

# Homages



Non-GBC Sannyāsis





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# Ātmanivedana Swami

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Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga!

I am writing this after many years. I got inspired to do this because I thought I will give you a report of my preaching. I have thought always that you would be pleased if someone came to you with a positive report of the activity of spreading the mission of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This, I think, is the real glorification of the spiritual master. We can always quote the twenty-six pure qualities from the scriptures, but this is self evident. So what is the point of telling the sun that it is bright and shining?

After the departure in October 2006 of my spiritual master, your dear disciple His Holiness Bhakti Svarūpa Dāmodara Swami, I felt lost. So after thinking for awhile, I decided to do some soul-searching to see what my direction should be. I came to the conclusion that if I want to please you, I should take up the spirit of my spiritual master and just preach. For the last three years I have been visiting the devotees and encouraging them to take bold steps to engage in different projects so there is no time for *māyā*. I pray to your lotus feet that I can be of some use to your divine mission. Please give me the ability to do this for your pleasure.

*Your very humbled servant of the servant,*

Ātmanivedana Swami

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# Bhakti Rāghava Swami

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*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā  
cakṣur unmilitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

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

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

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

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, at whose lotus feet more and more souls are surrendering and finding solace and shelter.

Since my last Vyāsa-pūjā offering to you, by your causeless mercy some important developments regarding your *varṇāśrama* mission have taken place. In September of 2008, the leadership in India formally endorsed a paper entitled “Promoting Vrindaban Village Development in India,” which gave your *varṇāśrama* mission much-needed support and recognition. Then, during the GBC meetings in February 2009, some important resolutions were passed encouraging the development of *varṇāśrama*. And now even more recently, in April of this year during the all-India leadership convention in Visakhapatnam, South India, another major development took place. The leadership of India officially endorsed the proposal to set up a ministry for promoting the *varṇāśrama* mission in India; the name of the ministry is the Varṇāśrama-based Rural Development Ministry. I am sure you must be pleased by these developments.

Yet I also know that you must remain somewhat dissatisfied because we have yet to fulfill so many aspects of your *varṇāśrama* mission, especially in the matter of establishing *varṇāśrama* colleges.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your vision of how to re-direct the present misguided society is very profound and far-reaching. When Lord Caitanya envisioned that in the near future the day would come when the holy names of Hari would be chanted in every town and village, few factually believed this could ever happen. Most, if not all, wondered how this ever could be possible. Although such doubts were there among your godbrothers, you had a clear and undeterred conviction that, by the grace of Guru and Kṛṣṇa, this was indeed possible. As a soul totally surrendered to the words and desires of your spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, you never doubted that this could be done, and at an advanced age you ventured halfway across the globe to undertake what appeared like an impossible mission: to make true the words of both your Guru Mahārāja and Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

When reflecting on your example, I gain a little glimpse of something similar when projecting how the *varṇāśrama* mission will one day see the vast majority of people back in the villages and once again following what was never ever meant to be abandoned, the pure and simple principles of “simple living and high thinking.”

Recently, while listening to a lecture you gave in Los Angeles in 1972, I was very much impressed by your statement that “no change means perfect knowledge.” You often reminded us how we Westerners nurture this disease of wanting to change things all the time. If one has perfect knowledge of something, then what indeed is the need for change? This is the major flaw in today’s demoniac so-called civilization. The modern understanding is that there is no such thing as the Absolute Truth, there is no such thing as perfect knowledge. Naturally, it follows that everything is meant to change. But that is totally unsupported by *sāstra*, nor is it supported by our own experiences. The laws of material nature are very strict, as you would often remind us. If we deviate even slightly from such laws, we are immediately punished. Our extra mouthful of food results in a stomach disorder and brings about the need to fast in order to bring back the lost balance.

I realize that the goal is to develop pure love of Kṛṣṇa through the process of devotional service. As you would say, *kṛṣṇa-bhakti nitya-siddha sādhyā kabhu naya*: The practice of devotional service is indeed the eternal perfection of the living entity, and that will always remain our goal as devotees. This you have so wonderfully demonstrated by your personal example and the clear teachings you have given us. Yet, to come to this platform is not at all easy, as you yourself have explained. The ideal social arrangement for developing pure love of Kṛṣṇa *varṇāśrama-dharma*, given by the Lord Himself in His teachings to Arjuna (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.13). In his *Śrī Caitanya-sikṣāmṛta*, chapter 3, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura confirms this as well:

In that man is bound by a material body, he must follow the *varṇāśrama* rules. That cannot be denied, for without the development of body, mind, society, and spirit, man’s life becomes degraded. The rules of *varṇāśrama* are suitable for this purpose, and therefore they should be followed. However, *varṇāśrama* is not the final goal. With the assistance of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, a person should cultivate *bhakti*. It is also necessary to follow the rules of *varṇāśrama* in the cultivation of *bhakti*. . . . Though all humans have a right to practice *bhakti*, those who follow the regulations of *varṇāśrama* have a much easier time.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, kindly help us understand how we can fulfill your desire to bring about in human society the necessary changes needed so that the principles of *dharma*, both *bhāgavata-dharma*, the science of the liberated soul, and *varṇāśrama-dharma*, the science of the conditioned soul, can be protected and the people will be able to progress nicely in devotional service. Without your kind mercy this will never be possible. Please be merciful to us so that we may serve your instructions nicely.

I beg to remain engaged in your devotional service, although I have no qualifications for such. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for your kind mercy upon me. Kindly forgive my shortcomings and offenses. I pray for the mercy of my godbrothers and godsisters so that we may all realize more deeply your desires to spread Lord Caitanya’s *saṅkīrtana* movement. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

*Your servant,*

Bhakti Rāghava Swami

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# Bhakti Sundar Goswami

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My dear Guru Mahārāja Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances. I take shelter at your lotus feet, which are the abode of pure *bhakti*.

When Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya asked Caitanya Mahāprabhu why Īśvara Purī kept Govinda as a servant although he was a *śūdra*, Mahāprabhu replied that the spiritual master is as independent as the Supreme Lord and therefore his mercy is not subject to any Vedic rules. In the same way, your mercy is so great and wonderful that due to your love for Kṛṣṇa you took so much risk by accepting as your servants so many fallen souls like me. We are so fortunate to have such a merciful master. Through the association of my godbrothers, I feel so much your merciful guiding presence. Please bless me so I can always keep company with your loving servants, in whose association your remembrance is so sweet and enlivening.

Guru Mahārāja, I'm missing you so much. You know my heart better than anyone else. I know you are making all the needed arrangements to purify my heart and mind so that one day, by your mercy alone, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa will reside there. Please keep me under the shelter of your lotus feet eternally.

You are my master, life after life.

*Your weeping servant,*

Bhakti Sundar Goswami

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## Bhakti Vighna Vināśa Narasimha Mahārāja

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Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

On this auspicious occasion of your divine appearance, I have the opportunity and duty to speak a few words in praise of your infinite glories and mercy.

I had the good fortune to take shelter at your lotus feet during your visit to London in the summer of 1971. I was twenty-two years of age at the time and had graduated from the university just over a year earlier. I was happy to join the daily *saṅkīrtana*-party excursions leaving the confines of our temple/*āśrama* and proceed to Oxford Street, the hub of London. The chanting party provided a joyful experience for both the participants and the onlookers.

To some we were recording stars, the singers on the famous Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Temple album. People had seen us on TV and knew we were friends of the Beatles and very close to George Harrison. To others we were a nuisance, a disturbance to the peace, parasites living off society by soliciting alms and selling books. Whatever we were, it was the most wonderful experience and I enjoyed every minute of it.

I had already tried other spiritual paths: there was the silent meditation and the *haṭha* yoga, and there was also the attempt to leave the body—astral projection—but I had to admit I was only increasing my attachment to this body. I was told I was like bubbles in the ocean and should become one with the ocean. I found it hard to believe.

I desperately needed something to cut down my false ego, to reduce my attachment to this body and everything in relation to this body. I found it in the daily program of street *saṅkīrtana*.

I shaved off my long locks and was left with a *śikhā*. I exchanged my faded jeans for the simple cloth of the *dhotī*. I was given a book bag and told to go out on the street and approach people and introduce our books to them. We had to get some donation for them also, as the books were not free. I found this simple activity to be the most spiritually powerful of anything I had ever tried. It forced me to detach myself from the body and to take a humble position before others. I no longer had anything to be proud of. I was a monk in the true sense, living a life of austerity and simplicity.

It was the kind of life I had always been looking for. It appeared to me by the grace of Lord Kṛṣṇa through the mercy of his pure and empowered representative, and I am eternally thankful for this. I can say that I continue to take pleasure in *saṅkīrtana* of any description. Chanting parties, book distribution, life membership preaching are only the first things that come to mind, but there are many other forms of *saṅkīrtana* and I take pleasure in them all.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have given us such wonderful engagements for the pleasure of the Lord. I know that I can never begin to repay you. I can only request you to please continue to engage me in the *saṅkīrtana* movement. I am willing to go anywhere and take up any service you may ask of me. I only request that you please engage me in your service.

