Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

 nama oriṇ viṣṇu-pādāya krṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
 śrīmāte bhaktivedānta-svāmīn iti nāmine

 namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracārīne
 nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tārīne

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as time goes by I realize more and more how timeless are your teachings and example. You were certainly far ahead of your times, and, as the world constantly changes, the principles you mapped out for us continue to provide direction and light, despite the growing darkness of Kali-yuga.

Rather suddenly the world has woken up to an environmental crisis sown by decades of humankind’s untamed exploitation of the earth. You not only saw it coming, but you taught us how to avoid it, in ways both simple and profound.

My own experience was eye-opening. As a young brahmacārī I traveled to Māyāpur for the first time in 1976. I was given a service and told it was directly for you—personal service to my guru. The task was to go daily to the rooftop of ISKCON’s International Headquarters after mangala-ārati, at 5 a.m. I was to stand there patiently until I could just begin to see my hand in the pre-dawn light. At that first moment of visual clarity, I was to run from the top floor of the building down each flight of stairs, encircle each floor, and turn off each and every light as I passed by. You had previously scolded your disciples: Lights on meant Krṣṇa’s energy was being wasted! We were being offensive (“Demoniac!” you exclaimed over a similar misuse of resources) and thus disrespectful of the Lord and the natural gifts He gives us. It was serious. I was mandated to run, not walk, down those stairs.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please bless me that I will not misuse the gifts of Mother Earth. Please bless me that I will not waste this human form of life and the chance to awaken love for Lord Krṣṇa. Please bless me to always keep running to carry out your instructions.

Your aspiring servant,

Anuttama Dāsa

Badrinārāyaṇa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

 nama oriṇ viṣṇu-pādāya krṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
 śrīmāte bhaktivedānta-svāmīn iti nāmine

 namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracārīne
 nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tārīne

You once asked in a morning class: “Why does the potter knead the clay before forming it?” As we fumbled to find the right answer, you continued: “To get all the impurities out of the clay so that when the pot is fired it will not crack.”
You went on to explain that in the same way it is the duty of the spiritual master to train and test the disciple so that the student will not crack at the time of death. That “kneading process” comes via the instructions of the spiritual master and in the execution of his orders.

As a guest coming to the old Los Angeles temple, I heard you explain that any serious process contains yama and niyama, “do’s” and “do nots.” You then added, “And in our process, we have so many ‘do nots.’” At the time, I was disappointed, picturing an arduous path of repression. But as I grow older and gradually more malleable to the “kneading process,” the more I realize the value in each and every one of your instructions.

Starting with the most basic principle, how to become a civilized human being, you have laid out the clear path to happiness and fulfillment—in this life, in the next life, and ultimately for eternity. All we have to do to succeed is take up your instructions.

To define what it means to be civilized, you told a story about how Gandhi came to England for the “Round Table Discussions.” In order to impress him, his British hosts gave him a tour of London—Westminster Abbey, Buckingham Palace, Big Ben, Whitehall, etc. At the end, they asked him “So, Gandhiji, what do you think of Western civilization?”

Gandhi replied, “I think it would be a good idea.”

In other words, it was not simply the ability to stack up stones that made one cultured but rather a person’s character and a society’s ethos and aspirations that were the real measures of civilization.

Forty years ago, at Stanford University, psychiatrists devised a simple study to test the will power and self-control of children. They put four-year-old children, one at a time, in a small room with a plate of cookies. The professors told each child: “You have a choice here. You can eat one cookie now, or you can hold off and wait until I come back, and then I will give you two cookies.” In other words, the deal was: one now or two later. The unannounced wait time was fifteen minutes. The result was that less than 30% of the children were able to hold out.

The psychiatrists then tracked all the children as they grew into adulthood. They found that those who were able to control their urge to cave in and instead waited for the two cookies were far more likely to do well in school and go on to have successful careers, stable marriages, and better all-around physical and mental health.

What it took a forty-year study, conducted by some of the best brains in American academia, to realize (that happiness comes not from indulgence but by developing self-control) is simply a preliminary instruction of a bona fide spiritual master.

Recently a soldier visited the temple. He told me that he joined the army to get help with his college tuition. The nation was at peace at that time, so he figured, “Little risk and a cash reward at the end.” But from the start of his training he struggled with his drill sergeant, resisting the sergeant’s every instruction, and thus he was constantly being disciplined. Our young soldier was miserable. Then, with only two months of training left, the war with Iraq broke out. All of a sudden his risk became very real. The young man told me that it hit him like a flash of light: very soon he was going to be sent to the battlefield, where a determined enemy would be shooting real bullets at him. He realized that everything the drill sergeant had been trying to teach him was for the soldier’s own good. He understood that the sergeant’s instructions were not coming from a position of exploitation or personal motivation but were solely for the well-being of the soldiers being trained. Those instructions he had ignored and resisted were in fact the keys to his staying alive. With the soldier now armed with that new understanding, the relationship completely changed. He surrendered to the instructions of the drill sergeant, and the two became best of friends. (With proven benefits: our young soldier survived his tour of duty in Iraq.)

Cāṇḍakya Paṇḍita writes that if you give good instruction to a fool, he only becomes angry. I am a fool, so at times I still resist. Thank you for your patience and the occasional “mallet of your mercy” (as your Guru Mahārāja writes), and for giving us the means of lasting happiness: your invaluable instructions, both big and small.

Your insignificant servant,

Badrinārāyaṇ Dāsa
My dear lord and master Śrīla Prabhupāda,
   Please accept my humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet. All glories to you and your mission to save the world!

The longer I remain in your ISKCON movement, the more I marvel at your Krṣṇa consciousness and your unlimited mercy. What can someone like me say? You are on a different level than anyone else in so many ways, but the particular quality I have been meditating on recently is your compassion to the fallen, like myself.

Śāstra describes different symptoms of advancement, including the aṣṭa-sāttvika bhāvas, such as crying tears of ecstasy, standing of the hair on end, and so on, but for us I feel your quality of mercy and compassion is most outstanding.

In material life people are self-centered, and therefore their hearts are hard. They are not concerned with anyone other than themselves. But as a devotee advances, his heart becomes softer and the mood of mercy in preaching Krṣṇa consciousness manifests more and more. This we saw with you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

One may be able to imitate crying or other emotional symptoms, but that mercy cannot be consistently imitated for any length of time. It can only be there when the heart is purified and softened through advancement in devotional service, and that is what we saw in you.

On this sacred occasion I am praying at your feet that you will continue showering your mercy on this useless soul, as you have been doing for so many years.

Thank you for everything, Śrīla Prabhupāda. May your fame be spread all over the three worlds. You deserve it.


ty humble servant,

Bhakti Caitanya Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
   Please accept my most humble obeisances at the dust of your divine lotus feet.

On this most auspicious day I want to offer myself to you. Spiritual life begins with surrender to the representative of Krṣṇa. To me you are that personality. You are my spiritual master. You are my savior. You are my everything. Whatever I am today is simply due to your causeless mercy upon me.

Officially I surrendered myself to you a long time ago. However, with the passing of time I am realizing how far away I am from that basic requirement. Through initiation I promised to surrender myself to you; I took the vow to offer myself eternally at your lotus feet. However, instead of doing that I have simply enjoyed the wonderful arrangements you made for us in ISKCON. Today, on this auspicious day, upon realizing that mistake, I want to rectify it to perfect my existence.

You created ISKCON with a very specific purpose. Although you spread Krṣṇa consciousness all over
the world in just ten years time, you knew that the mission of spreading this movement to every town and village would not be accomplished in just one lifetime. Therefore, you saw the need to establish an institution that would continue your mission even after your disappearance from this planet. Your spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvati Ṭhākura, also perceived this need and created the Gauḍīya Maṭha. Unfortunately, that institution disintegrated after his disappearance, and as a result his preaching mission stopped. You revived that mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and fulfilled the dream of your spiritual master. Your ISKCON is the glorious institution that will spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world, to every town and village. That is why you were so concerned about its protection and safety. If ISKCON continues to thrive, the saṅkīrtaṇa movement will continue to spread.

Today I realized that to uphold the real purpose of ISKCON it is absolutely essential that we recognize it is your property, and that even after your apparent disappearance from this planet you are its sole proprietor and will continue to be so for thousands of years to come. Otherwise, ISKCON will become fragmented, just as the Gauḍīya Maṭha did after Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvati Thākura’s disappearance.

Today I became painfully aware how, instead of serving your ISKCON, I was actually enjoying its assets. I became so embarrassed to realize that after your disappearance I started to think that due to my advanced spiritual position and good fortune I inherited a part of your ISKCON and it is my natural right to enjoy its assets.

On this most auspicious day I fall at your lotus feet begging forgiveness for that offense. Please be merciful unto me and allow me to serve your mission without any personal interest. Please bless me that I can perfect my existence by becoming your servant by truly surrendering myself to your lotus feet.

Your most unqualified follower,

Bhakti Chāru Swami

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Bhaktimārga Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

\[
\text{nama oṁ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale} \\
\text{śrīmata bhaktivedānta-svāmīn nī nāmine}
\]

\[
\text{nāmasya te sārasvate deve gaura-vānī-pracārīne} \\
\text{nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-lārīne}
\]

The Incredible Master

Nobody has it like some of us do,
A master of which you’ll find very few,
With sharpness of wit and words he could whip
At science and pundits who distort by the lip.
With grace of hand and adjusting of head,
Elegant of gesture with fingers on bread,
He tossed each morsel of the edible n’ blessed
To the lotuslike mouth, and so with the rest.

A message like thunder, a definitive light—
For us dullards it comes magnanimously bright.
The topic of service in the line of devotion
That moves along like smooth locomotion.

With a smile that beamed ocean-wide,
Stretched out a distance from side to side,
He bore a reason to look way ahead
And never to hang low like a hopeless head.

His lesson pronounced a radical meekness,
Otherwise declare—admit to ultimate weakness.
Kindness, concern was his absolute trait,
His thrust was one to advance very straight.

In an unprecedented and very brief time
The earth shook at a political prime,
He racked up incredible marathon levels,
Giving a challenge to desires and devils.

In this world it’s rare to see anything lasting,
But his radiance shines even after his passing.
Memories are gathering, worthy to behold,
Never to be traded, nor to be sold.

A master so rare like a needle in hay.
A mahātmā who stays in sound—what more to say?
Drink up his words, observe his action,
Do as he did, or even just a fraction.

Bhaktimārga Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!
This year I am joining with my godbrothers and -sisters in offering you this homage written by Tuṣṭimohana-krṣṇa Dāsa.

Our very dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Dandavat-pranāmas unto your lotus feet. All glories to you and to your divine gurudeva, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvati Ṭhākura Prabhupada!

On behalf of my godbrothers and -sisters, I am writing a few words for your Vyāsa-pūjā celebration to express our deepest gratitude to Your Divine Grace for allowing your very dear and
intimate son Jayapatāka Swami to remain with us on this planet. After the severe stroke he suffered last October 23rd at ISKCON’s temple in Juhu, Mumbai, he could have left his transcendental body or remained in a vegetative state for the rest of his physical life. But instead, Your Divine Grace has heard all our prayers and performed a miracle, with the blessings of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Nṛsīnhadeva.

Now your dear son is recovering in record time, and his mind and intelligence have been well protected. We feel that Your Divine Grace may be so pleased with his seva that you want him to remain with us for a long time, serving your divine lotus feet for many years to come and inspiring more people around the world to take shelter of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.

Although I am not qualified to do so, please allow me to glorify Your Divine Grace in this simple homage.

In fact, we have no words to thank you enough for descending to this planet to save all of us and many more millions to come. Your Divine Grace has helped many people around the world, not only spiritually but even socially and economically, and in many other ways. We have seen many poor people join the society you founded and end up as rich and very skilled devotees. Many have joined in a sick state and gotten cured. Many were preached to in jail and, after embracing Kṛṣṇa consciousness, got freedom. Many joined as homeless people and got a home—and even built houses for others. Many joined illiterate and became well versed in śāstras and other topics. Many Indians have joined from lower castes and ended up as brahmānas, thus winning respect from all. By your mercy, today in India whoever has Vaiṣṇava tilaka on his forehead and wears a dhoti is offered respect as a member of your family and one of the followers of Śrī Caitanya-deva. Many joined depressed and frustrated and became happy and successful. Many joined as unknowns and became famous. Others joined after being disrespected by society and got all respect and even became sannyāsīs or gurus, with all opulences and service. These miracles we have seen all over the world. So how can we calculate your greatness?

