many devotees were chanting your glories and throwing jasmine flowers. You walked past me without apparently even seeing me (it was crowded). I bowed down and picked up some of the jasmine flowers you had stepped on, touching them to my head. The image is etched in my mind as it is the closest I ever got. But considering that some of my god-siblings didn't even get that much, I deem myself fortunate.

Though I had little physical association, our relationship was spiritually sealed when you accepted me as your disciple. This was absolutely the most important thing to me. Because even though I was extremely ill and weak, I mustered whatever strength I had to attend the initiation ceremony and focused my mind on not passing out and remaining upright. There was no way that I was going to miss it. I was ecstatic to find out that I had been given the name "Śyāmasundara Dāsa," the name I wanted.

Sadly, only six weeks after I received the second initiation on Oct 2, 1977, you left our physical presence. After that, I only had

the possibility to associate with you through your books, recordings, videos, and remembrances of godsiblings.

But I wonder how it is that I perceive some spiritual progress despite my conditioning? How is it that I get realizations? By whose mercy is that? How is it that my attachment to you has grown? How is it that I feel your presence in my life, guiding and protecting me?

On the night of December 24, 1994, I was reading Hari-śauri Prabhu's wonderful book *Transcendental Diary*; I was feeling very sorry for myself that I was not able to get your association like Hari-śauri and Harikeśa Prabhus. I wondered what offense I had committed in a previous life to be deprived of your association, and I cried myself to sleep. That night I had a wonderful dream where I was standing next to you in Vṛndāvana, fanning you while you sat. You motioned to me, and when I leaned over, you kissed me on the cheek like a grandfather would kiss a small child! I was immediately shocked into wakefulness, and I then realized that I should not lament about not getting any material association with you because you were always present and lovingly watching over me and all of your 5000 disciples like a grandfather.

Externally, you appear like one of us, but by your remarkable activities, we understand that you are not of this world. You seem to be an uttama-adhikārī playing the role of a madhyama-adhikārī. But exactly who you are, I don't know.

You sometimes casually mentioned that you could see great sages like Nārada Muni and remarked how they were laughing at seeing yavanas chant the holy name. And when asked by a young disciple, "Can you see Kṛṣṇa?" You responded, "at every moment."

There are many "gurus" but few are uttama-adhikārīs who can see Kṛṣṇa eye to eye.

As a mahābhāgavata, you are a mukta—a liberated soul—with many powers as explained in the *Vedānta Sūtras* (4.4). Your potency is almost on the level of Kṛṣṇa's, except that you cannot create or destroy universes. The difference is that Kṛṣṇa is independent, whereas you are dependent on Kṛṣṇa.

One of the special powers mentioned that you, as a mukta, possess is that of omniscience, *Vedānta Sūtras* (4.4.15). Like a lamp, which though located in one place, is able to pervade the whole room, similarly, your consciousness pervades everywhere, and you are aware of all things. Thus, you are omniscient like Nārada Muni:

tvaṁ paryaṭann arka iva tri-lokīm

antaś-caro vāyur ivātma-sākṣī
parāvare brahmaṇi dharmato vrataiḥ
snātasya me nyūnam alaṁ vicakṣva

Like the sun, Your Goodness can travel everywhere in the three worlds, and like the air you can penetrate the internal region of everyone. As such, you are as good as the all-pervasive Supersoul. Please, therefore, find out the deficiency in me, despite my being absorbed in transcendence under disciplinary regulations and vows. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.7)

Though I had little physical saṅga, you are still able to guide me because, unlike other "gurus," you are an omniscient liberated soul. When Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura sings *divya jñāna hṛde prakāśito,* he is echoing the Vedāntic truths.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, awareness of these mystic glories of yours gives me strength and courage in a fearful world, knowing that you are always with me. I pray that you will always be merciful to me. But, I know that I am broken and severely materially conditioned and that my heart is filled with anarthas even at such an advanced age. So it is embarrassing to know that you can clearly see all the dirt in my heart. Still, I pray that you will save me. What other hope do I have? I pray that you accept and are happy with whatever meager service that I can perform, which is becoming even less with age. And I pray that you never kick me away from your feet and forgive all my offences. But most of all, I pray that you cure me of my material disease so that I can again be in my rightful spiritual position and have your blessed association in full.

As I mature in the realizations of the misery of this world, I am terrified of taking birth again, but I am still bewildered by Kṛṣṇa's māyā, so I ardently pray that you protect me from māyā and lead me by the hand back to Goloka and the Lord's eternal pastimes.