*The eternal servant of your many, many servants,*

Bhakti Vighna Vināśa Narasimha Mahārāja

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## Bhakti Vikāsa Swami

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*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale  
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn̐ iti nāmīne*

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

*nāma-śreṣṭhar̥ṇ manum api śacī-putram atra svarūpaṇ  
rūpaṇ tasyāgrajam uru-purīṇ māthurīṇ goṣṭhavāṭīm  
rādha-kuṇḍar̥ṇ giri-varam aho rādhikā-mādhavāśāṇ  
prāpto yasya prathita-kṛpayā śrī-gurum̐ tar̥ṇ nato 'smi*

“I bow down to the beautiful lotus feet of my spiritual master, by whose causeless mercy I have obtained the supreme holy name, the divine mantra, the service of the son of Śacī-mātā, the association of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara, Rūpa Gosvāmī, and his older brother Sanātana Gosvāmī, the supreme abode of Mathurā, the blissful abode of Vṛndāvana, the divine Rādhā-kuṇḍa, and Govardhana Hill, along with the desire within my heart for the loving service of Śrī Śrī Rādhikā and Mādhava in Vṛndāvana.” (*Muktā-carita*, Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, having completed twenty years attempting to serve you in the *sannyāsa-āśrama*, I must first thank you for giving me the opportunity to render service to you throughout my life by traveling, speaking, writing, and preaching. Of course, ultimately *āśrama* is unimportant in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and at best I am a castor-plant, Kali-yuga excuse for a *sannyāsī*. Yet I must still thank you for saving me from any black-hole tragedies, for protecting and sustaining me in this difficult *sannyāsa-āśrama*, and for giving me the freedom to preach without concern for personal maintenance and without entanglement with children, wife, home, and the rest.

I am very happy in your service.

*ātma-nivedana, tuvā pade kori',  
hoinu parama sukhī  
duḥkha dūre gelo, cintā nā rohilo,  
caudike ānanda dekhi*

“I have become supremely happy by surrendering myself at your lotus feet. Sorrow has gone far away, and worry has not remained. Everywhere I see bliss.” (*Saraṇāgati*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura)

Of course, being your *sannyāsī* brings great responsibility. *Sannyāsa* is meant for neither luxurious living nor carefree wandering, but for performing significant service. You wanted your disciples to be recognized for their greatness—not the greatness attained by hype or by collecting sentimentalists and sycophants, nor the greatness of attaining a high position from which to exploit others, but the greatness that follows total surrender and utter humility. Śrīla Prabhupāda, my lack of significant service to your lotus feet, despite having all opportunity to perform it, sadly speaks of my dearth of both surrender and humility. Therefore, on this day I beg your mercy that I may at last rectify myself and serve you as I properly should. May I cast aside all petty ambition and become a true disciple of such a glorious master as Your Divine Grace.

You have given us everything, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Via the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra you have given us Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and the whole spiritual world:

Prabhupāda handed [Robert] a small piece of paper with the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra printed on it.

**Robert:** While Swamiji was handing it to me, he had this big smile on his face, like he was handing me the world. [*Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*]

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the one who can bring me to the spiritual world. You have opened the door, showed me the treasure therein, and commissioned me to bring others also. I attempt to do that by exhorting them to heed your message. In a world dangerously spinning toward pandemonium, your message is urgently needed more than ever, for you have offered all solutions to the myriad confusions facing society—even before others were aware of the problems. There has never been a more vital nor better time for preaching. Throughout the world, people are eager to take your books and hear your message.

Please empower us, for the favorable factors are complicated by innumerable hurdles, not the least of which is the state of your ISKCON—which in essence is nondifferent from you and, being the prime medium of service to you, is the means whereby our relationship with you is maintained and nourished. Vyāsa-pūjā offerings are not meant for airing gripes, but I cannot but express concern for your movement. Various compromises and deviations, exacerbated by pronounced leadership problems, are making your house a precarious one in which to live.

The challenges are enormous, and we can overcome them only by invoking your mercy and recalling how you remained steadfast amidst apparently insurmountable obstacles. You triumphed by your full commitment to do the unimaginable: deliver Kṛṣṇa consciousness to a degraded and apathetic populace. Your success formula is the only one that has ever or will ever work in the spiritual sphere: invoking the mercy of the previous *ācāryas* by having full faith in their words and full dependence upon their favor. We too can achieve the impossible by reverting to the same principle, the one you incessantly taught:

*guru-mukha-padma-vākya, cittete kariyā aikya,  
āra nā kariha mane āśā*

Whatever happens, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I want to stay with you. I know that you are always with me, despite my often almost willful forgetfulness of you. I feel your potency charging me when I speak and write; otherwise, how could I even dream of speaking and writing for Kṛṣṇa? If you wish, you can make me a vessel for delivering your message in a manner we now can hardly envisage.

Your mercy is all that I am made of. Praying to ever remain in the shelter of your lotus feet, and in that of your true followers,

Bhakti Vikāsa Swami



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# Bhakti Vinoda Swami

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Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am but a very small and insignificant servant in your worldwide movement. Still, I greatly appreciate your contribution to me and to the rest of the world through your books, your followers, your temples, your personal life and conduct, and so much more. Your pastimes and life are a powerful example of the mission of human life enacted with determination, intelligence, and devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Today many people write about attaining happiness and the perfection of life, but they fail miserably in acting to attain them, and mostly they don't act at all. Their books just remain mere ink on wasted paper—*vāyasa-tīrtha*. Through your books, life, and activities you have shown how to visibly and tangibly live life to the full and enjoy it by serving Kṛṣṇa. Real life means Kṛṣṇa conscious life. I am convinced.

As I write this to Your Divine Grace, your very dear spiritual son His Holiness Jayapatāka Swami, my spiritual master, is here in Coimbatore undergoing intense Ayurvedic therapy. He is working with amazing determination to make a comeback after his serious illness. His resolution against all odds and his positive spirit of fighting for Kṛṣṇa offer an amazing display of the purports in your books. Although I did not get to see you physically, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I can see that my *gurudeva* is a “chip of the ol' block,” and thus I can have *darśana* of you through him. I offer my prayers at your merciful lotus feet for his speedy recovery, since he is so important to your mission of spreading the holy name. How wonderful are each of your disciples holding together your movement today!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, spreading your mission in Kerala is a special task entrusted to me by the GBC. It's tough terrain, and only by your mercy can we begin to melt the hearts of the innumerable Mr. Nairs who populate this place. Please empower me with your blessings so we can complete the project at Guruvayur and finish publishing your books in the Malayalam language. I am too tiny for this task.

On this auspicious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā, I offer my respectful obeisances at your lotus feet, beg forgiveness for all my offenses, and seek your mercy as my spiritual grandfather. I am very dependent on your mercy. I was awarded *sannyāsa* by His Holiness Jayapatāka Swami recently, and I seek your blessings so I can increase my travel and preaching and contribute to the spreading of the wonderful movement you have initiated globally.

I thank you once again and always, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for this wonderful gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

*The servant of your servants,*

Bhakti Vinoda Swami

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# Candramauli Swami

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

*namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāñī-pracāriṇe  
nirviṣeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

The principles that guide our devotional practice give life to our devotion in proportion to how we awaken to our spiritual qualities and good character. You have mentioned in your writings that there are twenty-six principal qualities of a Vaiṣṇava. Kindness is listed first. A devotee is kind. That kindness is best exhibited as a desire to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness and bring others into the process of pure devotional service. A devotee is *para-duḥkha-duḥkhī*: he feels for the suffering conditions of those who remain asleep to their spiritual nature but very much awake to the illusory happiness of the material body and its many extensions.

But along with that element of kindness toward outsiders, which is paramount and supreme, you instructed your followers to be very concerned not to neglect our godbrothers and godsisters when they are afflicted by bodily illness or injury.

In April of 1974 you wrote this in a letter to Śukadeva Dāsa:

One of the symptoms of a devotee is that he is kind, so if our Godbrother becomes ill it is our duty to help him get the proper medicine and treatment so that he can recover.

So there is no question of ill treating of our own Godbrothers simply because they are sick, nor should you allow such neglect to go on. So long we have this material body there will be sickness, but we have to remain on the transcendental platform nevertheless.

Since October of last year, when your dear disciple His Holiness Jayapatāka Mahārāja suffered a severe stroke, leaving him with less than 1% chance of survival according to medical experts, we have witnessed how the worldwide Vaiṣṇava community has come together in a most amazing and determined way to do what was within our power to help. Devotees have offered individual prayers, held twenty-four-hour *kīrtanas*, commenced long-term fire *yajñas*, performed special worship services, and taken upon themselves personal austerities to show the Lord our love and concern for Mahārāja. The results have been astounding, baffling all medical calculations: Maharaja survived and is now well on his way to recovery! The society of Vaiṣṇavas have shown the Lord in a most amazing way how much they cared for Mahārāja, and the Lord has reciprocated.

And again, in March of this year, when Jahnudvīpa Prabhu and his good wife Braja Sevakī had a near-fatal car crash in Calcutta, many devotees came together to offer their loving care, prayers, concern, and personal assistance.

What follows is an excerpt from a letter of appreciation written by Braja Sevakī:

Since Jahnu Prabhu and I returned to Mayapur, and while in the Intensive Care Unit in Calcutta, so many devotees have visited us, given us their loving support, and shown their affection, care, and concern in so many ways. Many also asked me if I would write something of our realizations gained from going through this.

We woke in Intensive Care, being cared for by professional experts. Murari Gupta, Sankarshan Nitai, Ramadevi, Radha Raman, Raja, Aghabid Prabhus . . . all of them put things in motion to have us cared for, all of them guided by Kṛṣṇa to care for their family members. Their love and selflessness have moved us like nothing ever has before; the love of devotees worldwide has healed us faster than medicine; the prayers of the devotees sped us through recovery and brought us home; the healing sent to us by Vaisnavas worldwide continues to sustain us; and most of all, the loving embrace of our family in Mayapur is our utmost shelter and feeds us constantly. We are blissful :)

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for teaching us in so many ways what is a devotee—to be concerned and to care for others. I pray I can develop these qualities.

With your mercy, the “impossible” is achievable.