Because of your preaching, many people have become less abusive toward Mother Earth, since Vaiṣṇavas don’t exploit nature with the destructive abandon shown by the materialists. Many people all over the world abuse Mother Earth with mines to get all kind of metals for unnecessary products. Devotees, following your divine instructions, avoid the abuse and misuse of nature’s resources. They are less offensive then others toward Mother Gaṅgā and other holy tīrthas. Thanks to you, devotees are eco-friendly and always willing to share their ideas in this regard with everyone.

Thanks to you, the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is being presented in a scientific way by the members of the Bhaktivedanta Institute, through publications for the scholars and academics. Many scholars from around the world join ISKCON and read your books. Many devotees join the universities and end up with PhDs; they are first-class scholars presenting Kṛṣṇa consciousness effectively in a scientific way.

Now we are going to have more higher educational institutes in our Society, and by your mercy Jayapatāka Swami has instructed me to contact the authorities of the Maharashtra Open University, which will start operating soon from Māyāpur dhāma for the benefit of devotees, and for your pleasure as well. I was very much inspired to see many young devotees in Mumbai and Pune take up Kṛṣṇa consciousness after completing their bachelor degrees and even graduate and postgraduate degrees. Some of them are now brahmacārīs in temples and doing devotional service at a high level. We can see how your movement is having a significant impact at the highest levels of society.

Your Divine Grace also deserves the best award for bringing peace to the world, even higher than the Nobel Peace Prize. Due to your teachings, all kinds of people have become nonviolent vegetarians. They and many others have been purified by the mass chanting of the holy names you have propagated so widely, especially during the Jagannātha Ratha-yāträ processions across the main cities of this planet. Thank you also for inspiring our spiritual master, your very dear servant Jayapatāka Swami, to take a main role in putting on these world festivals, including not only Ratha-yātrās but Deity installation festivals, prasādam distribution programs and others, where he leads many devotees in the chanting of the holy names and dancing for the pleasure of your divine Lord, Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu.
Thank you for giving him the service of helping to develop Śrī Māyāpur dhāma (the spiritual world on earth). Although much more has to be done, we are sure you are pleased by his seva, as Your Divine Grace once said, “If I would have had to do the seva of Jayapatāka, I would have done it as he did.” This really inspires us more and more.

Thank you again and again for keeping him alive and allowing him to become fit again to help oversee the construction of the very-much-awaited Temple of the Vedic Planetarium. We beg you to ask Lord Kṛṣṇa to arrange things so that the government will not obstruct its construction. We are sure that by your blessings our Guru Mahārāja, along with godbrothers of his like Ambarēña Prabhu and many other qualified Vaiṣṇavas and Vaiṣṇavis, will do their best in this service to Your Divine Grace.

Whatever Jayapatāka Swami is or has done is only by your mercy, support, and protection. We see you as the great protector of all your devotees. You told us that a grandfather loves his grandchildren more then the father does, so we know your love for us is greater than that of anyone else, and we thank you always for that. Please always bless us and remain above our heads, guiding us.

We beg your forgiveness and always seek your blessings. We pray as our Guru Mahārāja once instructed us recently—that Your Divine Grace will appear soon again to give us more guidance and enlightenment.

On behalf of His Holiness Jayapatāka Swami’s disciples, I, an unqualified servant of your servant’s servants, offer this homage to you.

(written by Tuṣṭi-mohana-kṛṣṇa Dāsa)

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Bhakti Puruṣottama Swami

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Bhaktivaibhava Swami

_nama oṁ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale_
_sṛimāte bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine_

_namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇi-prācārīṇe_
_nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādī-pāścātya-deśa-tārīṇe_

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

During my stay in Kerala (South India) this year, I met a doctor and scientist who wanted to test my knowledge of the _Vedas_. He challenged me by asking whether I knew the original four _Vedas_ (Sāma, Yajur, Atharva, and _Ṛg_). I began to quote in Sanskrit from the _Bhagavad-gītā_ that Lord Kṛṣṇa is to be known by the study of all the _Vedas_. He was not very impressed by my reply and retorted that the names Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu were not even mentioned in any of the original _Vedas_. By your grace I remembered and quoted in Sanskrit the following verse from the _Ṛg Veda_:

_oṁ tad viṣṇoḥ paramāṁ padam sadā_
_paśyanti sūrayo divāca ca kṣur ātataṁ_
_tad viprāśo vipānyavo jāgṛvāṃsah_
_samindhate viṣṇor yat paramāṁ padam_

---

Bhakti Puruṣottama Swami
“Just as the sun’s rays in the sky are extended to the mundane vision, so in the same way the supreme abode of Lord Viṣṇu can always be seen by the wise and learned devotees. Because those highly praiseworthy and spiritually awake brāhmaṇas are able to see the spiritual world, they are also able to reveal that supreme abode of Lord Viṣṇu.” (Ṛg Veda 1.22.20–21)

I told him that just in this verse alone the name of Lord Viṣṇu is mentioned twice. As his patient, I naturally had a very respectful attitude toward him, and he obviously didn’t want to alter that relationship, so he quickly changed the subject.

Another Indian gentleman, who had accompanied me on my visit to the doctor, asked me how I could possibly know this one particular verse from the Ṛg Veda. I replied that my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is the knower of the essence of all the Vedic scriptures, is training me. He asked me whether I had more such quotations, and I gladly referred him to your books.

When we travel in India or any other country in the world, Your Divine Grace has given us everything we need to always remain Kṛṣṇa conscious and defeat all those who are against the Supreme Lord and the true message of the Vedas. Kindly continue to bless our insignificant attempts to continue spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in whatever way is possible for us.

By your mercy the preaching in Mongolia is developing nicely. When the local devotees wanted to register our society there, the government officials told them they would have to build a temple before they could apply for registration. The only condition was that the design of the temple had to be similar to that of the Buddhist temples. Now the Mongolian devotees are in the process of buying the land, and a 3D model of the temple has been completed. I am sure that you would like the design. As Badrinārāyaṇ Prabhu recently commented when he saw the design, “Genghis Khan goes to Rajasthan.” Indirectly the government is forcing us to build a temple in Mongolia. This is possible only due to your unfathomable compassion for all the conditioned souls.

Your insignificant servant,

Avināśa Candra Bhaktivaibhava Swami

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Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my respectful obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you!

The day of Vyāsa-pūjā is the day of gratitude. Searching within my heart, I understand very clearly that I should be grateful to you for literally everything I have now. There is absolutely no aspect of my life that was not influenced by you or molded according to your instructions. You turned the very current of my life in a different direction; somehow or other you convinced me to stop my foolish attempts to find happiness in the place where it simply does not exist—a fact I somewhat realize only now, thirty years after the day when I made this decision. You changed my habits, my association, my desires, my thoughts, my dress, and even my tastes. You gave me the most precious gift—the sacred land of Bhārata, with her unique culture, and especially Māyāpur and Vṛndāvana, the replicas of the spiritual world on this earth. But still, despite having received from you all these amazing and precious gifts even without asking, today I want to thank you for two very special and distinct ones that I am learning to appreciate more and more.

There is a famous verse in Sanskrit:

\[ \text{saṁśāra-viśa-vṛkṣasya} \quad \text{due hy eva rasavat phale} \\
\text{kavyāṁrta-rasāsvādaḥ} \quad \text{saṅgamaḥ saj-janaḥ saha} \]
“On the poisonous tree of this world of repeated birth and death, there are only two tasty and sweet fruits: nectarean poetical compositions and the association with saintly people.”

As time goes by, I realize that it is these two things that I need the most to sustain my life. Somewhat stretching my imagination, I can think that, perhaps, on my own I would have found other things that you gave me. It is highly unlikely, but possible. I would never have found them in such a complete and wholesome form as that in which I received them from you, but still I might have found something. However, I know for sure that if it were not for you I would never have found or been able to appreciate Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam or the many saintly people who surround me today. Every day I try to go deeper and deeper into the words of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and find in this single book so many hidden treasures. I know for sure that this living book would never have revealed Himself to me if it were not for your mercy. And every day, with amazement and disbelief, I look around me and see how the saintliness revealed by you is manifesting in even simple devotees. Every day I learn from them by seeing their selflessness and dedication. Every day I hear and read about their amazing realizations and about the happiness they derive from their spiritual practices. Every day I taste their kindness and love. These simple devotees may not be great pundits or saints of the highest caliber, but still they are saj-janas, sincere sädhakas, and I know very well that I am totally dependent on them in my feeble attempt to serve the Lord. And I also know that these people are entirely your creation. You worked so hard to give us Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and to preach, and all these devotees are the fruits of your tireless endeavors. The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and the society of devotees, your ISKCON or, in the words of your Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvati Tḥākura, the Vaishnava-samāj, are two most glorious achievements of yours, matchless gifts that you gave the world. Yes, the vicious tree of this world gave me so many poisonous fruits, but these two, the most precious and nectarean ones, I could find only by your causeless mercy. Thank you for them, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Eternally indebted to you, I remain

The humble servant of your glorious servants,

Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami

The humble servant of your glorious servants,

Bhūrijana Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

nama ori viṣṇu-pādāya krṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine

namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vānī-pracārīne
nirviṣeṣa-sāṅyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tārīne

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you! May this fallen soul become a purified servant of your desires.

Recently, while reading your Caitanya-caritāmṛta, I noticed an astounding yet well-known sequence of verses. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, while speaking to Prakāśānanda Sarasvati in Vārāṇasi, relates His own spiritual master’s instructions to Him:

“The conclusion of all revealed scriptures is that one should awaken his dormant love of Godhead. You are greatly fortunate to have already done so. It is a characteristic of love of Godhead that by nature it induces transcendental symptoms in one’s body and makes one more and more
greedy to achieve the shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord.

“When one actually develops love of Godhead, he naturally sometimes cries, sometimes laughs, sometimes chants, and sometimes runs here and there just like a madman. Perspiration, trembling, standing on end of one’s bodily hairs, tears, faltering voice, fading complexion, madness, melancholy, patience, pride, joy, and humility—these are various natural symptoms of ecstatic love of Godhead, which causes a devotee to dance and float in an ocean of transcendental bliss while chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

“It is very good, my dear child, that You have attained the supreme goal of life by developing love of Godhead. Thus You have pleased me very much, and I am very much obliged to You. My dear child, continue dancing, chanting, and performing saṅkīrtana in association with devotees. Furthermore, go out and preach the value of chanting krṣṇa-nāma, for by this process You will be able to deliver all fallen souls.” [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 7.86–92]

Although these powerful words, kindly translated by you for the world from Bengali, are deep, instructive, and full of wonder, they were not the one’s that struck me. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu continued:

Saying this, My spiritual master taught Me a verse from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. It is the essence of all the Bhāgavatam’s instructions; therefore he recited this verse again and again. [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 7.93]

When I read this I became excited, for I wasn’t able to remember which specific verse had flowed from the mouth of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Which verse would He cite as the essence of the instructions of twelve cantos of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam?

I next read that verse, which Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī had extracted from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.40) and embedded in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta:

\[
\begin{align*}
evañ-urataḥ svā-priya-nāma-kīrtayā \\
jātānurūgo druta-cītta uccaśā \\
hasaty atha roditi rauti gāyaty \\
unmāda-van nṛtyati loka-bāhyāḥ
\end{align*}
\]

“When a person is actually advanced and takes pleasure in chanting the holy name of the Lord, who is very dear to him, he is agitated and loudly chants the holy name. He also laughs, cries, becomes agitated, and chants just like a madman, not caring for outsiders.”