Completely dependent on your mercy, your eternal servant,

Śyāmasundara Dāsa (Jyotiṣa śāstrī)
Initiation: 1977, March—Māyāpur, India

Nṛsiṁha Dāsa

All glories to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga

oṁ ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākaya
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ
tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṃ jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ

One must approach a bona fide guru and ask proper questions with respect, using the discrimination God has given us to accept or refine our understanding of those answers. Once accepted, then comes sevayā, or service.

The acceptance of a guru is a very serious matter that must be pondered with both intelligence and the heart, for that relationship is eternal and should never be changed whimsically.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, from the moment I read your books, heard your voice, and witnessed your acts, I was completely sure that you came from the spiritual world. I wanted to serve you in any way possible. That feeling has not changed over the years; indeed, now in my old age and with my health declining, it is stronger than ever.

Please bless me so that I may remember your lotus feet at the time of my passing and never forget my *sevā*.

Your unworthy disciple,

Nṛsiṁha Dāsa
Initiation: 1977, March—Caracas, Venezuela
Current location: Pamplona, Norte de Santander, Colombia
Contact: lafundacion108@gmail.com

Aṅkottha Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

As stated by Mahārāja Yudhiṣṭhira to Vidura in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.13.10:

bhavad-vidhā bhāgavatās
tīrtha-bhūtāḥ svayaṁ vibho
tīrthī-kurvanti tīrthāni
svāntaḥ-sthena gadābhṛtā

"Saints of your caliber are themselves places of pilgrimage. Because of their purity, they are constant companions of the Lord, and therefore they can purify even the places of pilgrimage."

By your great and wonderful mercy, at an advanced age of 70 years, you left Śrī Vṛndāvana dhāma to fulfill your guru mahārāja's order and ventured out to the 'western speaking countries' to disseminate the transcendental science of devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Krishna.

On the Jaladuta, you not only carried many sets of the first canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, that you had laboured so hard to publish practically single-handedly, but you also carried your beloved Iṣṭa-deva, Śrī Krishna directly in your heart.

This was the first time in recorded history of the modern world that the person Bhāgavata and the book Bhāgavata had together made their way from the confines of India to the shores of America.

Thus began the great "tīrthafication" of the known world. At astounding speed, but with complete deliberation, you made your way around the globe 14 times in 12 short years. Everywhere you went, along with your growing band of disciples, you banged the brhad-mṛdaṅga and celebrated the great festival of loving service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Krishna and Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi. The waves of unprecedented ecstatic bliss that flowed from these festivals astounded and mesmerised the inhabitants of the countries of the six continents.

From highly placed dignitaries to common working class folk, you gave freely your transcendental teachings and saving grace. Everywhere, all living beings felt your purifying presence knowingly or unknowingly, so intense was your desire to benedict the world.

So many decades have passed since your manifest pastimes but the wave of love and compassion that you unleashed is still circling the globe – thousands upon thousands of your disciples, grand-disciples and even disciples of grand-disciples are unceasingly still manifesting the great festivals of devotional service so

dear to your heart.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, for years now I have been trying to purify my heart so that it would be a proper place for your lotus feet. Today I beg, if you think that I am deserving, that you please bring your lotus feet into the core of my heart so that I may be forever situated as your servitor in the balming luster of your divine presence.

Your ever grateful servant,

Aṅkottha Dāsa
Initiation: 1977, March—London, UK
Current location: Kansas, USA
Contact: onkarankotthasandal@gmail.com

Jīva Pāvana Dāsa

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

In Vṛndāvana
In your rooms
At Rādhā Dāmodara
I took your *darśana*
I massaged your lotus foot
Chanting Gāyatrī
I sighed
Feeling your separation
I cried
Then felt your presence
Deep inside
I pray I remember this
When I die
May I fly
Into the embrace
Of Your Divine Grace
Forever yours
Jīva Pāvana Dāsa

Initiation: 1977, March—RDTSKP
Current location: UK
Contact: jivapavana@gmail.com

Tattva Darśinī Devī Dāsī

Hare Kṛṣṇa! Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have done so much for me and the entire world. I am forever grateful to you for saving me.

I was in search of a genuine, true guru and was so fortunate to find you.

I beg you to bless me to always remain at your lotus feet.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for saving me from continuous birth and death.

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

Your servant,

Tattva Darśinī Devī Dāsī.
Initiation: 1977, March—Trinidad
Contact: taratelemaque@gmail.com

Pañcagauḍa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

With gratitude and feelings of appreciation for your bravery, determination and faith in the words of your spiritual master that you crossed the Atlantic Ocean. You suffered several heart attacks, and courageously pioneered the spreading of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, first in America, considered to be the leaders of the Western world. I would be totally lost in the illusion of Māyā, with no clue of the purpose of life, just going here and there looking for answers. By your causeless mercy you have brought the treasure house of bhakti — the chanting of the Lord's holy names, His words; Bhagavad-gītā As It Is, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, *The Nectar of Devotion, Kṛṣṇa Book* and the *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. You personally made them available to us in English so that we can have an idea what is the purpose and goal of life.