*Your lowly servant,*

Candramauli Swami

# Candraśekhara Swami

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

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

How can we get them to listen? That is the real deal, isn't it? Somehow they must take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As devotees, we talk about preaching strategies. Some are having large success. Will this strategy work, will that? Somehow or other we need a strategy to help the conditioned souls become devotees. This is wanted. At *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.16 you state:

The expert devotees also can discover novel ways and means to convert the nondevotees in terms of particular time and circumstance. Devotional service is dynamic activity, and the expert devotees can find out competent means to inject it into the dull brains of the materialistic population. Such transcendental activities of the devotees for the service of the Lord can bring a new order of life to the foolish society of materialistic men. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His subsequent followers exhibited expert dexterity in this connection. By following the same method, one can bring the materialistic men of this age of quarrel into order for peaceful life and transcendental realization.

So we must have a good strategy and good *sādhana*. We cannot underestimate either. The key is getting Kṛṣṇa's mercy to give Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

Kṛṣṇa has committed Himself to allowing the living entities to have free will. This means that Kṛṣṇa does not take away the living entities' power to choose actions, be they right or wrong. And we also hear that Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or *bhakti*, is not dependent upon any outside factor. It is not dependent on birth, piety, caste, previous knowledge, age, or any material designation. It is not dependent upon *karma*, *jñāna*, or *yoga*. *Bhakti* springs from its own source, not any other. Accumulating pious credit does not guarantee *bhakti*, nor does extreme sin exclude *bhakti*.

At first pass this sounds mysterious. Kṛṣṇa does not force *bhakti* upon anyone. *Bhakti* springs only from *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is not dependent upon any other thing—not *karma*, *jñāna* or *yoga*. *Somehow or other, by good fortune, one attains bhakti*. This is the mysterious phrase that we hear in scripture.

If there is no eligibility prerequisite, then why do some people become devotees and others don't? How does this *bhakti* spring up in the heart of the nondevotee? How does *bhakti* spring from *bhakti*? What is this good fortune? Who gets it and why?

This is nicely answered in the *Mādhurya-kādambinī*, by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura unravels this question in his "First Shower," as he explores the meaning of the Sanskrit word *yadṛcchayā* (Sanskrit for "somehow"; "somehow or other" in ISKCONese. By the way, it also means "by its own accord," "by fortune," "without endeavor," "by chance," "causelessly," "by its own sweet will," "spontaneously," "automatically," "suddenly," "by providence," "independently," etc.) The answer is that *bhakti* follows the mercy of the devotee. The devotee has *bhakti*; the devotee gives *bhakti*; therefore *bhakti* come from *bhakti*. Kṛṣṇa is not forcing the *bhakti* upon someone; rather, it is the devotee who is trying to inject the *bhakti* into the dull mind or heart of the nondevotee. The *bhakti*, of course, comes from Kṛṣṇa. And Kṛṣṇa does not require some prerequisite; the Vedic literature is full of stories of even low-class sinners becoming devotees. So why do some get the mercy and not others? This is the important point. Some get the mercy and not others because a devotee approached them and the devotee had the mercy. Kṛṣṇa's mercy follows the mercy of the devotee. Hmmm . . .

As the *Dragnet* intro went, "*Bum-Pa-Bum-Pa . . . That's when I go to work . . .*" So it depends upon the devotees. Hey, I am supposed to be a devotee . . . that means me. Wow. So Kṛṣṇa's mercy follows me? "Yeah, dat what it means!!" Of course, I cannot expect Kṛṣṇa's mercy to follow me if I am not in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore I have to work at being devoted, pleasing Kṛṣṇa, pleasing you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Then Kṛṣṇa's mercy will follow me. This is the case for strong *sādhana*.

Practically, we see this principle in action every day. Some devotees just seem to make people Kṛṣṇa conscious wherever they are, whatever they do. Today I am praying to become more pure to really achieve that mercy to spread the mercy. And I am also trying to approach people in various ways. I believe in an integrated preaching approach. That means trying to make a whole package that will bring people into the association of devotees and continue to nurture them. Help me, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, to deploy these systems fully and become a touchstone.

Whenever I think of you, I can only think of preaching. That is what I associate you with. Preaching was your heart in the 60's and 70's, and today I feel that nothing has changed: it is still your heart. It will always be the same thing. There is nothing else. For me—Hang on, work hard, make good plans, follow through on them, care about everyone, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, and pray like all-get-out.

I want the mercy to give the mercy!!

*Your servant,*

Candraśekhara Swami

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## Dānavīr Goswami

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*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale  
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn̐ iti nāmīne*

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

To my dear beloved Guru Mahārāja, Om̐ Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa Parivrājakācārya 108 Śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,

I offer my most respectful obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet. All glories, all glories, all glories to Your Divine Grace on this most auspicious day!

I am pleased to report that, in the past three years, Rūpānuga Vedic College (RVC) twice placed second in the annual North American book distribution results. RVC continues to publish new volumes of books such as the *Garga Saṁhitā* and cosmological texts, as well as a highly acclaimed DVD called “Vedic Cosmos.” Great strides have also been made by our cosmology research team of devotees, comprising fifteen PhD's and PhD candidates, who are proving the accuracy of the *Sūrya-siddhānta's* astronomical calculations and formulas.

My next project, with your blessings, is to construct a themed village for presenting Vedic sciences to the Americans. Originally the idea began with the thought of constructing a three-dimensional domed theater to display the fascinating workings of the universe according to the Vedic scriptures. Such a theater could also be used to show movies about transmigration of the soul (“Cellular Bodies”) and other Kṛṣṇa conscious topics. The logical choice for a location is Orlando, Florida, near Disney World, where the climate is good all year round and millions of tourists visit annually.

Outside the domed theater, tour guides will show visitors the full-sized replica of King Jai Singh's observatory. At the planned Forbidden Archaeology Museum, anomalous artifacts and high-tech gadgetry will be used to show how Darwin's theory of evolution is flawed. The Bhaktivedanta Institute Pavilion will house many other Vedic scientific exhibitions and host science symposiums at the conference center.

A major attraction of the planned theme village will be a Vedic Eco farm demonstrating how to live without modern technology. Visitors will learn how the devotees produce their own food, clothing, etc., using the land, oxen, and cows. Through the *varṇāśrama* system of simple living and sustainability, we hope to provide a viable alternative to modern industrialized lifestyles.

As a memorial to Your Divine Grace, we plan to bring the original *Jaladuta* (or its replica), which carried you across the Atlantic to America in 1965. Onboard, it will display your lifelong achievements in museums, theaters, plays, 3D exhibits, and picture galleries. Visitors will be able to browse or buy any of your books in all of the more than eighty languages in which they have been published so far.

Other attractions will be a replica of Vṛndāvana, sacred rivers, diorama/animatronics, dramas of the Lord's transcendental pastimes, a magnificent Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa temple, restaurants, and devotional gift shops. To accomplish all of this we are working with the best theme park designers in America.

The planned themed village will provide housing for devotees and education in the form of *gurukulas* and a Vedic college. Guests will be accommodated in our own guesthouses.

In short, we wish to showcase everything that Kṛṣṇa consciousness has to offer in the most attractive, interesting, and beneficial way.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, our fervent desire is to please you. Kindly guide us in the right direction.

*Your most insignificant servant,*

Dānavīr Goswami

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## Gaṇapati dās Swami

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To: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Please accept my humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace! In a lecture given in Hyderabad, 1974, you referred to a conversation of a day earlier:

The present problem is food problem. It is not simply talking on this platform or that platform. Yesterday some news reporter, “Sir, what is your view of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *dvaita-vāda*, *advaita-vāda*?” The *dvaita-vāda*, *advaita-vāda*—that we shall consider later on. Come to the practical field. Now, suppose there is scarcity of food. So Kṛṣṇa does not say that this problem of scarcity of food will be solved by *dvaita-vāda* philosophy or *advaita-vāda* philosophy. Kṛṣṇa says practical way: *annād bhavanti bhūtāni*. *Annād*. You have, you must have sufficient food grains for the living entities, animal or man. This is practical. There is no question of talking. What is he talking of *advaita-vāda* philosophy or *dvaita-vāda* philosophy when you are needy, you require *anna*? That is practical solution given by Kṛṣṇa. *Annād bhavanti*. He never says that your food problem will be solved by philosophizing *advaita-vāda* or *dvaita-vāda*. Here is practical. *Annād bhavanti bhūtāni*. You must find out sufficient grains. *annād bhavanti bhūtāni parjanyaḥ anna-sambhavaḥ*. *Parjanyaḥ*. When there is sufficient rain, then there will be food grains, not by your *advaita-vāda* philosophy or *dvaita-vāda* philosophy. These are practical solution.