Reading this, I was surprised and, in a way, disappointed. The verse described esoteric, advanced ecstasy, a state that seemed so far away. I had expected philosophy, or at least practical advice or instruction on how to advance. Nor had you written a purport to this verse (although you do comment on the entire section of verses in a later purport). I wondered how this one verse encapsulates the Bhāgavatam’s—“your” Bhāgavatam’s—essence?

I read more and thought further about the verse and about the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and its essence. The commentaries of our acāryas, as offered in the BBT’s purports to the Eleventh Canto and in other places, greatly helped.

Will that verse, Bhāgavatam 11.2.40, ever truly become attractive to me? Will I ever become attracted to the mature state of full Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that far-distant goal of all I have been doing for the past forty-one years? Will I ever become attracted to the ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa that naturally blossoms through offenselessly and ecstatically chanting Kṛṣṇa’s beloved holy names?

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for translating the Caitanya-caritāmṛta, for translating Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, for teaching me to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra and guiding and giving purpose to my life. Thank you for inspiring your servants to further translate the books and commentaries of the Gauḍīya Vaishnava acāryas. Thank you for giving me a service that, if I sincerely accept it, can fully absorb me in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Thank you for giving me hope.

And especially thank you for continuing to be so kind, tolerant, and forgiving to me, who once long ago made a small offering that you have never forgotten. I stand only on the platform of your continued mercy,
and that mercy is my hope. May I serve you today and forever onward with ever-increasing devotion.

Aspiring for your service,

Bhūrijana Dāsa

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Dear Śrila Prabhupāda,

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

You have made it apparent that the methodology for reaching the highest goal (kṛṣṇa-prema) is quite easy. One does not have to execute severe austerities, become an eloquent scholar, run to all the holy places, perform all the different sacrifices, etc. The only requirement is take shelter of the sound vibration that emanates from the mouth of pure devotees.

"My dear King Rahūgaṇa, unless one has the opportunity to smear his entire body with the dust of the lotus feet of great devotees, one cannot realize the Absolute Truth. One cannot realize the Absolute Truth simply by observing celibacy (brahmacarya), strictly following the rules and regulations of householder life, leaving home as a vānaprastha, accepting sannyāsa, or undergoing severe penances in winter by keeping oneself submerged in water or surrounding oneself in summer by fire and the scorching heat of the sun. There are many other processes to understand the Absolute Truth, but the Absolute Truth is only revealed to one who has attained the mercy of a great devotee." (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.12.12)

In the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we are so fortunate to have you present with us in sound vibration. As Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura states:

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

Modern technological devices have been devised by Kṛṣṇa to help us continue to associate with you twenty-four hours a day. We can listen to your talks and transcendental chanting and thus become just as much enlivened as when you were physically present before us. In fact, as we mature in devotional service, our appreciation of you grows with time.

When I read your books or listen to your classes and chanting, I feel as if I have been transported directly to Kṛṣṇaloka, and my enthusiasm to serve, preach, and chant increases exponentially.

Your Divine Grace comments in this regard:
The transcendental vibration from the mouth of a pure devotee is so powerful that it can revive the living entity’s memory of his eternal relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

[Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.20.25, purport]

Also, Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura tells us:

\[
golokera prema-dhana, \ hari-nama-sankirtana
\]

“The treasure of divine love in Goloka Vṛndāvana has descended as the congregational chanting of Lord Hari’s holy names.”

My prayer is that you will eternally engage in me in your service and eternally allow me to hear the transcendental sound emanating from your lotus mouth.

Mahārāja Prthu prays in the same way to the Lord:

My dear Lord, You are glorified by the selected verses uttered by great personalities. Such glorification of Your lotus feet is just like saffron particles. When the transcendental vibration from the mouths of great devotees carries the aroma of the saffron dust of Your lotus feet, the forgetful living entity gradually remembers his eternal relationship with You. Devotees thus gradually come to the right conclusion about the value of life. My dear Lord, I therefore do not need any other benediction but the opportunity to hear from the mouth of Your pure devotee.

[Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.20.25]

I am eternally grateful for the mercy you have shown me in allowing me to hear from you and serve you. Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, let this never end.

Your servant,

Bṛḥ Krishna dās Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet.

Near the beginning of the ISKCON years, a devotee wrote asking if you would have to return to this world to rescue wayward disciples, in their future births. Replying yes, you cautioned that a sincere disciple wouldn’t want the guru to have to do this; therefore we should “finish up our business in this lifetime.”

A few years later, another devotee, having heard his fellows assert that you would return to reclaim the lapsed, wrote you seeking confirmation. This time you replied, “I’m still thinking about it.”

Our rebirth due to spiritual negligence or laziness is one possibility; rebirth due to loving devotional service is another. Even in the ordinary world, we find cases of persons who longed to offer more than just the life they had in some kind of service, though mundane. For example, in the 18th century a famous American patriot, caught spying by the British army, recited as his last words, before the hangman’s noose snapped his neck: “I only regret that I have but one life to give my country.”

Recently, in the ISKCON world, a grhastha godbrother friend told me that after twenty years of a sometimes uphill marriage, his wife—peaceful and satisfied—paid him the ultimate compliment: “I wouldn’t mind being your wife again in my next life.”

Cakhu-dān dilo jei, janme janme prabhu sei. Śrīla Prabhupāda, how we would jump to take you again as our lord and master. Certainly we wouldn’t want that you return for laboring again to retrieve us
from material illusion. But if you thought it best purely for Kṛṣṇa’s service, then who would hesitate to take birth again—just to be with you wherever you might choose to descend? Allow me to submit my résumé. Instead of starting off as a greenhorn, this time I could assist your divine mission from my earli-est years as a seasoned ISKCON veteran.

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are such a paramount devotee of Kṛṣṇa and you care so intensely for your disciples and granddisciples; consequently, we all long to be your humble servitors life after life.

As the decades roll by, I’m amazed at the lessons of spiritual character and spiritual practicality your service instills. Yes, foresight is a precious commodity, whereas hindsight is quite cheap. Nevertheless, allow me to declare that if only I knew in my younger years what I know now, how much better my service to you could have been. And to think, still the horizon of bhakti looms ahead unlimitedly!

In the corporate world, they say, “Life begins at fifty” and “Weighty responsibility always gravitates to those with graying hairs.” If only I could have offered you, in this lifetime, youth coupled with wisdom. Why first one, and then the other? The younger years bubble with boundless enthusiasm and energy; the senior phase of life bestows maturity and insight. Oh, to give you the best of both youth and elderliness—at the same time! How wonderful it would have been, in a youthful body, to serve you with the sagacity of old age.

Outreach in the prison house of māyā can be so demanding of the present moment. The often thank-less task consumes all—both the young and the old, the green and the tested. But the taste of service at your lotus feet and the radiance of your care are so magnificent that indeed I must say, “My only regret is that I had just one period of youth in this lifetime to expend for your global mission.”

*Trying to be a real disciple,*

Devāmrita Swami

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**Giridhārī Swami**

**Aiming for the Eye of the Owl**

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Of the many thousands of verses you translated and commented upon, *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.41 is very special.

\[ vyavasāyātmikā buddhir ekeha kuru-nandana
bahu-sākhā hy anantās ca buddhayo vyavasāyinām \]

“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.”

During the 1950’s, before coming to the USA, while translating the *Bhagavad-gītā* you were struck in a very special way by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s commentary on this verse. You later told your disciples that this commentary fixed you in your resolve to follow Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura’s order to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness in English.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes:

Of all kinds of intelligence, the best is intelligence focused on bhakti-yoga. In bhakti-yoga, one’s intelligence becomes single-pointed, or fixed in determination. One thinks, “The instructions of my spiritual master to worship the Personality of Godhead by chanting, remembering, serving
His feet, and so on are my only sādhana, my only sādhyā, my only livelihood. I am incapable of giving up these instructions either in the stage of practice or in the stage of perfection. They alone are my object of desire and my only responsibility. Besides them, I can desire no other responsibility, not even in my dreams. It is all the same to me whether I feel happy or unhappy, or whether my material existence is eradicated or not.

In the same way that this commentary fixed your intelligence on following the instructions of your spiritual master, it should also inspire us to be fixed on following your instructions.

How fixed should we be? I am reminded of a story from the Mahābhārata that nicely illustrates this point. Once, Droṇācārya brought together his best archery students. Among them were Duryodhana, Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, and Arjuna. He wanted to test their ability to take aim, not just to hit the target, which was the eye of a wooden owl placed high in a tree. He brought Duryodhana forward and asked him to take aim. When Duryodhana drew his bowstring, Droṇācārya asked him what he saw. Duryodhana said he saw his gurudeva (Droṇācārya), the sky, the tree, the branch of the tree, the tip of the branch, the owl, and the eye of the owl. He and the others who were tested and gave similar answers were disqualified by Droṇācārya. Next came Arjuna’s turn. When Droṇācārya asked him what he saw, Arjuna said he could see only the eye of the wooden owl, which he shot perfectly in the middle. Arjuna was not only the best archer, but more importantly he knew the art of taking aim at the target without being distracted. This was Droṇācārya’s lesson. On the battlefield, a warrior has to be fully attentive and not distracted by anything or anyone.

In the same way, we have to fully embrace “ekeha kuru-nandana.” We have to be fixed on following your instructions, Śrīla Prabhupāda. We have to take perfect aim with the bow and arrows of your instructions, without distraction, and hit the lotus feet of Rādhā-Śyāmasundara. It is then only that we will understand Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura’s commentary and realize how it fixed your attention on following the instructions of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.

Begging for your mercy,
Giridhārī Swami

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Girirāj Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

We have gathered at your lotus feet to glorify you on your appearance day. Today I thought to read a verse from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam that describes Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, as bestowed in particular upon the demoness Pūtانا. The verse is appropriate because it glorifies the quality of mercifulness, which was so prominent in you, and it suggests to what extent you were willing to give mercy. Even upon a demoness who came to administer poison to Him and kill Him, Kṛṣṇa bestowed His supreme mercy. In a similar mood, you bestowed your mercy upon people who were lowly and fallen, and you were unreserved in bestowing it upon them.

The verse is from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Canto Three, chapter two: “Remembrance of Lord Kṛṣṇa.”

\[
\text{aho baki yaṁ stana-kāla-kūṭaṁ} \\
\text{jighāṁsayāpāyayad apy asādhoī} \\
\text{lebe gatiṁ dhātry-ucītāṁ tato 'nyaṁ} \\
\text{kaṁ vā dayāluṁ śaraṇāṁ vrajema}
\]
“Alas, how shall I take shelter of one more merciful than He who granted the position of mother to a
she-demon [Pūtanā] although she was unfaithful and she prepared deadly poison to be sucked from her
breast?” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.2.23)

In your purport you write:

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you always glorified Krṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and you instructed
everyone to take shelter of Krṣṇa. Many people who came in touch with you were struck by this fact.
George Harrison, for example, said that so many swamis and gurus tell their followers to surrender to
them but that you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, always said, “Krṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead; one
should surrender to Him.”

Once, a new devotee approached you and said, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, I can trust you; I can surrender
to you. But I can’t trust your representatives. I can’t surrender to them, because I fear they may cheat
me.” And you replied, “Don’t surrender to me either. I may also cheat you. Surrender to Krṣṇa.”

Your purport concludes:

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as aspiring devotees, we still have qualities in common with Pūtanā, and so we too
are in need of extreme mercy from the Lord—and from Your Divine Grace.

One quality mentioned in the verse is jighāṁsāyā—she acted out of envy. We are in the material world
out of envy of Krṣṇa. We don’t want to accept Him as the supreme enjoyer; we want to enjoy independent
of Him. We are envious of Him, and it is actually envy that keeps us in the material world. Only one who is
completely liberated and pure can be free from envy. Śrīnivāsa Ācārya glorifies the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana
as dhīrādhīra-jana-priyau: They are dear to both the gentle and the ruffians. They are pleasing to everyone
because they are not envious of anyone (nirmatsarau), and thus they are worshipable (pūjitau). You explained
that one who is nonenvious is worshipable because one can be nonenvious only if he is a pure devotee. Our
natural position is to serve Krṣṇa (jīvā svarūpā haya—krṣnera nitya-dāsa’); if we act as anything other
than an eternal servant of Krṣṇa, it means that we have not fully realized our actual position and that our
original envy of Krṣṇa, which brought us into the material world, is still, to some degree, lingering.