After wandering up and down this universe, from higher and lower planets, transmigrating from aquatics, plants, beasts, and so many varieties of life. We finally received the human form of life... the only means to understand the importance of finding a bona fide spiritual master, a pure devotee of the Lord, who so mercifully accepted me and engaged me in Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* mission of Harināma, chanting the holy names and distributing transcendental literature for the benefit of the fallen conditioned souls. Your tolerance, and love for the suffering of others is the symptom of a loving pure devotee.

Thank you again for giving me my eternal life back, looking forward to serving you and hearing the nectar of Bhakti in the association of your ecstatic devotees. You made a home that everyone can live in and serve Kṛṣṇa together, the real eternal family. I can't thank you enough, and I pray that you continue sending your blessings so that we can carry on serving you forever...

Your fallen servant,

Pañcagauḍa Dāsa
Initiation: 1977, March—Miami, Florida, USA

Matsya Avatār Dāsa

My most dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

All glories to Your Divine Grace.

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

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

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

On this most sacred day of your Vyāsa-pūjā, when the hearts of your disciples gather to offer you their heartfelt gratitude, I feel moved to return in memory to the time when I had not yet come to know your holy name.

I was searching for authenticity, yet I did not truly know what I

was seeking. I had success, recognition, and all necessary facilities; and yet, within myself, I felt out of place. The world was offering me a position, but my consciousness could not find its true shelter there.

I was not distant from spiritual life out of superficiality, but out of a deep need for truth. I did not wish to accept something merely by tradition, nor to follow out of emotional necessity. I was longing for something that could sustain my entire existence.

By your causeless mercy, meeting you gave an answer to that silent restlessness.

Through your divine teachings I have come to understand that consciousness is not a by-product of matter, but its very light; that identity is not a social construct, but an eternal relationship with Śrī Krishna; that whatever abilities we have are not our property, but instruments meant for your service.

All that I had learned in my profession — the ability to design, to communicate, to organize — has found its true perfection in your service. What once nourished my personal affirmation has become an instrument of your mission.

In the early years, I learned to harmonize family life with the practice of bhakti; in the years that followed, I was able to dedicate my energies to assisting — according to my capacity — in the dissemination of the message that you have brought to the world with such sacrifice and compassion.

If today I can speak of the rasa of bhakti, it is only because you have taught me how to approach it — not as a mere emotion, but as a living and responsible relationship in devotional service.

Looking back upon my past, I can now understand that even my skepticism, my success, and even my dissatisfaction were — without my knowing it — arrangements leading me to your lotus feet.

Therefore, on this Vyāsa-pūjā day, I do not thank you only for what you have taught me, but for what you have transformed within my heart.

I humbly pray that you may kindly allow me to continue to serve you, with a clearer mind, a more humble heart, and an ever purer intention.

Your grateful servant,

Matsya Avatār Dāsa
Initiation: 1977, May—Rome, Italy

nama oṁ 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,

Thank you for showing us the escape route from this labyrinth of the material world. In Bhagavad-gītā 15.1, this illusory world is compared to an enormous upside down banyan tree. Like a tree reflected in water, it is a perverted reflection of the real, spiritual world. Once entangled in this bewildering tree, we wander from branch to branch engaging in fruitive activity experiencing attachment and aversion that propel us ever deeper into suffering. We continuously look forward to achieving some kind of satisfaction, but are led more and more deeply into a dark, tangled path of frustration and distraction from that which would bring real contentment. While here, we are subjected to a constant supply of propaganda encouraging us to identify with this or that material desire, designation or belief. This material vision encourages us to see other living entities as either objects for our exploitation or else as enemies to be cut down.

In recent years, the internet of all things has increased this propaganda to the nth degree. It has become almost impossible to know if anything we see or hear is 'true' or not. In each new world drama we find ourselves in, we believe that this conflict is the 'all & all', forgetting that it is the very nature of this prison. In a world of demon fighting demon, the media constantly encourages us to take sides with one prisoner or another.