Thirty-plus years after your physical disappearance, your mission has been severely diverted and weakened by a variety of controversies. So much time, intelligence, and energy we have wasted arguing and debating over relative details, while the multitudes are left bereft of the only thing that can save them from disaster. Meanwhile, the iron fist of karmic law is swiftly descending in the form of financial, political, social, and environmental catastrophe. In the same way as you chided the reporter for worrying about *dvaita-advaita* instead of accepting Kṛṣṇa's practical instruction to perform sacrifice, I can hear you chastising us for fighting over what may soon prove to be trivial matters indeed—while the most urgent thing remains unfulfilled.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you gave us not only *sambandha-jñāna* and *prayojana*, but also *abhidheya*, the process for achieving life's perfection. What's more, not being satisfied with espousing a theoretical version of the devotional process, you taught us everything by example. Furthermore, you painted such a wide swath with your brush of compassion that you even encouraged the system of *daivī-varṇāśrama* as an

adjunct to your mostly *mleccha*-grade disciples' practice of *sādhana-bhakti*:

Vaiṣṇava is not so easy. The *varṇāśrama-dharma* should be established to become a Vaiṣṇava. It is not so easy to become Vaiṣṇava. [Conversation, February 1977]

Finally, in your last days you were anxiously prepared to personally train us in practical application of *varṇāśrama*, which you revealed to be the other “fifty percent” of your uncompleted mission:

I will go to Gītā Nāgarī. I will sit down, and I will teach you how to live off the land. [Personal remembrance, Tamāl Krishna Goswami]

Your heart bled, not only for your disciples, but for the countless souls who would one day come begging for shelter—both material and spiritual—at our rural communities. You saw it all coming, and you warned us to prepare:

That job . . . They will be very soon jobless. Don't worry. [*laughs*] They will come. They will be obliged to come. Now they have got job, but as the days are advancing in Kali-yuga, they'll be jobless. [Conversation, January 1977]

We initially responded with enthusiasm, but after you left, our determination waned and we abandoned the projects as being impractical. Now many nondevotees, around and ahead of us, are seeing that it is the *only* practicality. In Vṛndāvana you said to your then secretary, Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami:

Book distribution and farms: these are our solid programs. They can change the whole world. The whole foundation of animal civilization can be destroyed. If I have hope for still living, I wanted to organize the farms, make it perfect. Simple living and high thinking. [*TKG's Diary*, August 9]

You shared the *Vedic* teaching that real wealth is land and cows—*dhānyena dhanavān gavayā dhana-vān*. We can't eat tobacco, rubber, nuts, and bolts, or even gold, what to speak of modern-day currency, which one day will not be worth the paper it is printed on:

So this artificial way of banking, that will be also collapsed. [Conversation, January 1977]

You forecast the demise of the motorcar civilization and concluded that it was just an *anartha* all along:

This motorcar civilization will be finished within another hundred years. It has begun, say, for the last hundred years, and after a hundred years, when . . . The scientists say the petroleum will be finished within fifty years or like that, so, say hundred years, this motorcar will be finished. So anything we manufacture, the so-called empire, so-called material civilization, it is finished, it will be finished. That is another knot only, that we become captivated. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* lecture, August 1972]

What then will happen to the preaching? You declare, and I concur, that if we truly “walk our talk,” the *real* preaching will just begin. And even if others don't take to it, there is still no loss:

We should be satisfied locally by our food, by our cloth, by our milk. That's all. Let the whole world go to hell. We don't care. If you want to save yourself also, you do this. Here is an example. If you want artificial life, city life, and hellish life, you do. But we shall live like this. This is the ideal life. [Conversation, January 1977]

Let me finish with a beautiful description of Vṛndāvana life that you mercifully revealed in Śrī Vṛndāvana *dhāma*, May 1977:

Yes. That I want. I . . . Everywhere I go and say, how these rascals . . . ? So much land is lying, and

these rascals are not developing. And they are making . . . What is that? Coal stone. Coal. They are interested with these bricks and stones, not green vegetables. Such a rascal government. Give them facility. We know how to do it. *Annād bhavanti bhūtāni parjanyaḍ anna-sambhavaḥ, yajñād bhavati parjanyaḥ*. Let them engage in *kīrtana*. There will be more water for gardening, and it will be moist, and then produce fodder for the animals and food for you. And animal gives you milk. That is Vṛndāvana life. And they are absorbed in this so-called opulence. Kṛṣṇa has taken birth. They are bringing so many nice, pleasant foodstuff, very well dressed and ornamented. These are description. In the morning we were reading. How they were happy, the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana with Kṛṣṇa and living and cows. That I want to introduce. At any cost do it and . . . Don't bother about big, big buildings. It is not required. Useless waste of time. Produce. Make the whole field green. See that. Then whole economic question solved. Then you eat sumptuous. Eat sumptuously. The animal is happy. The animal even does not give milk; let them eat and pass stool and urine. That is welcome. After all, eating, they will pass stool. So that is beneficial, not that simple milk is beneficial. Even the stool is beneficial. Therefore I am asking so much here and . . . ,”Farm, farm, farm, farm . . . “ That is not *my* program—Kṛṣṇa's program. *Annād bhavanti bhūtāni*. Produce greenness everywhere, everywhere. Vṛndāvana. It is not this motorcar civilization.

I wonder, “Is there still time?”

*Your backwoods servant,*

Gaṇapati dās Swami

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## Guṇagrāhi dās Goswami

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Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

As I write my offering to you on the eve of the appearance day of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, I am drawn to contemplate how you reflected His divine qualities and those of His dear devotee Prahlāda.

When we meditate on *nṛsiṃha-līlā*, we marvel at the magnitude of the Lord's transcendental anger toward the great demon Hiraṇyakaśipu. I likewise marvel at the wrath you manifested toward Kṛṣṇa's modern-day Hiraṇyakaśipus in order to save us from their clutches. We knew full well that the great power and intensity of your ire was, contrary to its material counterpart, the perfect measure of both your immense love for your Lord and your extreme compassion upon your devotees, aimed at liberating us from destruction at the hands of Kali's insidious agents. The evolutionists, the abortionists, the materialistic scientists, the Māyāvādīs, the bogus yogīs—all were objects of your anger. And, just like Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, when you manifested your anger, your rage and prowess were awe-inspiring, illuminating, and exhilarating. “Hogs, dogs camels, and asses!” . . . “Fools and rascals!” . . . “Kick on their face! . . . on the nose! . . . with boot!” . . . You would almost shout when exposing and defeating the demons in your classes, *darśanas*, and morning walks. These outbursts gave us a feeling of peace and security and the faith that nothing could harm us as long as we held tight to your lotus feet. And when we saw how perfectly you mirrored Śrī Prahlāda's complete faith in and dependence on the Lord as you executed your mission, and saw how, just like Prahlāda, you were fully sheltered by that surrender, that further inspired our fearlessness. We were thus propelled to take all risks, undergo all austerities, and accept all difficulties to preach the holy name and to defeat Kali's agents with the sword of knowledge.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, not only did you protect us, your young disciples, in all our efforts, but you empowered us to practically move empires as we expanded Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the globe. There is no doubt, of course, that it was you who moved those empires and that without you we would have

been completely crushed by the innumerable Hiraṇyakaśipu of this world. I pray with all my heart, therefore, to never forget the magnitude of the good fortune you bestowed upon us, because, sadly, it is my tendency to do so. It often takes me moments of deep reflection like this to truly appreciate all that you have done. I therefore pray that these moments of awakening become transformed into a steady stream of constant remembrance and gratitude, and that I am thus always moved to serve you as valiantly, selflessly, and relentlessly as Prahlāda served his Lord and you served yours.

*Your humble, insignificant servant,*

Guṇagrāhi dās Goswami

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# Janānanda Goswami

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*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale  
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn iti nāmīne*

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

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

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

## A Vision Comes True

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

This year, 2009, is very special on our calendar. It is the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *sannyāsa*. It is also the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of your taking *sannyāsa* in order to preach.

In New York in the early days, when you were preaching alone, you met with a Mr. Ruben, a Turkish Jew who worked as a New York City subway conductor. Your prophetic words to him stand in history—your vision: “I am not a poor man, I am rich. There are temples and books, they are existing, they are there, but the time is separating us from them.”

Mr. Ruben mentioned how you always used the term “we” and spoke about the one who sent you, your spiritual master. You didn't know anyone in the US at that time, but said, “I am never alone.”

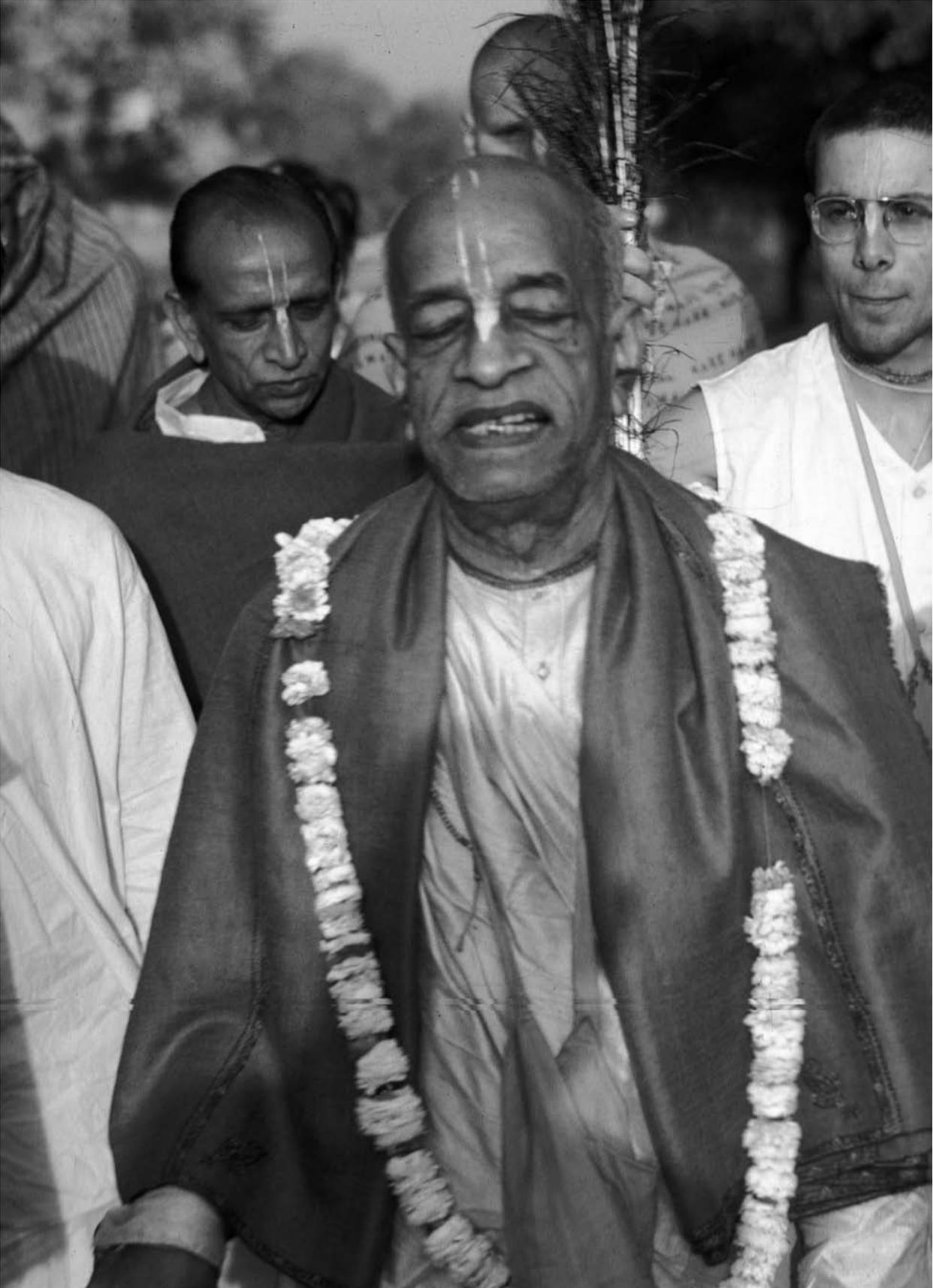
Mr. Ruben said, “He always looked like a lonely man to me. That's what made me think of him like a holy man, Elijah, who always went out alone. I don't believe he had any followers.”