After starting your mission in New York and San Francisco, you suffered a stroke, and after all efforts
to recover in America had failed, you decided to return to India to recoup your health. Before your de-
parture, you visited the San Francisco temple. No one had expected you, in your condition, to speak,
but you asked for the microphone. You spoke about your mission, how under the order of your spiritual
master you had brought Lord Caitanya’s movement to America and how Krṣṇa had kindly sent so many
sincere souls. You told the devotees, “I have a few children in India from my family days, but you are my
real children. Now I am going to India for a little while.”

One of your early disciples from San Francisco suddenly entered the room. The devotees knew that
he wanted to leave Krṣṇa consciousness, that he hadn’t taken his initiation vows seriously, and that
he wanted to move on—he didn’t want a spiritual master anymore. The other devotees had tried to
discourage him, but he had persisted. Now they were incredulous: how could he do such a thing on the
night before your departure?
The devotee, Râvîndra-svarûpa, fell to the floor to offer obeisances, but he didn’t rise up. Instead, he began crawling on his hands and knees toward you. This dramatic encounter is vividly described in Śrīla Prabhupāda-lilāmṛta:

Râvîndra usually had a cavalier manner, enhanced by a handsome face, long tousled hair, and a beard. But now he was wretched and sobbing and crazy. He crawled towards Prabhupāda, who sat but two steps off the floor on the simple redwood dais. Prabhupāda looked at him with compassion: ‘Come here, my boy.’ Râvîndra crawled up the steps and placed his bushy head on Prabhupāda’s lap. Moved, the devotees watched as Prabhupāda stroked Râvîndra’s head and the boy cried and cried.

“What’s wrong, my son? You don’t have to be so unhappy.”
Râvîndra bawled out, “I want . . . ,” he sobbed, “aah . . . to . . . aah . . . reach God directly! Without anyone in between!”
Prabhupāda continued to pat and stroke the boy’s head: “No, you continue to stay with us if possible. Don’t be a crazy fellow.” Râvîndra’s weeping subsided, and Prabhupāda continued, speaking both to Râvîndra and to the emotion-struck group in the room. “I am an old man,” he said. “I may die at any moment. But please, you all carry on this sanākīrtana movement. You have to become humble and tolerant. As Lord Caitanya says, be as humble as a blade of grass and more tolerant than a tree. You must have enthusiasm and patience to push on this Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy.”

Suddenly Râvîndra’s tears were gone. He jumped up, dejectedly stood, hesitating for a moment, and then hurried out the door, banging it behind him.
Râvîndra-svarûpa’s dramatic exit from Kṛṣṇa consciousness shocked the devotees. Prabhupāda sat still and continued speaking to them gravely, asking them to stick together and push on the movement, for their own benefit and for others. Whatever they had learned, he said, they should repeat.
They realized, perhaps for the first time, that they were part of a preaching mission, a movement. They . . . had a loving obligation to Swamiji and Kṛṣṇa.

Although Râvîndra-svarûpa’s exhibition may have been extreme, in principle he is no different from many of us. We also don’t want anyone between us and Kṛṣṇa. We don’t want to surrender; we want to be Kṛṣṇa. But by your mercy we have been engaged in devotional service and are undertaking the process of purification—chanting the holy names, hearing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, associating with devotees, worshiping the Deity, and as far as possible residing in Mathurā, Vṛndāvana, Māyāpur, or any temple of Gaura-Nitāi or Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Pūtanā was asādhuī, unfaithful. And she pretended to be something that she was not. She was actually a demon, but by her mystic powers she presented herself as a very beautiful woman. Of course, it is not entirely wrong to present oneself as something that one is not. Sometimes, for social reasons, we must, but internally we should remain faithful. The problem is that internally sometimes we become unfaithful (asādhuī). We want to surrender—we decide to surrender—but then we take back our surrender. It happens all the time. We surrender—decide to surrender—and then withdraw our surrender. We are not sure whether we should surrender. We are not sure whether the process will work, whether we will get the result. We are not sure whether we will be successful in our attempt. We are not sure whether Kṛṣṇa will take care of us. We are not sure our desires will be fulfilled.

Ultimately, it comes down to faith (śraddhā), upon which all progress depends.

śraddhā-śâbde—viśvâsa kahe sudṛḍha niścaya
kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarva-karma kṛta haya

“Śraddhā is confident, firm faith that by rendering transcendental loving service to Kṛṣṇa one automatically performs all subsidiary activities. Such faith is favorable to the discharge of devotional service.”
(Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 22.62)

Even in your presence devotees did not always understand you. Most of the people who joined you were young, in their late teens or early twenties, and it was years before any of them left his or her body. The first I recall was Jaya Gopāla Dāsa, who lost his life in an automobile accident. His young wife was distraught, and you assured her that Jaya Gopāla had gone back to Godhead and that she would join
him. One of my godbrothers commented that you had said that just to encourage her.

Then I came across a book called *His Divine Grace* by Dānāvēr Goswami. Looking through it, I saw a photo of Jaya Gopālā, with the caption: “Śrīla Prabhupāda stated that Jaya Gopālā was not ready to go back to Godhead but that Kṛṣṇa made an exception and took him back anyway.” That is causeless mercy—your mercy. Kṛṣṇa has no interest in anything of the material world. He is interested only in devotees. And it is only because of the mercy of a devotee that Kṛṣṇa takes interest in someone who is not yet truly a devotee. Why else would Kṛṣṇa make an exception for us—other than your mercy? Otherwise, who is Jaya Gopālā Dāsa—or any of us—to Kṛṣṇa? It is because of our connection with you that we have any standing in Kṛṣṇa’s eyes.

Of course, as you always told us, Kṛṣṇa is the Supersoul. He is in the heart of every living entity as the witness and overseer. And He loves the living entities and accompanies them wherever they go. But He is neutral. He lets them act to fulfill their desires. He doesn’t interfere. However, when a devotee intervenes, Kṛṣṇa takes special interest. One who has received a devotee’s mercy gets Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, and that is true for all of us, your followers, now. Otherwise, why should we be engaged in devotional service? We are just conditioned souls who have come into the material world to enjoy, in imitation of Kṛṣṇa. Why should we even be in your temple? We are here by your mercy, and thus we are making the effort to purify our hearts by hearing *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam* and chanting the holy names, and thus to become true devotees.

Satsvarūpa Dāsa Gosvāmī told me a nice story—a thought or realization that he had had. It relates to your mercy and leads to the conclusion *kāṁ vā dayāluṁ śaraṇaṁ vrajaṁ*: “How shall I take shelter of one more merciful?” In other words, “You are so merciful; how can I find anyone more merciful? How can I take shelter of anyone else?”

Sometimes it happens that your followers meet saintly persons outside of ISKCON. One year, Satsvarūpa Mahārāja went to Jagannātha Puri, during the holy month of Pūruṣottama, to spend some time with one such sādhu. But while there, Satsvarūpa Mahārāja felt uncomfortable; he didn’t feel at home in that association. He felt that you created ISKCON to be his home and that he could feel at home only in ISKCON—nowhere else.

Then he went a step further. He imagined a time when he would leave his body and come to the precincts of Kṛṣṇaloka and the gatekeeper would ask him, “Who are you?” He suddenly became fearful, thinking that he was taking a gamble by turning himself into a sīksā disciple of that sādhu rather than remaining an exclusive disciple of Your Divine Grace. He wasn’t sure exactly what his relationship with
that sādhu was or what that sādhu might say to Kṛṣṇa on his behalf.

Then he imagined a different sequence. In this one, when the gatekeeper asked, “Who are you?” he would reply, “I am Satsvarūpa Dāsa, a disciple of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.” He imagined the gatekeeper going to you and asking, “Satsvarūpa has come to the gate; what should we do?” And he imagined that you would say, “Satsvarūpa? My Satsvarūpa? Call him immediately.”

To me, this provides a striking picture of you and your mercy, and it serves to answer the rhetorical question “How shall I take shelter of one more merciful than he?” For us, there is no one more merciful. There is no need to take shelter of anyone else, and there will be no gain if we leave you to take shelter of anyone else.

Two years ago I had the good fortune to meet your disciple Nārāyaṇī Dāsī again. I hadn’t seen her for many years, and then, at a japa workshop in Houston, I met her again.

During the workshop a devotee asked her, “Śāstra says that if you chant a mantra knowing its meaning you get more benefit than by reciting it without knowing its meaning. So, what is the meaning of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra?” She replied that the mantra is a prayer: “O Kṛṣṇa, O Rādhārāṇī, please engage me in Your service. O Lord, O energy of the Lord, please engage me in Your service.” A little later someone else asked the same question. Obviously they were looking for more. And she gave the same answer. She said, “I know that there are other explanations of the meaning, but this is the meaning that Śrīla Prabhupāda gave, and I’m satisfied with it. I don’t feel any need to pursue the matter further.”

After the last session of the workshop I asked her about that question and her response—“Did you give that answer because it was a general audience and you wanted to stay within Śrīla Prabhupāda’s direct instructions? Was it because of the circumstances that you gave that answer?” She said, “No, it’s because of me.” She said that sometimes as a teacher at the VIHE she is expected to speak from the commentaries of previous acāryas, on the Bhagavad-gītā or Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, but that if she sees a difference between what a previous acārya says and what you say, she can’t present what the previous acārya says. She told me, “It’s not because of the circumstances or the audience—it’s because of me.” I asked, “Why do you want to repeat only what Śrīla Prabhupāda said, not what any other acārya has said?” And she replied, “Because Śrīla Prabhupāda is more merciful.”

Then she told a story that she had heard. You were giving a talk in which you said that in order to go back home, back to Godhead, one must be cent percent pure, cent percent free of material desires and attachments. When you saw that the devotees were discouraged, you said, “All right, 90%.” Still they were dejected. Then you said, “All right, 80%.” Still they were crestfallen. Then you said, “All right, 75%—but not less.”

After the talk, you commented, “If you just hold on to my lotus feet, I will take you back to Godhead. I have the key to the back door.”

Mother Nārāyaṇī continued, “Actually, my only qualification to speak or to do anything is my faith in Śrīla Prabhupāda. I feel that we are not so qualified to go in the front door, so our only hope is to strictly follow Śrīla Prabhupāda, because he can recommend us to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Lord Kṛṣṇa and open the door for us to enter the spiritual world.”

We, your followers, have already received your mercy, and we are in a position to receive even more. We just have to follow your instructions. Once, I heard that you had said, “Your qualification is that I give an instruction . . .” I thought the rest of the sentence would be “and you follow it,” but the statement was “Your qualification is that I give you an instruction and you try to follow it.” Not even that we follow it—just that we try to follow it.

(Of course, we must try sincerely and seriously, by all means, with all of our energy and resources, to follow.)

In our japa retreats we emphasize chanting with attention, without offense. We encourage devotees to pronounce each syllable distinctly and hear each syllable attentively. To chant inattentively is an offense. So, I thought of my initiation letter—you sent it to me in Boston from Los Angeles—in which you instructed me to avoid the ten offenses. And I thought, “Oh, my God, that was practically the first instruction I got from Śrīla Prabhupāda—the one I got when I was initiated—and now, forty years later, I still haven’t been able to follow it, which is another offense: to disobey the orders of the spiritual master.” So I thought, “I am just drowning in offenses.” And then I thought, “I better reread that letter, to try to get some strength and inspiration.” I reread it, and there was the instruction: “You should avoid the ten offenses as far as possible.” You were so merciful—you knew that I couldn’t avoid them completely. So
you saved me from the offense of disobeying your order, by writing “as far as possible.”

So that is our qualification, according to you. And that is our hope. If we sincerely try to follow your instructions strictly—if we just hold on to your lotus feet—you will do the rest. You will take us back home, back to Godhead.

And then? As you wrote, “We will have another ISKCON in the spiritual sky.”