How fortunate that you have given us another perspective. You are a fully realized servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa and truly have equal vision. You have compassion for every participant in the drama. You see our spot life here as a blip in eternal time. You see how every suffering or moment of relief is part of a potentially endless chain of karma. You not only have this perfect vision, but are fully empowered to give effective directions out of this mess.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are that rare and expert guide who has been sent to this dark place to take our hand and guide us to the

light. You teach us that the ultimate purpose of the Vedas is to cut down this upside down tree with the sword of detachment and knowledge. You teach us not only how to follow rules and regulations of bhakti, but to serve Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa with love. You teach us just how to become attached to Them. You give any sincere soul an opportunity to chant Their sweet holy names joyfully. That is the excellent & true way to return to reality.

May we always remember your kindness and brave sacrifice. May we always remember with gratitude that without you, we would be lost.

Your forever grateful servant,

Gopīmātā Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1977, July—London, UK

Nanda Kumār Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

Please accept my humble obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace on this most auspicious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā.

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

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

"What a night that was! What a night of dancing, singing and festivity. Love was the conductor, love was the music and love filled everyone's heart. Love made Kṛṣṇa dance and love made the gopīs sing. Love was the language of the lovers, and love pervaded Vṛndāvana. Time seemed to stand still — a night of Brahma had passed, but it was now over".

When a musical recital is complete, the silence is deafening. When a festival of love comes to an end, what remains?

The everfresh dance of divine love remains forever etched in the hearts of those swan-like devotees who float on the waves of the ocean of ecstatic love, tasting nectar as they drink the vision of the golden and blue lotuses.

Thank you for this gift of love as an offering which is the opulence of your heart reflecting the golden lustre of the all-compassionate empress of ecstatic emotions. Śrī Rādhikā, whose beauty is but a hint of her spotless love. Who is the worshipper of Sri Hari, the emperor of the mellows of love but who agrees to accept service from Him only for His pleasure.

Your writings which are pregnant with meaning reveal your heart wounded by the arrow of separation. Your books break the shackles of time and we get a glimpse into your heart, speaking clearly and silently to us the message across millennia as you fulfill the plea of the Empress of Devotion and the promise of her Beloved.

I pray that I will always be protected by the dust of your lotus carried by the fragrant wind of your mercy.

Your lowly servant

Nanda Kumār Dāsa
Initiation: 1977, September—Durban, South Africa
Contact: nandakumaragtsp@gmail.com

Prahlāda Bhakta Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

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

The Butterfly Effect and me.

After all these years I am still here and to date am chanting 51 rounds per day. This is due to the fact that over the past several years when someone I know is in difficulty, such as sickness, stress, exams, etc., I say, ''I will chant an extra round for you''. And once that round has been added to the existing tally, I can't delete it. And it feels good, being a devotee, when things could have been so different.

So different, if you had not agreed to Narendra Mallick's suggestion to visit Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Mahārāja.

So different, if Howard Wheeler and Keith Ham had not happened to be on the same sidewalk as you.

So different, if someone had not taken all the prized possessions from my overland trip to Australia, but left a pair of *karatālas* and *The Nectar of Devotion* there instead.

So different, if Graham had not suggested that we hitchhike up the coast to where Sabhapati prabhu and his bus crew were holding a beach programme.

So different, that having been dumped off at the Melbourne temple with my broken leg encased in plaster of Paris, I couldn't get away.

So different, if they hadn't put me on the graveyard shift for the 24 hour kīrtana for you.

And so different that for some reason I started crying whilst chanting your name.

If that butterfly had not flapped its wings I shudder to think what might have happened to me instead…Or was it all Kṛṣṇa's arrangement?

Eternally appreciative and grateful.

Your servant

Prahlāda Bhakta Dāsa
Initiation: 1977, September—Sydney, Australia
Current location: Ireland
Contact: murphypjb@gmail.com

Dhīra Dāsa

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to you on the auspicious day of your transcendental appearance to deliver all of us fallen, conditioned souls, who are suffering the miseries of this material world. Thank you for coming here as the emissary of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to give us the ecstatic process of Krishna Consciousness; *nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe.*

You will be pleased to know that since your departure, Krishna consciousness has expanded all over the world, in spite of so many problems and disagreements, symptomatic of this dark age, Kali-yuga. So many Festivals of the Holy Name, with devotees joining this movement all over the world. ISKCON devotees have tried very hard to carry on your legacy; opening centers, distributing books, writing new books in *paramparā*, preaching Krishna consciousness far and wide across the globe. Although we have so many faults, your purity and strength of purpose cannot be impeded, by the

transcendental mercy of Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

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

"Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of the Vedic knowledge automatically revealed." (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.23) You demonstrated this faith in the order of your spiritual master by coming to this western world with full confidence in the mercy of Krishna to carry you through.