Prabhupāda, you are never alone. “I never felt alone. I knew that my spiritual master and the previous *ācāryas* were always with me.”

To feel your presence today is a subject pre-eminent in our Society. I am thinking, How can I become more aware of you always being with me?

This year is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the installation of Śrī Śrī Rādhā–London-Īśvara. As I write this offering, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am sitting in London, where you said there should be ten temples (at least). Many years ago a television host asked you if you had a concept of hell. “Yes,” you replied, “London is hell. It is always damp, cloudy, and raining. In India the sun is always shining. Of course, it is a very great credit to the English people to have established such a great civilization in such a climate.”

But it is you who are making a civilization in London.



Where to start? No. Where to continue. Yes—September 1977. The last time we saw you. Out of your love for your devotees you came to London. Your body was finished, but your work never finishes. You came to reciprocate and inspire, forming indelible memories in the hearts of your followers.

Bhaktivedanta Manor—the last place in the Western world to be blessed by your lotus feet. On that visit you did not go for your morning walk or give class. There was barely any *darśana*. You hardly ate. No programs.

The effect, however, was greater than ever. We can never forget. How can I ever repay the debt to you for this?

### I Feel Your Presence—You Are Always with Us

Today, April 14, I am at Bhaktivedanta Manor. My foot is damaged due to a twist, and walking is difficult.

I am sitting at *maṅgala-ārati*, watching the *kīrtana*, with the devotees dancing and singing. I am remembering how much you loved to see your disciples dance and sing. I meditate on the deep meaning of “the Samsāra Prayers.” I feel your presence.

I hear the book scores, and I wish they were higher. Book distribution is your life and soul and brings so much pleasure to you. Here at the Manor in 1977, when your health was so weak, you insisted on hearing the daily scores of book distribution, even though some of your assistants thought it better you not do so. I feel your presence in the *rasa* of book distribution.

I feel your presence in the morning program as devotees sit together chanting *japa*, as the conch blows and the “Govindam” tape begins, during the *guru-pūjā* song and *ārati*, in the incense, the ghee lamp—in everything I feel your presence.

I am sitting in the class listening to a devotee explain so nicely points from your teachings. How pleased you are to hear your devotees speak. Many devotees are sitting listening. I feel your presence.

I am sitting in the temple looking at the beautiful forms of Rādhā-Gokulānanda. I remember in 1977 your presence in the temple, lovingly absorbed in looking at Rādhā-Gokulānanda. Now I remember you by seeing how beautifully the Deities are served. I am sitting tasting the *maṅgala-ārati* sweets of Rādhā-Gokulānanda. I remember how much you like *sandēśa*, *rasagullā*. How much you like these sweets cooked with milk from our cows. I am feeling your presence.

I am sitting in the *prasādam* room and seeing young, old, new, and all varieties of devotees enthusiastically coming together to serve and honor *prasādam*. (I wish we would chant the prayers enthusiastically before we start.) I feel your presence as you get great pleasure in seeing your devotees honor *prasādam*.

I am watching the sweet exchanges between the devotees and remembering how sweet it is to be in your presence—cooperating together, putting aside our own selfish intentions for your pleasure. I am feeling your presence.

I am sitting meeting so many devotees who have been faithfully serving here for many decades. You would inquire about the whereabouts of the devotees. If they had drifted away, which many have, you would shed tears of loving separation and compassion and pray for their return. Śrīla Prabhupāda, I feel your presence as I think about the thousands of dear devotees drifting here and there and those who are packed up in your movement.

When I see the smiling devotees, I feel your presence. Dressed with *dhotī* or saris, wearing *tilaka* and neck beads, the men with shaved heads, and even if they’re not so attired, I feel your presence. If they like me or not, if we agree or not, I still feel your presence.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am sitting in your room holding your lotus feet in my heart. The room where you spent your last days in the Western world. Where so many *darśanas* and merciful instructions were given. This room is the spiritual world, holding your presence permanently. Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am feeling your presence.

Gazing out the window (as you would often do), I see the lake. Memories go back to that year in 1977. Then the lake was dirty, the gardens poorly kept. Now I look carefully—the lake is beautiful, with ducks and swans, clean and tidy and full of water. The gardens are neat and organized, with lots of flowers. No rubbish, no excess leaves. Well sign-posted. How many times you pointed out the importance of looking after Kṛṣṇa’s property. Now I feel your presence. Your followers are fulfilling your vision.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am looking out the window and watching so many visitors walking around the gardens. They look happy and peaceful. There are many Westerners, not just Indians. They are inquisitive and impressed. I feel your presence being pleased to see this.

I am sitting on an ordinary Sunday in the temple and seeing how so many guests are coming. One can hardly get in. Even the corridors are packed. Hundreds are sitting and chanting, hearing the class. I feel you are pleased. I feel your presence.

I watch as full *prasādam* is served to one and all. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you so much wanted this. I feel your presence watching this.

I look at the Manor building and the improvements—the maintenance, which is constantly done. I feel your presence remembering how much you would push us to preserve things nicely.

Everywhere I look here, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I remember you. It is all your mercy. This experience is only by your grace.

I see so many young children coming and becoming attracted to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I remember you on the lawn here, playing with little Śiva-jvara and how much you love children. You love everybody. I feel your presence.

I see the serious effort of the devotees to chant and hear nicely, with many courses to help us. I feel your presence, knowing these courses are meant to bring us closer to following your instructions.

I see hundreds and hundreds of schoolchildren coming to the Manor to receive a deep dose of your mercy with *kīrtana*, talks, *prasādam*, loving exchanges, tours of your beautiful Bhaktivedanta Manor and grounds. I feel your presence, knowing how pleased you are.

I feel your presence, knowing how pleased you are with all the devotees engaged in these responsible services. The list could go on and on. So many wonderful things just here at the Manor—it could be anywhere.

There are many things I don't see, as I am practically lame and blind, but I know your followers are trying despite shortcomings to bring your vision to reality. I feel your presence in their sincerity and enthusiasm.

I sit in front of your *vyāsāsana* remembering the times you were personally there, glancing over us—purifying our consciousness with the words emanating from your lotus mouth. How in 1977 Tamāl Krishna Mahārāja delivered such an “out of this world” speech on your mission. How tears were dripping from your eyes—everyone spellbound. *Māyā* was far away from everyone. Nobody moved, focused on the highest subject. How when the cake came before you there were only eighty-one candles and you insisted there should be another one to make it eighty-two. How you would be carried up and down the same staircase from your room to the temple and back, and the incredible love and enthusiasm shared between you and your devotees.

It's time to leave the Manor. Oh no, that reminds me of the time you left the Manor and the feelings in my heart at the time. Prabhupāda, I feel your presence as we leave. Good by. Driving out of the property with fifty acres more land than in the days you were here. Yes, another great achievement for your pleasure by your mercy. I feel your presence as I see this.

I ask the driver, “Please go to the *gośālā*.” How can we visit the Manor without paying our respects to the cows? Now, Śrīla Prabhupāda, a magnificent *gośālā* is being constructed—world class. I feel your presence, as I know you would be so pleased with this. The cows and bulls are so magnificent—well looked-after and happy. They are providing the best milk for you and the Deities and devotees, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Etched in my consciousness is that memorable time in 1977 when I drove you from Heathrow Airport to the Manor. In your physically weak condition, you inquired from me about how the cows were being looked after. I felt terribly embarrassed and foolish, not knowing what to say. Books and *bhaktas* were our priorities. Cows? Why cows? No. On that last visit, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you were so concerned about the cows, *varṇāśrama*, farms. Śrīla Prabhupāda, when I see the bulls—they are plowing the fields—and the wonderful cow protection program, I remember you more than anywhere else. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I feel your overwhelming presence swell up. I see tears dripping from your eyes. Tears of love and happiness.