And what will we do there? We will engage in the same activities that you gave us here—chanting, dancing, feasting, and discussion of Kṛṣṇa. As you said, “The aim of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is to enable us to approach Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and associate with the Supreme Lord in His sublime pleasure dance . . . to enter into the dancing party of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.” And if we are not completely successful in the present lifetime? You wrote,

It is true that the spiritual master remains in the material universe until all of his disciples are transferred to the spiritual sky. . . . Therefore, every student should be very much careful not to commit any offense that will be detrimental to this promotion to the spiritual kingdom, and thereby the spiritual master has to incarnate again to deliver him. This sort of mentality will be a kind of offense to the spiritual master. Out of the ten kinds of offenses, the number-one offense is to disobey the orders of the spiritual master. The instructions given to the disciple by the spiritual master at the time of initiation should be strictly followed. That will make one advance to the spiritual path.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I do not want you to have to come back to deliver me, or any of us. I will try my best to follow your instructions, without offense—and depend on your causeless mercy.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your fallen, eternal servant,

Girirāj Swami
Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most fallen obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you, my eternal spiritual master!

Once again we are celebrating your divine appearance on this planet, and once again I find myself totally inadequate to describe your transcendental qualities and achievements. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you were always a Vaikuṇṭha man, who appeared in order to fulfill Lord Caitanya’s prediction that the chanting of the holy name would spread to every town and village.

“Even the most learned cannot understand the words, activities and symptoms of a person situated in love of Godhead.” (Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 23.39)

You picked me up from the ocean of nescience and gave me the blissful process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Were it not for your causeless mercy, I would be rotting in the endless cycle of birth and death. You were the personification of humility and determination. You struggled against all odds to fulfill you Guru Mahārāja’s instruction. From your transcendental appearance in 1896 till your disappearance in 1977, you demonstrated nectarean pastimes. These pastimes will be discussed and meditated upon by Vaiṣṇavas for the next ten thousand years. Your every thought and action was according to the sāstras. In spite of thousands of followers and comfortable living conditions, you always remained humble. You poured mercy just like the rain cloud pours torrents of rain on this dry earth. You opened “spiritual hospitals” so that suffering humanity could understand the goal of human life.

You encouraged us to study and distribute your books because of your strong compassion for the conditioned souls; you would wake up in the middle of the night to translate these books. Even when you were physically very weak, you did not stop your translation and preaching. In Vṛndāvana, you remarked that as long as book distribution went on, you would never die. You would keep preaching through your Bhaktivedanta Purports. Your books have changed the lives of countless human beings and will continue to do so for the next ten thousand years. Your books are a manifestation of your mercy. Devotees can continue to associate with you by studying your books and following your instructions. The instructions in your books are the lifeblood of the devotees who want to please you.

Please bless me so that I may continue to be a tiny instrument in the effort to keep getting your books produced and distributed. Please bless me so that I can continue to serve in your great movement. I have come to the realization that my service is totally insignificant compared to that of other Vaiṣṇavism, who are lifting huge boulders and accomplishing great things for you.

Your insignificant servant,

Gopāl Krishna Goswami
Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most prostrated obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to your transcendental descent, which is saving the world by your selfless compassion.

I would like to touch on your quality of para-upakāra; and I say touch upon it because this particular quality is limitless in your person. It is what you identified as the prominent mission that you culled from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura, and the essence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, especially in the fallen Age of Kali. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is celebrated as the mahā-vadānyāvatāra because of His quality of audārya, magnanimity and compassion. That is the overflow from His stirring mādhurya-rasa: the mercy sentiment of Śrīmati Rādhārāṇī. You have poured it upon us, govinda-gānātmartaiḥ, and your selfless desire to see everyone basking in the nectar of kṛṣṇa-kathā knows no bounds.

The first manifestation of your all-embracing concern for others is that you gave up the spiritual comfort of Vṛndāvana. Before that, you gave up the comfort of home and family, all to please your Guru Mahārāja, whose ardent desire was to preach and save the world. We have inherited his mood from you. Your example, taken from him, is that we should be willing to spend, or spoil (in your words, meaning that we could have used that same energy for chanting and hearing peacefully) gallons of blood to make one devotee. And you did it with us! You left Vṛndāvana, you risked the high seas, you took care of us; all these sacrifices for our benefit, and not your own. This is the mood of Rādhārāṇī, which was manifested in Mahāprabhu. He taught that every person should take up the challenge of giving the fruits of love of God to all others, and you have instilled within us that understanding.

You demonstrated another sentiment of your Guru Mahārāja, which inculcates in us the need for perseverance and determination in our missionary activities. That is, success means that one person becomes a pure Vaiṣṇava. This is the apex of compassion—that one is willing to give one’s whole life just to help another. Risking health, security, personal happiness, and life itself, you forged a comprehension of what total sympathy for the conditioned soul is. I perceive that your dedication to ISKCON, even to the point of disregarding to some degree your most treasured activity, translation, for the sake of assuring that the Society could continue, is another manifestation of your compassion. You wanted to leave in place a mechanism that would continue for the next ten thousand years. Now it is our legacy to keep that arrangement in place. Presently I see many devotees putting their own well-being or cherished projects before the sense of sacrifice for others, and I am at the forefront.

Therefore I beg you to give me one atom of the concern and compassion for others that you possess, which would be millions of times more than the shadow of empathy that I now feel for others. Only by your empowerment can I escape the desire for self-satisfaction that dominates my consciousness and life. Please let my theoretical understanding of love for others become a reality, by your mercy.

Your most undeserving servant,
Guru Prasād Swami

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Hṛdaya Caitanya Dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

At the moment I am in central France, at New Māyāpur, one of the two ISKCON centers in Europe where you have your personal rooms.
It is a place with a lot of potential and amazing Deities—Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma (personally installed by you), Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda-Mādhava. In the early ’80s we had festivals here with a thousand devotees having ecstatic kīrtanas. At that time up to three hundred devotees were living here. The place was booming as a book-distribution and lākṣmī-collection base, with three sets of large Deities, a farm, a gurukula, a BBT division, a construction department, and a pottery and art department.

Now, more than twenty years later, there are a handful of devotees struggling to take care of the basic personal needs of the Deities and the devotees, and to maintain the property. These remaining devotees have been through many challenges, serving you with determination, knowing that this is the best service to you and the best way to further their personal spiritual benefit.

In August 1976, on your last visit to New Māyāpur, you stressed self-sufficiency—keeping cows and growing vegetables, grains, fruits, and flowers. You advised members to build cottages with wood from the forests on their land. You encouraged devotees to concentrate on village organization and to become self-sufficient—even eventually to make their own clothing.

These basic instructions were originally somewhat overshadowed. But now, by the Lord’s arrangement, due to a lack of funds the devotees have again started to live more simply and are again cultivating their own organic vegetables. They also have their own well, are heating the buildings with wood from the property, and are keeping beehives.

Your disciple Gopaswami Prabhu, who is a practicing doctor and who spends a lot of time in New Māyāpur, built his own cottage from wood, clay, and straw. He has been living there on and off for several years—even during the winter, with the help of a small wood-fired heater. This helps create a very sattvic atmosphere that will attract more devotees to do the same.

You told the devotees in Bhuvañeśvara in ’77 that our mission is simple living and high thinking. You explained that there is no need for big bombastic economic arrangements. We should depend on God’s natural economic arrangements: the earth’s produce and the cow’s milk. And we should always remember that the central principle is to use our priceless human life for becoming God conscious.

In August ’76, just after visiting New Māyāpur, you described it to Surabhi and Gargamuni:

The devotees are very nice—two hundred devotees there are. And they are taking prasādam on the open lawn—very nice. Presently they are growing vegetables sufficient for their consumption and for the Paris temple. Fresh, nice vegetables. Flowers, grains also they have got. Barley and wheat. Milk also—their own cows. So if there is milk, there is food grain, there is vegetable, so what do you want more? Enough we can grow. They have got two hundred acres of land; some portion of the land they are utilizing. That is becoming sufficient for them. And if they grow the whole land, they can make good trade.

New Māyāpur’s current temple president, Kūṭastha Prabhu, has a lifetime of experience working with the cows and the land, and he is leading the community in the right direction. Ten of your disciples live in and around New Māyāpur, and with their advice and help things can pick up again.

In this offering to you I am especially speaking about New Māyāpur because it is pertinent in regards to the current time and circumstances. The world situation is forcing us to reflect on the instructions you gave about self-sufficiency, and the GBC is also encouraging the development of farms, especially where there are existing projects.

I want to thank Lord Kṛṣṇa a thousandfold for allowing me to live at a time when you were physically present in this world, although unfortunately I never had the opportunity to meet you personally. Let your instructions become my life and soul.

“By rendering devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one immediately acquires causeless knowledge and detachment from the world.” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.7)

I hope and pray that this verse becomes realized in my life.

I like to meditate on the fact that all living entities are eternal servants of the Lord and that every action in line with our constitutional position brings us closer to Kṛṣṇa. The process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is meant to wake me up, to make me conscious of Kṛṣṇa. For me, a conditioned soul, it is always a little painful to wake up. I pray to you that I may always realize my great fortune of having you as my most important Śikṣā-guru, and to have the great fortune of serving your disciples, who are helping me
understand this process. Please save me from māyā.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your servant,

Hṛdaya Caitanya Dāsa

Hridayānanda dās Goswami

In 1971, I wrote to Śrīla Prabhupāda asking if I could address him as my spiritual father. He wrote back saying that he was indeed my spiritual father and that the Gāyatrī mantra was the spiritual mother. With the combination of father and mother, the disciple takes second birth.

As we continue to receive the unstinting mercy of our eternal guide, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we continue to grow spiritually, and indeed intellectually and emotionally, since all our faculties rest on the spirit. With our growth in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, it is natural that we discover an ever more mature relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda, even as we learn to appreciate him with ever greater insight.

As Prabhupāda progressively frees us from our blind attachment to our temporary bodies, and to this temporary world, we are able to increasingly appreciate his own spiritual purity and perfection. We can see with far greater clarity that Prabhupāda’s glory lies in his selfless devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Once in a morning Bhāgavatam class in New Dvārakā, Prabhupāda said, “People give me credit for spreading this movement, but I take no credit. If, however, you insist on giving me some credit, then it is simply this: that I never tried to take Kṛṣṇa’s position.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda is the only person I ever met about whom I can say with complete certainty that everything he did, he did with no other desire than to please and glorify Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It is this pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness that we worship and follow as we eternally serve Śrīla Prabhupāda.

His servant,

Hridayānanda dās Goswami

Jayapatāka Swami

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His servant,

Hridayānanda dās Goswami

Jayapatāka Swami
My dear spiritual father Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Hari oṁ tat sat. On this occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā, I want to offer you a humble offering. I am afraid that it won’t be pleasing to you. I don’t have so much to offer, since in October 2008 I was hit by a stroke in a cerebral stem area. A local doctor said that I had little chance to survive, and that if I did survive I would be paralyzed. But by your causeless mercy and the mercy of lord Kṛṣṇa, I survived the stroke and was not paralyzed.

Now I am in South India, at the Arya-vidya pharmacy, taking therapy and trying to recuperate. Right after the stroke I spent almost two months in the Hinduja Hospital. Then I did physical and occupational therapy in the Bhaktivedanta Hospital. I am very grateful to the GBC members who offered their prayers for me to survive and continue doing service to them and to Your Divine Grace. I am especially grateful to His Holiness Bhakti Chāru Swami, His Holiness Gopāl Krishna Goswami, His Holiness Kavicandra Swami, and His Holiness Rādhānātha Swami. Especially those present in the hospital encouraged me in my service to you and my survival. His Holiness Rādhānātha Swami had his four thousand disciples on the Vṛndāvana yāträ pray for me.

I am also grateful to the devotees around the world who prayed for me. I was saved, although I was a rascal. So somehow I have been given another chance. I hope that I can recuperate all my faculties so I can engage fully in my devotional service. Maybe I did something right, since even though I am a rascal I was given a chance to live and to continue serving Your Divine Grace. I heard that after your stroke in 1967 you had massage therapy, so I am also taking massage therapy. I started it at the Bhaktivedanta Hospital, and I am taking it now in South India, at an Āyurvedic chikitsālayam. Hopefully it will help me recover my faculties.