Although I am patently unqualified, I pray for this level of faith and love in devotional service by your divine grace. Please forgive my unfettered inadequacy and bless me to actually do what you desire with the remaining portion of this tiny life. Thank you for being the most important person in my life, who gave us all this greatest gift, Krishna consciousness. I am unlimitedly grateful for the opportunity to have served you in some small capacity and pray to continue with that service, life after life. Hare Krishna!

I beg to remain,
Your insignificant servant,

Dhīra Dāsa
Initiation: 1977, September—Washington, USA

Krishna Nāmānanda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, the years are passing faster and faster, rapidly moving away from the time when you were on this planet. Wherever you are now, you have remained with us in our memories, your books, your instructions. Your coming to this world has become a compass for subsequent generations of spiritual seekers for the next millennia.

You were a messenger from the Spiritual World, nitya-siddha, and you carried the mission of spreading the message of Lord Chaitanya

– *yāre dekha, tāre kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa*. And you were successful!

You have widely and generously spread the message of the Lord to all, indiscriminately showering your mercy on all who were willing to accept it.

We were very lucky to meet you, and even more lucky to follow you. You have made us human, given us a chance to fulfill the mission of human life – to restore our forgotten relationship with the Lord.

Our generation is already heading towards sunset. Your senior disciples are gradually embarking on a further journey to meet you and Krishna. There is an inevitable generational change. But whatever we try to do for you in this life, being young, will stay with us.

You have built a home for all sincere souls. The Hare Krishna Movement that you started continues to grow and develop. And it is up to your followers to carefully and lovingly cultivate what we have already received.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, all I can do is chant the holy names and never let go of your lotus feet, remaining your faithful follower!

Your disciple,

Krishna Nāmānanda Dāsa
Initiation: 1977, September—Māyāpur, India

Amṛtāṁśa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

Kṛṣṇa directed me to you as He had been showing me so many signs of His existence. But I never knew God could be Kṛṣṇa! What a relief! Not an old man with a gray beard, but a *nava yauvanaṁ ca* spirited young man.

As a devoted Catholic altar boy and attending all Catholic schools, even an all boys High School, Kṛṣṇa's presence was always felt. As a three year old child I even had an "imaginary" friend I called 'Crocky'. Someone told me recently that I was in touch with Paramātmā. I was always the good kid and by the grace and mercy of Kṛṣṇa, I was directed to you.

As a child, many hours of contemplation in solitude forced me to see Kṛṣṇa everywhere. The magic of Kṛṣṇa's external energy flabbergasted me. I knew that it was God behind everything but

knew nothing about 'God'.

Then after traveling outside of my small hometown, I met your disciples in New York City. They were riding in an open cart giving out burfi. I have a sweet tooth so I was excited for my first taste of prasādam. Then, a short time after I saw a harināma party in Boston having a sit down bhajana in the park below the gold dome of the Massachusetts State House on Beacon Hill. I received a ticket for a free lunch at 72 Commonwealth Avenue. I went immediately and sat down on the floor. In front of me was a sheet of wax paper and brahmacārīs brought me the delicious lunch. One devotee sat near me talking in my ear that only my sub-conscious heard.

Then, I visited a childhood friend living in Boston from my residence in Eastham, Cape Cod. I met his roommate Larry Burroughs, a bhakta living outside the temple.

Larry and I were reading the same book at the time, "*Back to Eden*" by Jethro Kloss. We had breakfast together and shared food and philosophy. Larry spoke nicely about Kṛṣṇa. But that was my only interaction with him face-to-face. He was on his way to see Siddhaswarupa in Kauai so I missed him dearly. Although I never saw him again, Larry sent me audio tapes of *kīrtana*, a bag of Tulasī, and an abridged version of the 1972 *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Well, after reading the whole *Gītā* quickly, I was all in and wanted to join Larry in Kauai. Larry directed me to attend a Sunday Love Feast in Boston and then decide. I attended the feast and stayed overnight, rose early for *maṅgala ārati*, got sandalwood paste on my forehead and drove home.

Curious, I wanted to see if my local library in Westerly, R. I. had your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. Well they did!! In such a small town. I read the full version in one week. During that week my aunt died and brought into focus the reality of death, birth, old age and disease. Concluding the reading, I lay on my parents' living room floor and said, "Kṛṣṇa, I'm Yours. Do with me as you like."

So now I'm still loving you for accepting me as your disciple in such a prolific sampradāya. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have introduced me to not only Kṛṣṇa, but His glorious pastimes and devoted lovers.

I have recited by heart the whole *Brahma-saṁhitā* every day now since 1978; when I first started chanting the saṁhitā during the morning bathing of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Govinda, with my stalwart book distributor prabhus.