Prabhupāda, as we drive to Soho St., to Rādhā-London-Īśvara, I see in the streets countless people wandering around busily going nowhere. Struggling in the confusion. I feel your presence. How much you cried for the deliverance of the fallen conditioned souls and begged us to preach. I see before me the truth of “London is hell.” Damp, dark, dirty, noisy, miserable. Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please shower your mercy on them.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, some of your children do not see it this way. Some are unhappy, some confused, some disgruntled; some have temporarily left your ISKCON. I feel sad. I feel your tears of compassion. I feel your presence even here, knowing how much you wanted us all to serve each other and keep together. Bring them back. Some have negative feelings about the way things are. Please be merciful to them that they may become nonenvious and happy again.

May there be good fortune throughout the universe, and may all envious persons be pacified. May all living entities become calm by practicing *bhakti-yoga*, for by accepting devotional service they will think of each other's welfare. Therefore let us all engage in the service of the supreme transcendence, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and always remain absorbed in thought of Him. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.18.9]

I see the devotees blissfully dancing and chanting on Oxford St. I see you there smiling. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I feel your presence on Oxford St. and everywhere else the *sankīrtana* is going on, or not going on (I wishing it were, to bring you pleasure).

It's time to fly.

Śrīla Prabhupāda I remember sitting close to you at Heathrow Airport as you were about to leave—your flight delayed, devotees at your lotus feet. You are looking over the side of the waiting area, down into the check-in hall. Thousands of people are aimlessly going here and there, wasting their human lives, with no direction. Tears are welling in your eyes.

I feel an intense shudder go through me. Practically, I can hear you speak through those tears. “Please help me. The world is suffering. They are our brothers, sisters.” Prabhupāda, it is as if you are drenching the fallen souls in the tears of your compassion, which are like an unending ocean of love. Then you look at the devotees before you—“Thank you very much.” And you were gone. But no. Here at Heathrow Airport, in this mad place, I feel your presence as much as anywhere. You came here and left here but you are still here.

Oh, it's time do die, no time to cry—yes, it will come. It has already come to so many brothers and sisters. Śrīla Prabhupāda, I feel your presence here also, knowing you are with them. I pray I will be with you when that time comes.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving me so many ways to *feel your presence*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, sometimes I feel my pathway has become full of blocks. You reply:

There are no stumbling blocks; I can kick out all those stumbling blocks immediately, provided you accept my guidance. With one stroke of my kick I can kick out all stumbling blocks. [Letter to Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, September 1972]

I feel your presences in your instructions and in your chastisement.

I am eternally indebted to you for everything. What can I do to repay you. Śrīla Prabhupāda?

If you feel at all indebted to me then you should preach vigorously like me. That is the proper way to repay me. Of course, no one can repay the debt to the spiritual master, but the spiritual master is very much pleased by such an attitude by the disciple. [Letter to Sons and Daughters, 14 August, 1976]

*Wake up and stop dreaming.* It's time for the festival—Prabhupāda's here—Śrīla Prabhupāda's Vyāsa-pūjā. So much to do!

But a festival of flowers and fruits is not the real worship:

One who serves the guru's message really worships him.

The service of the message is the real transcendental vibration.

[*Vaiṣṭyaṣṭakam* (your 1961 homage to your Guru Mahārāja), Third *Vaiṣṭya*, 25–26]

We have so much to do to continue fulfilling your vision. So much room for self-improvement. No time to waste. No time for gossip.

Please bless me that I can get on with this service, encourage and serve others, and continue eternally. That I can chant the holy names more and more and inspire others to do likewise.

I fall at your feet in all humility. In this condition *I feel your presence always. Your vision will become fully manifest.* Prabhupāda, you are never alone, and we are never alone as long as we feel your presence at every moment.

*Your fortunate lowly servant,*

Janānanda Gosvāmī

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# Jayādvaita Swami

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

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

*manaso vṛttayo naḥ syuḥ prabhupādāmbujāsrayāḥ  
vāco 'bhidhāyinīr nāmnān̄ kāyas tat-prahvaṇādiṣu*

“May our mental functions always take shelter of the lotuslike Śrīla Prabhupāda, may our words always chant the holy names he has given us, and may our bodies always bow down to him and serve him.”

It all begins in the mind. The mind has so many engagements, but if we can only withdraw the mind from its too-many engagements and fix it, concentrate it, on the transcendental life and instructions of Śrīla Prabhupāda, if we can make his instructions our life and soul—that terrible word “if”! Can’t we say “when”? When we make his instructions our life and soul, then our life becomes successful.

In the *Bhāgavatam* we read of “the malleable sons of Pāṇḍu.” Let us be malleable clay in the hands of Śrīla Prabhupāda, to be shaped as he may desire. But clay is too passive. Let us actively strive to be of service.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, may my words and efforts be pleasing to you. But that’s “May what I want to do be pleasing.” Rather, may my words and efforts be those you would wish. *Cittete koriyā aikya*: May my mind become one with your words, absorbed in your words, so that my efforts will always be those you would desire. May my mind be purified by taking shelter of you. Taking shelter of you is as good as taking shelter of Kṛṣṇa.

And may my power of speech, instead of being engaged in words words words, so many useless words, be always engaged in chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa. “Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and be happy”—and make others happy by spreading the chanting of Kṛṣṇa’s holy names.

It’s all in the name (*vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti*). By giving us the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda has given us everything. He has given us Kṛṣṇa Himself in the form of His holy names. One name—Kṛṣṇa—chanted again and again becomes many names. “Sixteen rounds, at least.” And when we distribute the chanting, the chanting multiplies—the names become more. *Kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*. He forever gives us the holy names of Kṛṣṇa, and that gift is for us to ever accept and distribute, every day, again and again. “Or chant any name of God.” But in the two syllables of that name *Kṛṣṇa*, how much nectar there is!

*tunde tāṇḍavinī ratim̄ vitanute tuṅḍāvalī-labdhaye  
karṇa-kroḍa-kaḍambinī ghaṭayate karṇārbudebhyaḥ sprhām  
cetaḥ-prāṅgaṇa-saṅginī vijayate sarvendriyāṅām̄ kṛtim̄  
no jāne janitā kiyadbhir̄ amṛtaiḥ kṛṣṇeti varṇa-dvayī*

“I do not know how much nectar the two syllables ‘Kṛṣṇa’ have produced. When the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is chanted, it appears to dance within the mouth. We then desire many, many mouths. When that name enters the holes of the ears, we desire many millions of ears. And when the holy name dances in the courtyard of the heart, it conquers the activities of the mind, and therefore all the senses become engaged in devotional service.”

By being engaged in devotional service to Śrīla Prabhupāda, and to Kṛṣṇa under Śrīla Prabhupāda’s direction, may my body and its senses, otherwise useless, troublesome, or dangerous to contend with, be purified and be always instrumental in doing good for others. May we always humbly bow down in reverence to the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda, may we always think of his life and instructions, and may we always spread the chanting of the holy names he has given us: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare / Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Jayādvaita Swami

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## Kadamba Kānana Swami

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Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

In Vṛndāvana you were deeply absorbed in serving Kṛṣṇa, chanting His name, translating and writing in deep *prema* in the dead of night. Out of your own compassion, and to fulfill the desire of Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga, you left Vṛndāvana to bring unalloyed, pure devotional service to the world. You knew it could be done through the chanting of the holy name.

The world lived in darkness but did not realize it. You were not intimidated by the magnitude of the task ahead. Your mood was “Just do everything you can for Kṛṣṇa, and if He is pleased He will do the rest.” By your mercy we gradually understood that what we thought to be normal was actually sinful, and you gave us four regulative principles.

Once when Prabhupāda walked into Mukunda’s apartment, he noticed a poster on the wall showing a matador with a cape and sword going after a bull. “This is a horrible picture!” Śrīla Prabhupāda exclaimed, his face showing displeasure. Mukunda looked at the poster, realizing for the first time what it meant. “Yes, it is horrible,” he said, and tore it off the wall. [Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlamṛta, chapter 22]

By your example of devotional service, by giving scripture, by logic and argument you instilled so much faith in our hearts that we were ready to leave everything we had come from.

A gray Bedford van pulled into my town. The back door flapped open and a huge number of bald, pink men came out of the back. Too many . . . more than natural! I could have never imagined then that one day I would be one of them, but your books gradually convinced me and I joined the temple.

Every day, by your mercy, I am changing a little bit, as if you are slowly chiseling a devotee out of a block of stone. These days I realize more than ever that I need to constantly take shelter of all the arrangements you have made—of chanting at least sixteen rounds, of your books, of your servants; then and only then is there Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It’s all simply depending on you.

One night Prabhupāda came out in a car and parked in front of the *kīrtana* party, watching the chanting and dancing with pleasure. Viṣṇujana, who had become especially expert on the *mṛdaṅga*, played and led the chanting. The boys wore clean, uniform saffron *dhotīs* and the women saffron saris. Tamāl Krishna had organized the devotees almost to the point of choreography, and

Prabhupāda watched as devotees raised their hands and danced back and forth in the “Swami Step,” which he himself had taught. [*Prabhupāda-līlā* (an addendum to *Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*), chapter 6: “One Hundred and Eight Rosebushes, 1968”]

From “day one” you made the devotees into preachers. They opened up countries and started temples, sometimes all alone. Hundreds of millions of books have been distributed. It’s amazing what devotees have done out of love for you.

Now the Vaiṣṇavas have blessed me with a *daṇḍa*. I hope it will inspire others to implement your teachings in their lives and to do something for your mission to spread this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world.