You asked me to travel. Actually, you said all sannyāsīs should travel and take the curse you had received from your disciples’ parents—to always have to travel. I was in your room on two occasions when you said this. Therefore, somehow I have been traveling, but at the same time you told me to preach in India—East India and Bangladesh. So I was made a GBC to preach in South India, Nepal, Southeast Asia, Malaysia, and Singapore, as well as the Middle East, to the Indian expatriates. I was also given the task to preach to Latin Americans. So I am trying mainly to focus on my zone and also write some memoirs of the pastimes with Your Divine Grace. I am also working on a book like Kṛṣṇa but about Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. In addition, you made me the life chairman of the Bhaktivedanta Swami Charity Trust, so I want to try to reunify the Saraswata Gauḍiya Vaishnava association, which has somehow become disunited due to some misunderstanding.

I also want to develop Navadvīpa dhāma and Gaura-maṇḍala-bhūmi’s holy places. You gave me Māyāpur to develop; you said, “I am giving you the spiritual world—now develop it!” So I want to spend more time in Māyāpur and try to complete the development work that Your Divine Grace has envisioned for me. That is why I am more eager to offer you the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium, which Ambariṣa Prabhu has so kindly offered a donation to build. We are eager to help with this massive work, for I know how much this project will please you and the previous ācāryas.

I would like to tell you about Bhaktivedanta Hospital, where I did two months of physiotherapy and occupational therapy after the stroke. The hospital has your mūrti in the foyer, near the entrance. Most of the doctors are devotees—not all of them, but the majority. These devotee doctors are using their occupational skills in your devotional service, and they are serving the devotees as well. They do “spiritual care counseling” at the hospital for the local people. Some devotee doctors were working outside at some other hospitals, but they came together under the guidance of Rādhānātha Swami and now work together as a team. This is something very exceptional. Although you didn’t like us to do mundane charity work, Bhaktivedanta Hospital actually provides these devotee doctors with an opportunity to engage their abilities in devotional service; otherwise they would have to work at some mundane hospital. So I hope you don’t consider the Bhaktivedanta Hospital to be doing mundane charity work but rather
providing service to Vaiṣṇavas and an opportunity for the devotee doctors to express the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They make from twenty-five to thirty devotees every month.

When I was at the Bhaktivedanta Hospital I was fortunate to hear many accounts of how the preaching was going on. Once a nurse was sleeping (she shouldn't have been, as she was on night duty) and you came to her in a dream and told her that she should read your books, which are in the hospital library. She was very happy and became very much inspired and to read your books and become more active as a devotee. I was fortunate to hear many such spiritual pastimes illustrating how Lord Caitanya's mercy is showering down on the various people who work in or visit the hospital. I like to regularly visit the hospital to encourage the devotees in their service, and to visit the Rādhā-Gopinātha temple and get the association of His Holiness Rādhānātha Swami. Maybe in the future we can have a hospital or a clinic in Māyāpur so people can come and live in a spiritual atmosphere and at the same time take care of their physical needs. We already have a house hostel for the elderly women; so we want Māyāpur to have a real home for all the devotees around the world.

Your Divine Grace once said that living or dying in Māyāpur is the same: living in Māyāpur is living in the spiritual world, and if we die there we go back to the spiritual world.

At the present time I am traveling to different places undergoing various therapies, trying to cure the problems I have encountered since the stroke. I hope I will soon be able to return to Māyāpur and spend time there. The doctors said that the six months after a stroke is the optimum time for getting physically recuperated, so I am trying to do this so I can do more useful service for Your Divine Grace. Many disciples have dedicated themselves to helping me in different ways, and I am grateful for all their help. Many devotees have prayed for me all over the world, and I am very grateful for their prayers and their kindness. I hope I will soon have a healthier body to engage in your devotional service in a more complete way, but in any case I am very grateful for this opportunity you have given me to continue serving Your Divine Grace.

Your most fallen servant,

Jayapatāka Swami

Kavicandra Swami

Dear Śrila Prabhupāda,

\[
\text{oṁ ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānārjana-sālākayā} \\
\text{cakṣur unmilitaṁ yena tasmaī śrī-gurave namaḥ}
\]

\[
\text{nama oṁ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preśṭhāya bhū-tale} \\
\text{śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine}
\]

\[
\text{namas te sārasvate deve gaurā-vāṇi-pracārīne} \\
\text{nirvīśeṣa-sānyavādi-pāścātya-desa-tāriṇe}
\]

I have recited those prayers millions of times. I pray for the day when I will really understand them and surrender.

I am always thinking to write something about my various defects, but better to dwell on your causeless mercy.

Once Lord Caitanya rescued His servant Kṛṣṇa Dāsa from the Bhaṭṭāṭhāris. Like Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, my mind is always wanting to go off with such persons, but you have made so many arrangements to save me again and again. You have given me so much service to do and made so many devotees who always remind me to chant the holy name and the speak kṛṣṇa-kathā.
sei bhakta dhanya, ye nā chāde prabhura caraṇa
sei prabhu dhanya, ye nā chāde nija-jana
durdaive sevaka yadi yāya anya sthāne
sei ṭhākura dhanya tāre cule dhari’ āne

“In a firm relationship with the Lord, the devotee does not give up the Lord’s service under any circumstance. As far as the Lord Himself is concerned, if the devotee chooses to leave, the Lord brings him back again, dragging him by the hair.” [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā 4.46–47, quoted at Madhya-līlā 15.154, purport]

I am now in Bali, Indonesia. You will be happy to know that there are thousands of sincere devotees here and that book production and distribution is increasing daily. It is an island only fifty miles wide, so we often see the ocean beach and hear the waves. I heard that you once said the sound of the waves are the gopis’ sighing for Kṛṣṇa. I try to remember that and pray to someday understand it and feel separation from Kṛṣṇa.

The wives of Lord Kṛṣṇa address the ocean thus:

bho bhoḥ sadā niṣṭanase udanvann
alabdhā-nidro ‘dhigata-prajāgarah
kim vā mukundāpaḥṛtāma-lāñchanaḥ
prāptāṁ daśāṁ tvain ca gato duratyayāṁ

“Dear ocean, you are always roaring, not sleeping at night. Are you suffering insomnia? Or is it that, as with us, Mukunda has taken your insignias and you are hopeless of retrieving them?” Kṛṣṇa’s wives are crying due to His leaving them. I am crying do to having left Kṛṣṇa. By your grace He is trying to bring me back through His devotees. As you write in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 10.67, purport):

Even though a person is rejected by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the devotees of the Lord do not reject him; therefore the Lord’s devotees are more merciful than the Lord Himself. Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura thus sings, chādiyā vaiṣṇava-sevā nistāra peyeche kebā: one cannot be relieved from the material clutches without engaging in the service of pure devotees. The Lord Himself may sometimes be very hard, but the devotees are always kind. Thus Kālā Kṛṣṇadāsa received the mercy of the four devotees mentioned above.

And, the passage from the Antya-līlā is worth quoting again, this time with a slightly different translation from Śrīla Prabhupāda:

sei bhakta dhanya, ye nā chāde prabhura caraṇa
sei prabhu dhanya, ye nā chāde nija-jana
durdaive sevaka yadi yāya anya sthāne
sei ṭhākura dhanya tāre cule dhari’ āne

“Glorious is that devotee who does not give up the shelter of his Lord, and glorious is that Lord who does not abandon His servant. If by chance a servant falls down and goes somewhere else, glorious is that master who captures him and brings him back by the hair.” (Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā 4.46–47)

I cannot repay you, but I pray that Lord Nityānanda Balarāma will give me the strength to try to repay you for the coming millions of my births.

I will end with some excerpts from preaching reports that I received in the last few days. These are all from your granddisciples. This is strong evidence of the potency of your preaching the mission that you created.

From Ghana, West Africa:

Last weekend we were invited to participate in the funeral of the Ghanaian International Drum-
mer who used to live down the road from the temple and could be visited only by appointment. He died in December last year and was given state burial/cremation last week. He willed that his body be cremated and that the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees officiate at his funeral. So the whole country saw the devotees on two TV stations officiating at the funeral. The government provided an air-conditioned bus to bring the devotees from the temple to the state house and back again with a police motorcade.

Ex-president Rawlings was happy to meet the devotees and took pictures with us. So many books were distributed during this important event. Ex-president Rawlings, who was given a set of Bhāgavatams by Bhakti Tirtha Swami many years ago, was happy to receive more books this time and spoke about the importance of the Vedas. All the important dignitaries, including ministers of state, eagerly accepted Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books. We made sure our contact numbers and temple address were stamped on each book. Consequently since the funeral we have been receiving calls from people who have started reading the books. Two people who attended the funeral have already visited the temple, and the military chaplain who was present and also received books called to say he wants some more books for the military library.

From Athens, Greece:

Twice a week we have a home program with kirtana, Bhagavad-gītā kathā and prasādam. Kṛṣṇa is sending nice people who are very inspired and enthusiastic. They chant, they accept the philosophy.

Another super-opportunity that Kṛṣṇa sent us is that I was asked to be the chef of a 10-day retreat for wealthy people on an island. The event will take place at the end of July, and apart from serving prasādam, we will do kirtanas, lead the guests in meditation, and deliver speeches on bhakti-yoga and Vedic culture. My prabhu will come as a helper, and we will even get paid for it. Two very respectable doctors are organizing it.

Lord Caitanya is really showering us with mercy. Even though I am so materialistic, ego-centric, prideful, and low, He is still giving me the chance to speak about His glories and inspire the people.

Ramādevī has started her own center with her husband, Rāsarāṇī and Yugala Kishore, and they offer people Bhagavatam classes, yoga classes, cooking courses, seminars on psychology and philosophy, Sanskrit lessons, and discussions on the Vedas.

From Śrīdham Māyāpur:

Sachi Kumar employs unique techniques such as inserting quizzes into Bhagavad-gītās for readers to take, then offering the winners prizes and invitations to ISKCON Māyāpur. Through a Bhagavad-gītā sponsorship program, his party is also able to distribute books to prisons, hospitals, and the poverty-stricken. “Sometimes they have no money,” says Sachi Kumar, “but they are very eager to take the books.”

And the main ingredient in the Māyāpur bus parties’ success? Faith. Help comes courtesy of several multi-layered training programs that are offered to them year-round in Māyāpur. There’s a distribution training course, a Bhakti-śāstri course to help them better understand the scriptures that they are handing out, and a program that encourages devotees to read a volume of the Śārīmad-Bhāgavatam while on their mission, then take an exam to show what they’ve learned when they return.

This year, seventy devotees hit the road, with those who have braved the marathon before helping to guide, train, and advise newcomers. Their ten buses travel to every corner of India, teaching and enlightening people of all backgrounds and philosophical leanings. And as the days go by, the book distributors almost miraculously find person after person who seem to have been living their whole lives just waiting to receive their tickets back home, back to Godhead. Bharadvāja Dāsa, who has participated in the marathon for the past six years, recalls: “Once, while traveling in West Bengal, I was trying unsuccessfully to convince a group of men to purchase a Bhagavad-gītā, until one of them began to stare at the picture of Śrīla Prabhupāda on the cover.
Then he suddenly exclaimed, ‘I know this man!’ He then bought every single book I had—a full eighteen-volume Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam set, the Bhagavad-gītā, and the Kṛṣṇa book—and invited me to visit his home.”

At first confused as to why this man so easily purchased so many books and extended an offer to visit his home, later Bharadvāja understood when the man told him his story.

Bharadvāja relates: “He was bathing in the Gaṅgā one afternoon many years ago when a sharp pain in his head caused him to look down and notice a picture of Śrīla Prabhupāda floating by. Because he had found it in the auspicious Gaṅgā, he decided that he should take the picture home. But he didn’t just take it home—he also began to worship it. And as soon as he did, many changes began to happen in his life.