Your epic accomplishments, ie., temples, books, lectures, letters

and establishing pure Kṛṣṇa bhakti throughout the whole of Earth are evidence of your purity. Kṛṣṇa flowed through you. No one can compare to your spiritual strength and perseverance to spread the name of Kṛṣṇa. You have deposited a lifetime of reading and research for all of humanity to delve into to understand the purpose of human life. No other organization / religion is giving what you are giving.

The cream of all Vedic knowledge was unveiled to me — ignorant and curious to know the truth. What a BOON to be introduced to Kṛṣṇa! Wow, the inconceivable… this is the power of paramparā. Purity and no interpretation. You have my heart ETERNALLY, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

To be a part of the most revolutionary movement of all time is a responsibility I take very seriously. For in these times the demonic influences are frustrating humanity, and all I can do is continue to share Kṛṣṇa in a link, a photo, or a conversation.

I feel like a flower that wants all of humanity to smell my Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Like a time machine every time I mention Kṛṣṇa to someone they are being purified to once again love Kṛṣṇa. The power of the sound Kṛṣṇa breaks through the material illusion like an elephant stepping on an egg. Kṛṣṇa gave me the most pure Śrīla Prabhupāda as my guru. In this day of Brahmā to be given you as my guru is a gift that makes all of us the most lucky souls ever. When we step back and see the big picture of Mahā-Viṣṇu and the enormity of the spiritual and material worlds, one can only be humbled by such a gift, mercy and grace we have received.

Initiation: 1977, October—Boston, USA

Devadeva Dāsa

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda,

My mother, Tuṣṭī Devī, taught in Śrīla Prabhupāda's gurukula, and I am certain she has gone on to help more Kṛṣṇa conscious projects in another dimension. My mother encouraged me to render service to Śrīla Prabhupāda and his devotees.

Your servant,

Devadeva Dāsa
Initiation: 1977, October—Vṛndāvana, India

Krishna-kīrtana Devī Dāsī (1977, France)

Please accept my humble obéissance at your lotus feet and forgive my offenses in your Société.

I am grateful for your coming to Paris in 72 and calling us to join your international movement already established in France. We answered and accepted initiation in 77 only after saṅkīrtana in our capital city, traveling in our beautiful country, distributing your books to whomever we met.

We finally resumed our studies with BA in English and MA in French and could teach in your New Māyāpura gurukula, international school in Chatenois (Jura), nursery aux Rosiers near NM again and in French National Education for another 10 year as a certified professor in collèges (Riom, Loches and St. Pierre des Corps in the Loire Valley).

We are back to New Māyāpura after 49 yrs of *sevā* for your mission in France and India and beg for empowerment and blessings to go on practicing devotional service in the field of Education at New Māyāpura for our new Varṇāśrama College as you wanted it in all our rural communities in the world.

I remain your humble servant,

Krishna-kīrtana Devī Dāsī
Initiation: 1977, November—France
Current location: New Māyāpura, France
Contact: v.verrier108@gmail.com

Mahāpurāṇa Dāsa

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my most humble obeisances, all glories to you.

> O beloved spiritual master, you are always in the presence of the cowherd girl Rādhā, the daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu. Please award me service at your lotus feet, which are the proprietors of devotional service. Please place me in the ocean of joy by bestowing upon me happiness in the mellows of service at the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā in the groves of Vraja-Dhāma.

In the past year many of my bodily contemporaries have disappeared. Also many of my godsisters and godbrothers have left this realm. Please keep me engaged in your service in the present, in the hereafter and eternally!

Your eternal servant,

Mahāpurāṇa Dāsa
Initiation: 1977, November—New Orleans, USA
Current location: USA
Contact: mahapurana108@aol.com

Śārṅga Ṭhākur Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

When I bow down, the flood of your mercy rushes to my head, and I am overwhelmed by gratitude. How can I please you, my master, Your Divine Grace? You are conquering hearts and minds everywhere. Your books are time bombs of pure auspiciousness, exploding with transcendental fruitfulness in millions of homes around the world.

ISKCON is full of vitality and growth. From the time you were with us physically, the waves of your intention, purity, and potency, are continually spreading out in all directions; shock waves, that shatters the ignorance of anyone who comes within reach. You have given us the formula, the system, and the desire to resolve all internal disputes or ugliness.

Every limb of bhakti given to us by you has multiplied without limit, to soothe the burning temperament of people in general.

Prasādam helps us to assimilate your teachings and sustains us. Deity sevā gradually teaches us how to be personal and attentive to our very personal Lord. Your books and instructions ignite the fire of transcendental realization, that has us running door to door to share our good fortune. Indeed every book invites us to deepen our relationship with you and Krishna. Your temples are bases from which "we wage war on Māyā".