Hoping to be of some use to you,

*Your servant,*

Kadamba Kānana Swami

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## Keśava Bhāratī Dāsa Goswami

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

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

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

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

*nāma-śreṣṭhaṁ manum api śaci-putram atra svarūpaṁ  
rūpaṁ tasyāgrajam uru-purīm māthurīm goṣṭhavāṭīm  
rādha-kunḍaṁ giri-varam aho rādhikā-mādhavāśām  
prāpto yasya prathita-kṛpayā śrī-guruṁ taṁ nato ‘smi*

“There must be more to life than this,” I thought, as I lay on my back, eyes closed, studying the effect of the mantra I had been chanting. According to the manual, a bell-like sound was supposed to appear from the “seventh stratum of consciousness.” All I could hear was the buzzing of my brain. “Ding.” As I strained to hear it again, elated with the prospect of approaching perfection after only a month of chanting *om*, a suspicion crept in. “Ding,” confirmed my doorbell.

Hope, our landlady, was at the door. She was a seventy-year-old Christian mystic prominent among the hundred-or-so residents of Frazier Park, a high-desert mountain community at the summit of the range between Los Angeles and Bakersfield, California. My wife Lynne and I had moved from the Bay Area earlier that year, 1972, to this remote place, along with Clint, a childhood friend of mine, in order to distance ourselves from the madness of materialistic society.

“I think these are for you,” Hope said as she handed me a small book and a magazine. “A young monk

sold them to me while I was shopping in Bakersfield this morning. I rarely go down off the mountain; and, you never see a monk in these parts. I didn't want the things, but somehow you came to mind, and I thought these books just might be for you." The titles: *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* and *Back to Godhead*.

I thought I had perceived a thread of similar truth running through the books I had collected on self-improvement and spiritual life, and so I was systematically going through them. Without looking at the new book and magazine I'd just received from Hope, I put them at the end of the shelf and continued following the meditation manual.

A few days later my wife and her friend Tracy returned from a tour of Mexico. While looking for local places of interest in the interior, far from the coastal and boarder towns frequented by most tourists, they had stopped at a used bookstore. The only book in English caught her eye. "I thought you were into things like this," she explained as she handed me the book, "so I thought this might be meant for you." Again, without examining it, I put the new book on the shelf next to the book and magazine Hope had given me. The new title—*Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

I was working the graveyard shift at a gas station just to make ends meet. I finished the meditation manual in a couple of days and decided to take the two new books to work. Just before dawn, when business was quiet and I was alone, I brought out the new books to check them out for the first time. It was then that I noticed that both books were by same author, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami. A powerful feeling came over me. Tears welled in my eyes, and I shivered. This was too coincidental to be an accident. Someone was reciprocating with me for all the prayers I had been offering God for guidance. I was very eager to know the purpose of my life.

As I read the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, I found answers, one after another, to the questions I had been asking for as long as I could remember. I had come to wonder whether God existed at all, because in none of the books I'd been reading had the authorities of those various traditions come to any concrete conclusion about God's identity or whereabouts. As I read I felt my eyes opening. I could see clearly that God really does exist—and the tears kept coming. I skipped to different places and found this passage: "...Thus the process of devotional service, of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is the king of all education and the king of all confidential knowledge. It is the purest form of religion, and it can be executed joyfully without difficulty. Therefore one should adopt it." I shut the book and resolved to find out how to do just that.

We lived seventy miles from Los Angeles, which was billed in the magazine as ISKCON's world headquarters. Being partial to San Francisco, however, Clint and I opted to drive more than four hundred miles to visit the Frederick St. center. We arrived at the address in the magazine only to find a boarded-up storefront. I was disappointed but undaunted. I felt as if I were being reeled in like a fish. Hadn't I lived four doors from this place, up Stanyan Street, just two years ago? We walked around the corner and saw a devotee distributing magazines. "The temple was moved last year to a new location," he explained. Then he said, "You must have come to hear Śrīla Prabhupāda speak tonight."

"What do you mean?" I asked. I had never read or heard the word "Prabhupāda."

"I thought you must have known," he replied. "The author of that book you're holding is speaking tonight in Golden Gate Park at the Hall of Flowers. He arrived today for a three-day visit on his way to India. And he hasn't been here for two years." I could hardly believe what I had just heard. Once again tears came, and I was visibly shaking.

Quickly we drove to the new temple. Each devotee I met seemed strangely familiar. No one had much time to talk, though, because everyone was busily preparing for the program. Fascinated by the atmosphere, I hardly noticed time passing. It was as if I had come home. Soon we found ourselves packed in a van with a bunch of devotees on the way to the Hall of Flowers.

My heart pounded as I sat on the floor in front of the stage. From the right I saw a slight illumination. I thought the lights were being adjusted for the program. Then suddenly the source of that illumination—you, my dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda—walked onto the stage, lighting up the whole room. I fell flat on my face instinctively, sobbing without restraint.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, at that moment I gave my heart to you. Until that moment I hadn't understood that the bona fide spiritual master you spoke of in those books was you. You were such an ocean of humility. But seeing your transcendental form and hearing the powerful message coming from your lotus mouth, I understood: here is my eternal father.

As you left the stage you plucked a red rose from your garland and threw it toward the audience. It landed in my out-stretched hand. And when I smelled that rose, I felt as though I had been transported

to another world. Later I read in your *Nectar of Devotion* that my mind was being relieved of the burden of impersonal conceptions I had learned from all those other books I had been reading. The smell of that flower would linger on my hand until I returned to Fazier Park, collected my wife and things, and made arrangements to move back to the city to join the temple.

I followed you out to your car. I wanted to jump in and go with you, but shyness nailed me to the spot a short distance from your car. Then our eyes met. You smiled at me with a knowing look, and my life changed forever. Many years later, Bhūmna Prabhu told me that you had decided to leave early, and that Jayananda Prabhu, who was cooking in the kitchen next to the stage, had made up a plate and told him to offer it to you before you left so that there would be *prasādam* to offer the guests.

After you had eaten three morsels from the plate and returned it to Bhūmna, he looked for a place to hide in order to honor that holy food. As he turned around, he saw me, radiating, as he put, and decided to give me the whole plate—somewhat of a miracle in itself, considering how much Bhūmna was attached to *mahā-prasādam*! Without thinking, without knowing what I was doing, I sat down in the middle of that parking lot and ate that whole plate of your remnants. Such a dramatic entrance you made into my life, Śrīla Prabhupāda! And since that night, by the unlimited causeless mercy you bestowed upon me, I can honestly say that I have never had a shadow of a doubt about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, despite the twists and turns your movement has gone through since your physical departure.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you chased me down and rescued me. Since that day you have continued to save me again and again despite my foolish, sinful nature. Your compassion is unlimited. You never abandon anyone who continues to approach you submissively with faith, no matter what his condition. You taught us to take shelter of the holy names of the Lord, especially during times of duress. You showed us by example that the difficulties and frustrations of material existence are actually blessings because they compel us to seek shelter of the holy names, just as a sudden downpour forces a person to run for the shelter of the nearest tree or overhang. Are you not an expansion of Lord Nityānanda's mercy?

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your books literally chased me down. The dramatic way your books entered my life convinced me that they are not different from you—sentient and completely ecstatic. Reading and distributing your books gives anyone access to your personal presence. Hearing the instructions in your books with unflinching faith is the medicine that cures the materially diseased heart. Following those teachings and repeating them is the diet that nourishes our spiritual health and our growth to maturity. Your words are simple and sublime, yet as deep as the ocean. No additive is required. Your books remove the conditioned souls' excuses for not accepting the truth of spiritual existence. The piercing logic of your purports illuminates the verses of scripture, exposing the modern so-called advanced civilization for what it is: nothing but a place of misery that separates us from the Supreme Lord and His eternally blissful abode. The objections we hear when we distribute your books are nothing more than the excuses of those addicted to sinful acts in the name of freedom. But having read your books, we, at least, have no excuse not to surrender fully to your mission.

Why, then, do we make so many excuses? Why do we sometimes reduce our efforts, or even go away? Why do we stop distributing your books? Why do so many conditioned souls refuse to accept the obvious? And why do we tend to blame others for our problems?

While taking Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī on *parikramā* of Navadvīpa *dhāma*, Lord Nityānanda gave us the answer. Śrī Jīva inquired how it was (as he had just observed) that so many people engage in sinful acts in that holy place, despite the *dhāma*'s power to deliver the soul from sinful reactions. The Lord replied that a person who has developed too much faith in the power of his own intelligence is empowered by *māyā* to reject the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu—the most powerful thing—even if he is a resident of the holy *dhāma*. How does that work? Such prideful material intelligence distorts the hearing process. Lord Kapiladeva has explained that intelligence is the rationalizing feature of the subtle body. It is the intelligence that permits the embodied soul to apprehend or misapprehend things. (*Bhagavatam* 3.26.30)

You go on to explain in your purport:

Doubt is one of the important functions of intelligence; blind acceptance of something does not give evidence of intelligence. Therefore the word *samśaya* is very important; in order to cultivate intelligence, one should be doubtful in the beginning. But doubting is not very favorable when information is received from the proper source. In *Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord says that doubting the words of the authority is the cause of destruction.

Persons with too much faith in their own intelligence thus rationalize their own mistakes, blame others for them, and in that way perpetuate their own faults. Such persons reject good advice and thus cannot own their own problems. Such unsubmitive persons commit the same mistakes again and again. Śrīla Prabhupāda, as the representative of Lord Nityānanda, you therefore repeatedly warned us, “Don’t be over-intelligent.”

His [the Supreme Lord’s] existence can be realized by one who has the single qualification of submissiveness and who thereby becomes a surrendered soul. The development of submissiveness is the cause of proportionate spiritual realization, by which one can ultimately meet the Supreme Lord in person, as a man meets another man face to face. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā* 1.55 purport]

Why, then, do some of your followers stay? How can we be submissive after all we’ve seen and gone through? Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī gives the answer in his commentary to *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam* (10.14.8), translated by your disciples for the BBT edition:

Although a devotee has surrendered to the Supreme Lord, until he is completely perfect in Kṛṣṇa consciousness he may maintain a slight inclination to enjoy the false happiness of this world. The Lord therefore creates a particular situation to eradicate this remaining enjoying spirit. This unhappiness suffered by a sincere devotee is not technically a karmic reaction; it is rather the Lord’s special mercy for inducing His devotee to completely let go of the material world and return home, back to Godhead.