“All the man’s problems suddenly became resolved, including the marriage of his daughter, one of the most stressful duties that an Indian father must perform. His daughter was betrothed, yet because he didn’t have enough money to pay for the wedding, nothing went as planned. When he prayed to the picture of Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, a friend he hadn’t seen in a long while arrived that very day and agreed to give him the money he needed. Not only that, but when the man sought refuge in Prabhupāda while suffering from anxiety, he dreamt that Prabhupāda soothed him by saying, ‘You should have more faith in me.’”

Naturally, Bharadvāja invited the sincere Śrīla Prabhupāda worshiper to visit ISKCON’s spiritual capital in Māyāpur, and expects to see him there soon.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, there are thousands of similar reports from all over the planet. Thank you again and again.

Praying to someday really surrender and join your saṅkīrtana movement,

Kavicandra Swami

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**Madhusevita Dāsa**

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace and the previous ācāryas!

Throughout the history of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism there have been inundations of mercy, attacks on that mercy, struggles to protect it, and again its rise.

Within recent times, when Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura brought Lord Caitanya’s teachings back into the lives of a misdirected Indian civilization, he suffered attacks from, among others, sahajiyās and bogus yogis. Yet he stood his ground and fought to establish the authoritativeness of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava siddhānta, and ultimately he left a monumental contribution for the following generations.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmi gave shape, potency, and brilliance to Lord Caitanya’s movement, and for his efforts he was attacked by the caste brāhmaṇas, impersonalists, so-called bābājīs, and foolish nationalists. Roaring loudly with his transcendental voice to counteract their nonsense, he established the deep and incontrovertible presence of our siddhānta in this world.

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, broke the seals on the storehouse of the mercy of Gaurāṅga and Nityānanda and flooded the whole world with the holy name and transcendental literature. When you suffered the attacks of well-dressed condescending troglodytes, atheists, pseudoscholars, idiots, semibeasts, and betrayers, you charmingly smashed their weapons, all the while effecting a spiritual metamorphosis within the hearts of the innocents. When you departed you left us this most wonderful ISKCON Society. ISKCON is Lord Caitanya’s instrument for reversing the world’s destiny by the power of His mercy, which you perfectly incarnate.

Those fortunate souls who are blessed by contact with your ISKCON receive that mercy, and those
who want to cultivate it become your own kinsmen and distributors of that same mercy thereafter.

Being your followers, we are also under attack, both from within and from without. The attack from within the heart comes in the form of those designations and concomitant attitudes that displease you and thus increase our misfortune; attacks from without are those enacted by the envious.

You taught us that what comes from within is far more dangerous, though.

The internal attacks may be sparked by attacks from outsiders. These attackers are Americans, Europeans, Indians, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, “intellectuals,” sentimentalists, rascals, fools, profiteers, philanthropists, persons who couldn’t care less, humanitarians, degenerates, “seekers,” bored ones, “self-realized” ones, and scholars, to name a few. They try to infiltrate and pollute our consciousness, creating different forms of pride, false hopes, dissension, and alienation. And sometimes they win a battle, inducing us to identify with and think, speak, and act like members of one of the above categories.

We have to stand our ground if we want to survive and grow as humble servants of the servants of Kṛṣṇa. The ground consists of your instructions and mood, and the ability to stand is the determination to please you. By becoming good disciples—disciplined servants—and by cooperatively pushing on this ISKCON movement, we’ll please you without doubt.

We have to keep reminding ourselves that we did not join the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, take initiation, and devote our lives to your lotus feet to retain a particular nationality, to change our creed by becoming a Hindu instead of something else, or to gain any spiritual position like gṛhaḥstha or sannyāsa. Our real need is love of God in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for keeping me here still. I know I don’t deserve it. But I’ll try my best to follow the path that you outlined, confident that your unbounded mercy will take me back home, back to Godhead.

Clinging to your lotus feet, I remain

Your menial servant,

Madhusevita Dāsa

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Mukunda Goswami

Compassion

\[
\text{nāma oṁ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preśṭhāya bhū-tale} \\
\text{śrīnāte bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīn iti nāmine} \\
\text{nāmas te sārasvate deve gaurā-vāṇī-pracārine} \\
\text{nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tārīne}
\]

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Once upon a time (in September of 1966) I took a vow in front of you, the sacrificial arena, your personal Deities, and the Vaiṣṇavas. That was on the occasion of my dīkṣā initiation. In speaking that vow, I said I would chant sixteen rounds of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra each day for the rest of my life. Four years later, you wrote to all your temple presidents (I was one of them) that we must agree in a signed document to chant sixteen rounds every day. I signed the paper and sent it off. Later I was relieved to find a five-hundred-year-old śāstric precedent for this paper-signing business. It is found in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 5.81).

Because of your uncompromising insistence that ISKCON initiates chant sixteen rounds each day and follow four regulative principles, sometimes people criticized you for being too conservative.
It has been said that Kṛṣṇa doesn’t forgive, but that devotees do. It is also said that to err is human but that to forgive is divine.

Is God’s mercy greater than God’s law?

Christ asked God to forgive those who crucified him. Haridāsa Ṭhākura prayed for his tormentors and played dead so that they wouldn’t be punished. And you write in Caitanya-caritāmṛta that Vāsudeva Datta was even more merciful than Jesus:

Here, however, we find Śrī Vāsudeva Datta Ṭhākura . . . to be many millions of times more advanced even when compared with Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ relieved only his followers from all sinful reactions, but Vāsudeva Datta is here prepared to accept the sins of everyone in the universe. So the comparative position of Vāsudeva Datta is millions of times better than that of Lord Jesus Christ. A Vaiṣṇava is so liberal that he is prepared to risk everything to rescue the conditioned souls from material existence. Śrīla Vāsudeva Datta Ṭhākura is universal love itself, for he was willing to sacrifice everything and fully engage in the service of the Supreme Lord.

[Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 15.163, purport]

Pūtānā offered her poison-smear breast to baby Kṛṣṇa with the intention of murdering Him, yet when Kṛṣṇa sucked her breast and killed her, He forgave her and in fact liberated her. Loving one’s enemy is high-level compassion.

These are indications that God’s mercy is greater than God’s law.

Even though sometimes you were thought to be excessively conservative and were uncompromising when it came to vows, you were also extremely forgiving. So it happened that even when some of your sannyāsi disciples fell from grace (i.e., were unable to follow one or more of the regulative principles), you exonerated and encouraged them, indirectly blessing them.

In your purport to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 8.23.2 you write that Kṛṣṇa is bhāva-grāhī janārdana, meaning that He takes only the essence of a devotee’s attitude.

And since you are Kṛṣṇa’s representative, and because you risked your life to preach to us Western mlecchas and caṇḍālas, you embody the Lord’s mercy. And since the spiritual master’s mercy is sometimes greater than Kṛṣṇa’s, this makes you one of the most merciful, maybe the most merciful, person in creation.

Thank you.

Your servant,
Mukunda Goswami
If the vans had to leave India. One of the suggestions Your Divine Grace gave was to take them to Bangladesh and organize extensive preaching programs there. Unfortunately, this suggestion of yours was not followed, and the vehicles were later confiscated by customs for overstaying their allotted time in India.

In early 1977, I visited Bangladesh to distribute your books to libraries. At that time Your Divine Grace had requested that I try to find out some information about the condition of the Gauḍīya Maṭha in Dhaka, as you remembered that they had a large property, well located near the city center. You had heard that the devotees there were having difficulty maintaining it and had been unable to complete the construction of the temple. You were thinking that perhaps the Gauḍīya Maṭha would agree to hand over the management to ISKCON, since you envisaged that ISKCON should have a large temple in Dhaka, the capital. On that trip I managed to meet some members of the management committee of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, but they said that such decisions should be made at the their headquarters in Māyāpur. Although we tried on several occasions, they never agreed to let ISKCON take over the management.

That visit to Bangladesh on the library party convinced me that there was good potential for preaching there. Not long after, in Mumbai, I wanted to ask you if I could try to start a center there, but the leader of our library party was not keen on my leaving the party, and he instructed your secretary not to let me meet you without a letter of permission from him. Somehow or other, another disciple informed you of my interest in opening a center in Bangladesh, and upon hearing this Your Divine Grace called me into your room and told me, “You have made the right decision. Go immediately!” I went to Delhi at once to get a visa, and when Your Divine Grace saw me there a few days later you exclaimed “You have not gone yet? Go immediately!”

All these incidents show that Your Divine Grace had a clear vision and a keen desire to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Bangladesh. The fact that it is a predominantly Muslim country did not deter you, for you were sure that many people would be attracted to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. You envisaged that ISKCON would have large temples and many preaching parties doing programs and distributing your books.

Over the years, ISKCON’s activities in Bangladesh have gradually increased. Ratha-yātrās are held annually in many parts of the country, including Dhaka, where around 30,000 people participate in the procession through the center of the city. Many devotees regularly hold preaching programs and distribute your books throughout the country. There are a lot of Nāma Haṭṭas and around thirty ISKCON temples, many of which were existing Deity properties that have been handed over to ISKCON for management. Among these are two properties near the center of Dhaka, one of which is even larger than the Gauḍīya Maṭha’s property. Due to the presence of around eighty squatter families, till now ISKCON has not been able to fully develop this property. Nevertheless, devotees have managed to construct a temporary temple and living facilities, and as a result thousands of people visit on a regular basis. Such is the interest in Kṛṣṇa consciousness there. You will be pleased to know that recently the last of these squatter families left the property, and we now pray for your blessings so that ISKCON can develop the project in a way that befits the mission and vision of Your Divine Grace.

Another property which was given to ISKCON is in Jessore, near the birthplace of Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs. At first it was just a small piece of land in a flood-prone village area, and it took many years to develop the project, get more land, build a temple and accommodations, and install the Deities. Gradually the government built canals in the area to solve the flooding problem and tar-surfaced the roads, so the temple has become much more accessible to the public. Called Śrī Śrī Rūp-Sanātana Smriti Tirtha, it is presently ISKCON’s largest temple in Bangladesh in terms of area and living facilities. Recently some of your granddisciples organized a special festival there for ISKCON devotees from all around the country. The vision for this festival was to strengthen the spiritual lives of the devotees by bringing them together for several days of intense hearing and chanting in the association of senior sannyāsīs and preachers. As Your Divine Grace said in a letter to a GBC man in 1972:

Now I want that we shall concentrate on making our devotees Kṛṣṇa conscious and ourselves becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious, and not be so much concerned with expanding ourselves widely but without any spiritual content. Just like boiling the milk, it becomes thicker and sweeter. Now do like that, boil the milk.

Affectionately joking, some of the visiting sannyāsīs called this festival the “boiling the milk festival.”
Around a thousand devotees attended, and from their faces and words it was clear that they received great inspiration to go back to their respective areas and practice and preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness with even more enthusiasm. Next year the organizers hope to be able to create the facilities for at least two thousand devotees to attend. On the last day a festival was held for the public. Many busloads of people came from different parts of the country, and approximately 100,000 pilgrims visited the temple. Fifty thousand plates of prasādam were distributed.

In this way, we hope that gradually the desires of Your Divine Grace for preaching in Bangladesh will be fulfilled and that ISKCON will be able to give spiritual shelter and guidance to more and more of the inhabitants of this densely populated country as they struggle for survival in the midst of Kali-yuga. We humbly pray for Your Divine Grace’s causeless mercy on all the devotees of ISKCON Bangladesh so that they may continue to expand your preaching mission with strong and determined Kṛṣṇa consciousness. All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Your insignificant servant,

Prabhaviṣṇu Swami

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Rādhānāth Swami

Dear Śrila Prabhupāda,

On this most sacred day, I offer you my heart. Over thirty-eight years ago, at our first meeting, you singled me out, from an ocean of people in a public lecture in Bombay, to be near you. Actually, on that day you reached out to deliver this lost soul from the ocean of bondage and misconception. Your oceanic compassion will always be my saving grace and my only qualification.

The way your love inspires your devotees’ hearts is an ever-present miracle. Last year we painfully witnessed two of your leading servants stricken by brain strokes, His Holiness Jayapatāka Mahārāja and His Holiness Rādhā-Govinda Mahārāja. It was devastating to our hearts. But in that most horrid condition from a material perspective, their transcendental qualities gave testimony to your unconditional compassion.