Your farms – exemplary in the matter of simple living and high thinking – show people how a self-sustaining project can be beneficial to the earth, and to our daily spiritual lives.

The sādhana you implanted in our hearts, and association of devotees you created keeps us strong and free from drifting, and fills us with purpose and determination. There are numerous branches of the culture you have imparted to us. Many schools have appeared and thrived, to fill a growing need to educate and mold our children into mature and compassionate Vaiṣṇavas, complete with the training necessary to navigate this world with spiritual vision and character. Your scientists are forging Krishna conscious links with the world of modern science, to raise their awareness of the origin and nature of life.

You have taught us how to be ideal gṛhasthas who can show others, that living by high principles based on śāstric knowledge, and the guru's example and teachings, is not only doable, but gives the best realization and joy. Our attraction to everything guru and Krishna, brings us ever closer eternally to serving your lotus feet, in whatever capacity you desire.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for saving us and giving us your shelter. May we forever serve you and your devotees.

Your humble servant,

Śārṅga Ṭhākur Dāsa
Initiation: 1977, September —Potomac, MD, USA

ALPHABETICAL INDEX

TRIBUTES BY SANNYASI DISCIPLES 5

Bhakti Caitanya Swami 67
Bhakti Gauravāṇī Goswami 43
Bhakti Rāghava Swami 85
Bhakti Vighna Vinasana Narasimha Swami 36
Bhaktimarga Swami 61
Bhaktivaibhava Swami 36
Bir Krishna Goswami 40

Candramauli Swami 59
Candraśekhara Swami 89

Danavir Goswami 24
Devamrita Swami 76
Dhaneśvara Dāsa Goswami 79
Dhanurdhara Swami 87
Dhīraśānta dāsa Goswami 47

Ganapati Swami 42
Giriraj Swami 22
Guru Prasad Swami 88

Hridayananda das Goswami 23

Jayādvaita Swami 12
Jayapatākā Swami 13

Kavicandra Swami 28
Krishna Kshetra Swami 48

Lokanath Swami 50

Mahādyuti Swami 77
Mahavishnu Swami 33
Mukunda Goswami 10

Nirañjana Swami 82

Pārtha Sārathi Das Goswami 58
Prahlādānanda Swami 16

Radhanath Swami 57
Ramāi Swami 68
Romapāda Swami 37

Śacīnandana Swami 26
Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami 10
Śivarāma Swami 62
Smita Krishna Swami 32
Subhag Swami 34

Umāpati Swami 7

Varṣāṇa Swami 70
Vedavyāsapriya Swami 91

TRIBUTES BY INITIATED DISCIPLES 93

Ādikartā Dāsa 284
Aditi Devī Dāsī 130
Aja Dāsa 251
Ali Kṛṣṇa Devī Dāsī 176
Amṛtāṁśa Dāsa 374
Ānandamaya Dāsa 304
Anīha Dāsa 318
Aṅkottha Dāsa 363

Anuttama Dāsa (1976, Vrindavan) 315
Ariṣṭahā Dāsa 228
Arjuna Dāsa (1973, LA) 201
Arjuna Dāsa (1976, Vrindavan) 323
Arundhatī Devī Dāsī 117
Atītaguṇa Dāsī 326
Ātmānanda Dāsa 159
Ātmārāma Dāsa 352
Ātmātma Dāsa 344

Baḍa Haridās 328
Bādarāyaṇa Dāsa 208
Balabhadra Bhaṭṭācārya Dāsa 244
Bhaja Govinda Devī Dāsī 334
Bhakta Dāsa 124
Bhavānanda Dāsa 118
Bhavatāriṇī Dāsī 168
Bhīma Dāsa 256
Bhṛgupati Dāsa 198
Bhūrijana Dāsa 113
Bhutiha Dāsa 314

Caitanya Svarūpa Dāsa 281
Cakrī Dāsa 333
Cathurbhuj Dāsa 120

Dayānanda Dāsa 100
Dayānidhi Dāsa 302
Devadeva Dāsa 376
Dhīra Dāsa 372
Divyāṅga Dāsa 227
Dravida Dāsa 224

Gaura Dāsa 330
Gaura Keśava Dāsa 341
Gauragopāla Dāsa 178
Gokulānanda Dāsa 169
Gopīmātā Devī Dāsī 369
Gopīśa Dāsa 264
Govardhan Dāsī 203