The massive stroke Jayapatāka Mahārāja suffered left him, by medical estimation, with hardly a one percent chance of surviving. After a prolonged coma and months in intensive care he could not sit up, walk, or speak properly, yet he pleaded with the doctors to allow him to share your message to over four thousand devotees at our Pune Yāstrā. Since the event entailed an eight-hour round-trip drive on rough roads and a taxing program of preaching, the doctors tried to dissuade him. But he persisted. Finally the subject came to the primary neurological surgeon for a final decision. He stunned us all when he said, “He should go. It is the best thing for him.”

“How is that?” the caretakers asked.

“Making him happy,” the surgeon replied, “will help him be cured. This man’s only happiness is in giving Kṛṣṇa to others. Let him go.” Amazingly, all of the caretakers involved in the discussion, this surgeon was the only one who was not a devotee. Jayapatāka Mahārāja came to the yāstrā, and despite his severe physical limitations he ecstatically spoke for one and a half hours, leaving the whole audience in tears of joy and gratitude.

Shortly after His Holiness Rādhā-Govinda Mahārāja’s devastating stroke, I visited him at his hospital
bed in New Delhi. In his materially pitiable condition he spontaneously spoke from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Quoting verses and extolling the glories of Prahlāda Mahārāja, he was totally absorbed in being an instrument of your love.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have invested your dedicated followers with an unconditional taste for glorifying Kṛṣṇa and an undying spirit of compassion for all souls. And it is all built upon the foundation of their ardent desire to follow in your sacred footsteps and please you.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I pray to be yours forever.

With gratitude, a servant of your servants,

Rādhānāth Swami

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Rāmāi Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupada,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{nama oṁ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale} \\
\text{śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine} \\
\text{namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vānī-pracārīne} \\
\text{nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe}
\end{align*}
\]

In your purport to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.15.45 write:

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu therefore says, guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja: one must first please the spiritual master, and then one automatically pleases Kṛṣṇa and gets the strength with which to cross the ocean of nescience. If one seriously desires to return home, back to Godhead, one must therefore become strong enough by pleasing the spiritual master, for thus one gets the weapon with which to conquer the enemy, and one also gets the grace of Kṛṣṇa. Simply getting the weapon of jñāna is insufficient. One must sharpen the weapon by serving the spiritual master and adhering to his instructions. Then the candidate will get the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

It’s been over thirty years since you left—in that time we’ve tried to please you, And while there’s been good, there’s also been bad—I’m sure that would displease you. We saw your example and what you did—we know how this movement went on. Let us examine the right and the wrong—working together now that you’ve gone.

From top to bottom we need a review—organized to the best of our ability. Gather devotees from around the world—move forward with careful objectivity. There are many things that should have been done—but are now left incomplete. It will take our full attention and we owe it to you—we offer this at your lotus feet.

More than that, we want to expand—keeping in mind the instructions you gave. Preaching is unlimited, by the mercy of the Lord—we need to be humble and grave. There’s so much to do and places to go—though your disciples are not young anymore. New generations have come forward—to take up the tasks you gave us from before.
We pray to you to help our endeavor—we seek your mercy and your blessing. 
By your guidance from up above—the world will be dancing, singing, and feasting. 
You once said this is the way for most—to the more serious, knowledge we can teach. 
The world of Māyā is very strong—these weapons will put them beyond her reach.

If we focus on you and the ācāryas too—certainly the Lord will help and approve. 
For we know that if we preach with vigor—everyone will appreciate and be moved. 
You are definitely our saving grace—without a doubt we can understand. 
You have lighted the night of Kali—please take us to Krṣṇa’s transcendental land.

Your insignificant servant,

Rāmāi Swami

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Romapāda Swami

_ōṁ ajñāna-timirāndhasya jīrānjaya-śalākaya_
_ caksur unmīltam yena taśmai śrī-gurave nāmaṁ_

_nāma ōṁ viṣṇu-pāḍāya krṣṇa-śreṣṭhāya bhū-tale_
_śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāṁhin iti nāmine_

_nāmas te sārasuṭe deve gaurā-vāṁi-pracāriṁe_
_nirviṣeṣa-sūnyavādu-pāścātya-deśa-tārīṁe_

_mūkāṁ karoti vāccālaṁ paṅguṁ laṅghayate girīm_
_yat-krpā tam ahaṁ vande śrī guruṁ dīna-tāraṇam_

My dear and most respected spiritual master and eternal father,

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

The mercy of a pure devotee is inconceivable. I have absolute confidence in this fact. With full faith in this reality, I come before you today with the petition of an abject beggar: I am pleading for but one drop of your very special mercy. My conviction is that if I can receive but one drop of your very special mercy, then only will I be able to fulfill the most daunting service you have entrusted me with thus far in my entire forty years of devotional service: GBC Chairman.

One of your dear disciples, Harvilāsa Prabhu, shared that you once instructed him in a letter: “Whenever one’s service and responsibility is increased in Krṣṇa consciousness, it is a sign of Lord Caitanya’s blessing.”

In a similar manner, many devotees have offered their kind words of congratulations for my having become GBC Chairman. Shaking my head with a diametrically opposite mood, I reply, “Prabhu, please pray for me!”

I take this challenging service in quite a different manner than receiving a sort of honor. My thoughts run as follows: “How but by your causeless mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda, can an obscure and unqualified nobody become entrusted with such a service—a service that only a highly qualified and exalted Vaiṣṇava should even be considered for?” The whole drama is surreal, except for one thing: your divine grace!
yogatā-vicāre,  kichu nāhi pāi,
tomāra karunā-sāra
karanā nā hoile,  kāndiyā kāndiyā,
prāṇa nā rākhibo āra

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

The range of qualities it takes to properly perform this service is beyond my reach: excellent communication skills, inexhaustible patience, highly personal responsiveness, sensitivity to multiple opposing voices and views, inclusiveness yet decisiveness, teamwork, limitless humility, attention to detail, awareness of cultural differences, respect for everyone, compassion, leadership vision that anticipates the future and envisions solutions even before they can and must be practically manifest, maintaining fixed regulation, being firm in determination yet flexible in execution of paths of action, being focused upon fulfillment of promises, wisdom in assigning tasks and roles, maintaining reasonable expectations, etc.

Who has all those qualities, and more? I certainly do not!

Once again, I see only one solution: absolute dependence upon Your Divine Grace!

Through this new service I am gaining an ever-deepening realization about our core theology: we are constitutional servants of Kṛṣṇa. Non-stop—service to Kṛṣṇa. This is our identity!

Echoing the message recently spoken by our new President of the United States on the occasion of his first hundred days in office, I can only say, “By this service I am deeply humbled.”

My relationship with you has entered a new dimension. By striving to accept this GBC Chairman post in a serious mood of humble service unto you despite my feelings of inadequacy and lack of sufficient maturity, I feel a profound sense of presence of Your Divine Grace with me almost always, unlike any other sense of connection with you I have felt before. I am most grateful to you for being present with me in such a strong and supportive manner. Without such presence I would have become crushed!

Gurudeva!
krpā-bindu diyā  kara ‘eī dāse,
tnāpeksa ati hīṇa
sakala-sahane,  bala diyā kara’,
nīja māne sprhāhīna

“Gurudeva, give to this servant just one drop of mercy. I am lower than a blade of grass. Give me all help. Give me strength. Let me be as you are, without desires or aspirations.”

“Preaching is the essence.” If anything rivaled your ability to inspire and empower others to conduct the affairs of your ISKCON Society on your behalf, it was your indomitable preaching spirit. Even though preaching has been my life’s dedication in your service, I find myself becoming ever-increasingly inspired to spread further and wider your preaching mission, despite the added management responsibilities I now have. The responsiveness to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s message of śuddha-bhakti is growing enormously here in America today; our Building Bridges Conference in D.C. brought forward a number of inspiring approaches aimed at touching the hearts of souls in very genuine and caring ways, approaches by which we could reach audiences with whom we are not regularly connecting. I am anticipating much growth of Kṛṣṇa consciousness as our newer devotees find their “voice” in the expanding realms of outreach.

You are our acarya, Śrīla Prabhupāda, in the preaching field as well as within our loving relationships amongst the Vaiṣṇavas. We are simply following behind you, joyfully striving to bring more souls to accept and in turn to gradually exemplify your sublime spiritual teachings.

I beg that you keep me engaged in the same way as you were engaged—preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the very last breath of life.

Please accept my prostrated obeisances again and again.

Aspiring for your eternal service,

Your humble disciple,

Romapāda Swami
Homages from the GBC

41

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

Please accept my humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet. And all glories to you, deliverer of the greatest treasure: the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

When you were physically present, you repeatedly thanked your disciples for their words of appreciation and for the sentiments contained in their homages to you. You were so great and your achievements so numerous that there were unlimited things to appreciate in you and your divine service, and these appreciations constantly stirred sentiments of gratitude, obligation, and love towards you.

Today I would like to single out what I consider to be the greatest of Your Divine Grace’s achievements: your deliverance of the holy names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa to the world. I hope that my words of appreciation communicate the profound sentiments that have grown in my heart during the four decades I have been chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Recently Govinda Mahārāja and I were talking about how, despite the many things that didn’t quite work out as we had envisioned or planned in the early days of your movement, one thing never let us down: the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.

Whether we chant japa in solitude, sing kirtana before the Deities, or perform harināma on the streets or at festivals, the holy names always deliver the goods. They insulate us from material contamination, give us a taste of the divine, and attract anyone who hears them as they are spoken, chanted, or sung.

When I feel discouraged or frightened, enthusiastic or calm, the mahā-mantra brings me back to reality, to the state of awareness wherein Kṛṣṇa is the center. I can then perceive all personal emotions and ambitions as subservient to the chanting of Kṛṣṇa’s names; and even failures become insignificant compared to the sweet chanting of those holy names. Nāma-sankirtana always delivers the goods.

When I chant japa, the holy names dissolve the miseries of the mental platform, awaken remembrance of Kṛṣṇa, and bestow spiritual happiness, which naturally flows from such remembrance. When I sing in kirtana, I reside in the reverberation of the holy names, the happiest and most satisfying place in which to live. The holy names dismantle all egocentric barriers, unite devotees and nondevotees alike, reveal the most esoteric truths, and make the inconceivable conceivable.

For those who first come in contact with Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the holy names of Kṛṣṇa are mystical, all-attractive sounds that gradually draw them to Kṛṣṇa, and to the spiritual world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you told us that all the other services we perform simply enable us to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa properly. You said that chanting is the solution to all problems, conflicts, and disease. You told us that chanting was the ultimate and only religious process for this age. And you also said that by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa we would become pure devotees and go back to Godhead.

Since I have personally experienced the fulfillment of some of the above statements, I have no doubt that as you have promised, in time I will experience the fulfillment of them all. Chanting delivers the goods.

A lot of water has passed beneath the ISKCON bridge; yet the holy names have remained, like you and Kṛṣṇa, unshakable pillars that never let a sincere devotee down.

Had we taken chanting more seriously, had we chanted more attentively, perhaps many of our personal failings and those of ISKCON could have been avoided, even transformed into victories. Didn’t you often point to our lack of commitment to quality chanting as the cause of our disparities?

In this meager offering I have touched but a molecular portion of the glories of the holy names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and of the benefits they award to those who chant and hear them. You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, fulfilled Lord Caitanya’s prophecy by giving the fallen people of this age the greatest of treasures. Therefore you are as glorious as the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. And as everyone knows, like the holy names, you always deliver the goods, the crown jewel of those touchstone-like goods being pure affection for the holy names themselves.

On this glorious day, therefore, I pray to the holy names of Kṛṣṇa that whenever I say the word “Kṛṣṇa” I shall remember you, my Prabhupāda. I pray to the wonderful mahā-mantra that I forever feel obligation, gratitude, and love for the spiritual master who has given me the Absolute Truth in the form of transcen-
dental sound. And I pray to you, my divine master, that you bless me that I can perfect my chanting of Kṛṣṇa’s names and thus begin to repay you for giving me the most treasured delight of my heart.

Śivarāma Swami