Haridāsa Dāsa 320
Havi Dāsa 220
Hṛmatī Dāsī 195
Hṛṣikeśānanda Dāsa 107

Īśvarīpati Dāsa 317

Jagadvīra Dāsa 263
Jagannātheśvarī Devī Dāsī 321
Jāgariṇī Devī Dāsī 199
Jagatām Dāsī 322
Janakarāja Dāsa 169
Jānakī Devī Dāsī 346
Janmanālaya Dāsa 181
Jaya Bhadrā Dāsī 221
Jaya Jagadīśa Dāsa 139
Jaya Mādhava Dāsa 335
Jayagurudeva Dāsa 339
Jitāmitra Devī Dāsī 162
Jīva Pāvana Dāsa 365

Kadamba Devī Dāsī 216
Kālakaṇṭha Dāsa 200
Kāñcanabālā Dāsī 109
Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu Dāsa 123
Karṇapūra Dāsa 296
Karuṇākṣī Dāsī 356
Kilimbā Dāsī 357
Krishna Nāmānanda Dāsa 373
Krishna-kīrtana Devī Dāsī (1977, France) 377
Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Dāsa 243
Kṛṣṇarūpa Devī Dāsī 249
Kṛṣṇāveśa Dāsī 229

Lalitā Devī Dāsī 261
Laṅgagaṇeśa Dāsa 245
Locanānanda Dāsa 127

Madhusevita Dāsa 226

Mahā Kartā Dāsa 258
Mahākāla Dāsa 289
Mahāmanā Dāsa 248
Mahāpurāṇa Dāsa 377
Mahāśinī Devī Dāsī 146
Mahatma Dāsa 126
Mahāviṣṇupriyā dāsī 307
Mālatī Devī Dāsī 95
Mañjuālī Devī Dāsī 166
Manohāriṇī Devī Dāsī 358
Matsya Avatār Dāsa 367
Medhāvī Dāsa 277
Meena Devī Dāsī 164
Miśra Bhagavān Dāsa 299
Mokṣalakṣmī Devī Dāsī 282
Mṛtyuhara Dāsa 273

Nāgapatnī Devī Dāsī 132
Nanda Kumār Dāsa 370
Nandapatnī Devī Dāsī 297
Narakāntaka Dāsa 310
Nārāyaṇī Devī Dāsī 144
Nartaka Gopāla dāsī 275
Nidrā Devī Dāsī 353
Nikuñjavāsinī Devī Dāsī 234
Nirantara Dāsa 233
Nṛsiṁha Dāsa 363

Pañcagauḍa Dāsa 366
Pañcharatna Dāsa 151
Paratpara Devī Dāsī 272
Pārtha Dāsa 218
Phalinī Devī Dāsī 259
Praghoṣa Dāsa 212
Prahlāda Bhakta Dāsa 371
Prassannātmā Dāsa 284
Pṛthu Dāsa 172
Pṛthuśravā Dāsa 213

Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Dāsa 194

Rādhāśyāma Dāsa 183
Rāghava Dāsa 217
Rāmānanda Dāsa 290
Ramyā Devī Dāsī 207
Rukmiṇī Devī Dāsī 114
Rukmiṇī Priyā Dāsī 211

Sākṣī Gopāla Dāsa 184
Samapriyā Devī Dāsī 293
Sandāminī Devī Dāsī 288
Saṅkarṣaṇa Dāsa Adhikārī 157
Śārṅga Ṭhākur Dāsa 378
Sarvadṛk Dāsa 219
Sarvamaṅgalā Devī Dāsī 134
Śatadhanya Dāsa 136
Satyarāja Dāsa 301
Śeṣa Dāsa 225
Somadās Dāsa 150
Śrīniketana Dāsa 306
Sukhadā Devī Dāsī 153
Sukhavāhā Dāsī 286
Śukla Dāsī 193
Sureśvara Dāsa 147
Svarūpa Dāsa 124
Śyāmasundara Dāsa (1977, Māyāpur) 359

Tāmra Dāsī 354
Tāraka Dāsa 265
Tattva Darśinī Devī Dāsī 366
Tattvavit Dāsa 240
Tīrthakāra Dāsa 303
Trivikrama Dāsa 120

Uttamā Dāsī 223

Vaikuṇṭhadeva Dāsa 336
Vaiṣṇavānanda Dāsa 174
Vaiyāsaki Dāsa 298
Vāmanadev Dāsa 112
Varāha Mūrti Dāsa 214

Varāharūpa Dāsa 351
Vimalā Dāsī 279
Viṣṇu Dāsa 142
Viṣṇugadā Dāsa 155
Viśvadevī Dāsī 171
Viśvatomukha Dāsa 252

Yādavendra Dāsa 237
Yogīndra Dāsa 349
Yogīndravandana Dāsa 192