A sincere devotee earnestly desires to go back to the Lord’s abode. Therefore he willingly accepts the Lord’s merciful punishment and continues offering respects and obeisances to the Lord with his heart, words, and body. Such a bona fide servant of the Lord, considering all hardship a small price to pay for gaining the personal association of the Lord, certainly becomes a legitimate son of God. . . . Just as one cannot approach the sun without becoming fire, one cannot approach the supreme pure, Lord Kṛṣṇa, without undergoing a rigid purificatory process, which may appear like suffering but which is in fact a curative treatment administered by the personal hand of the Lord. (*Bhagavatam* 10.14.8 purport)

And in your own words, Śrīla Prabhupāda:

Coming again to the point of pure devotional service, the Lord is describing the transcendental qualifications of a pure devotee in these two verses. A pure devotee is never disturbed in any circumstances. Nor is he envious of anyone. Nor does a devotee become his enemy’s enemy; he thinks, “This person is acting as my enemy due to my own past misdeeds. So it is better to suffer than to protest.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 12.13–14, purport]

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, please empower me to follow these timeless teachings. Please continue to administer the necessary treatment to purify this time-worn heart. Let me not deviate from proper Vaiṣṇava behavior on the plea of protecting you or your movement. Then, when my heart is sufficiently purified, please sit down there comfortably and allow me to serve you.

Begging for any place in the shade of your lotus feet, I remain

*Your eternal servant,*

Keśava Bhāratī Dāsa Goswami

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# Lokanāth Swami

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Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet on the occasion of your 113th appearance anniversary. All glories to you, our beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Every year in your divine service brings to us, your followers, newer and newer realizations of the truth and the supreme necessity of your teachings for us individually, organizationally, and globally.

This year, that realization has come powerfully through the medium of the global meltdown. As the recession is tightening its vicious grip on the world economy, unemployment is increasing rapidly. Even those who have not yet lost their jobs are seeing their income stagnant or decreased and are living in constant fear of “the dreaded pink slip.”

Economic experts are predicting a grim, ominous future. Gerald Celente, the CEO of Trends Research Institute, renowned for his accuracy in predicting future world and economic events, has said:

It’s going to be very bleak. Very sad. And there is going to be a lot of homeless, the likes of which we have never seen before. Tent cities are already sprouting up around the [USA] and we’re going to see many more. We’re going to start seeing huge areas of vacant real estate and squatters living in them as well. It’s going to be a picture the likes of which Americans are not used to. It’s going to come as a shock, and with it, there’s going to be a lot of crime. And the crime is going to be a lot worse than it was before because in the last 1929 Depression, people’s minds weren’t wrecked on all these modern drugs—over-the-counter drugs, or crystal meth or whatever it might be. So, you have a huge underclass of very desperate people with their minds chemically blown beyond anybody’s comprehension.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you had, nearly four decades ago, pointed out the artificial, unstable nature of modern industrial economy. The present economic model considers the ability to provide a few people with luxuries like cars, computers, and cell-phones as signs of success, whereas the Vedic economic model that you taught us considers the ability to provide necessities like food and water as signs of success. You would emphatically expose the ridiculousness of this standard of success on many occasions:

**Prabhupāda:** Mother asked . . . Mother Durgā asked the devotee . . . Because Durgā comes every year. Asked the devotee, “My dear son, you are happy?”

“Yes, Mother, very happy.”

“So there is no complaint?”

“Only two complaints.”

“What is that?”

“There is no food and there is no cloth. Otherwise we are very happy.” [laughter] Two difficulties: no food, no cloth. [Room conversation, January 1977, Bhuvaneshwar]

And of course, your unforgettable exposé of modern so-called industrial progress echoes repeatedly, even today, from the lips of your faithful followers: “Can you eat nuts and bolts?”

In fact, you pointed out the folly of the loan-based purchasing that led to the US subprime crisis and eventually the global meltdown:

**Prabhupāda:** In America the bank canvasses that “You take money, you purchase motorcar, you purchase your house, and as soon as you get your salary, you give me.” That’s all. Finished. You take the card . . . American . . . What is it called? Am-card? Yes.

**Śyāmasundara:** Bankamericard.

**Prabhupāda:** “Bank-card” or something. “Bank-rupt.” [laughter] You see? So you take the card

and you purchase whatever you like. And deposit your money in the bank. Then again, you are without any money. Simply that card. That's all. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* lecture, October 1972]

Eminent thinkers have not only pointed out the problems of the merely five-hundred-year-old Western civilization, but have also stated that the solution will come only from the ancient, indeed timeless, Vedic civilization. Late British historian Arnold Toynbee reminds us, "It is already becoming clear that a chapter which had a Western beginning will have to have an Indian ending if it is not to end in the self-destruction of the human race. At this supremely dangerous moment in history, the only way of salvation for mankind is the Indian way."

You unequivocally elaborated on this same theme during your celebrated Azad Hind Maidan lecture series in Mumbai, 1977, which I was blessed to have the opportunity to attend. You had fittingly, prophetically titled that lecture series "Western Civilization Is a Failure. Kṛṣṇa Consciousness Is the Only Hope."

The Vedic socioeconomic model is so practical and essential that when Lord Kṛṣṇa came to this world He demonstrated it by His own life. He Himself looked after cows, and Balarāmajī carried a plow, used to till the earth.

You elaborated on the standard of real prosperity that this represents:

*Dhānyena dhanavān.* If you have got grain, then you are rich. And if you have got cows, then you are rich. This is the standard of Vedic richness. *Dhānyena dhanavān gavayo dhanavān.* They don't say, "Keep some papers and you become rich." All rascal, one thousand dollar I promise to pay, a piece of paper. Practical, we have got enough food grains. We have got enough . . . That is richness. What is use of paper? Even gold you have got, you have to exchange. And if you have grain, immediate food. Just boil with milk, and it is nectarean, *param anna*, immediately. Take some wood collected from the wood and have fire, put the milk and the grains—oh, you'll get so nice food, nutritious, full of vitamin, and so easily made. It is practical. So tasteful, so nutritious, and don't require. If you simply boil little milk and little grain, whole day, so much sweet rice, you take—*bās*. You don't require any more. And if you add little apples and fruits, oh, it is heavenly. Your whole day free from any food anxiety, and you can work. And you can work. You can chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Make this ideal life here. America has got good potency. We have got so much land here. We can have hundreds of New Vrindabans or farms like that. And people will be happy. And invite all the world, "Please come and live with us. Why you are suffering congestion, overpopulation? Welcome here. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. [Room Conversation, June 28, 1976, New Vrindavana]

As the failure of the modern economy is being exposed on all fronts, now is the time to preach vigorously about the Vedic solution of God-centered simple living that you taught.

On the occasion of your 113th Vyāsa-pūjā, we pray to you for guidance to properly present and represent your teachings as a solution to the problems of the world.

*Your insignificant servant,*

Lokanāth Swami

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## Maha-Viṣṇu Swami

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Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances! All Glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!

When you gave me second initiation in London in 1972, you considered rejecting me as a suitable



candidate when you saw my grimy fingernails. You showed me your effulgent fingers and nails—“Just see!” I didn’t want to try to excuse myself by telling you I had been constructing and painting the Ratha-yātrā cart for two weeks and couldn’t get my fingernails clean in time. But my heart dropped. You seemed to shrug before Kṛṣṇa, as if the force of circumstances were forcing you to accept me because you perhaps saw a speck of sincerity in my grimy heart.

Unfortunately, since that time I have been forcing you to shrug many, many more times due to my dirt-ingrained heart. But still you go on overlooking my faults. I could excuse myself by saying that I was a well-intentioned but inexperienced and impulsive preacher, etcetera, but it all boils down to my continued struggle with my *anarthas*. But due to your unending mercy and the mercy of your representatives in your ISKCON family—my seniors, peers, and juniors—I am allowed to go on preaching.

I should perhaps publish a Maha Fiasco Swami book of tales of all the stupid things I have done. It may benefit other devotees, who could then learn from my mistakes, but probably it will not prevent me from doing more mistakes in the future. My only recourse is to go on stumbling on and to pray for your mercy and forgiveness.

I am finding special comfort and strength in your purport to text 31 of chapter 3 of your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. You say that “The injunction of . . . Kṛṣṇa [to selflessly work for Him in full knowledge of Him] is the essence of all Vedic wisdom and therefore is eternally true without exception.” The translation is “Those persons who execute their duties according to My injunctions and who follow this teaching faithfully, without envy, become free from the bondage of fruitive actions.” But the part I like most is in your purport, when you say this:

But an ordinary man with firm faith in the eternal injunctions of the Lord, even though unable to execute such orders, becomes liberated from the bondage of the law of *karma*. In the beginning of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one may not fully discharge the injunctions of the Lord, but because one is not resentful of this principle and works sincerely without consideration of defeat and hopelessness, he will surely be promoted to the stage of pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I am an ordinary man and unable to carry out such orders properly. I am still in the beginning of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I am not able to fully discharge the injunctions of the Lord. But I am trying to work sincerely without defeat or hopelessness. Even though I am often ashamed of myself before others, your gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is so kind and sweet that I find myself singing and dancing again.

So I can only try to thank you again and again by never giving up spreading your divine mission, especially here in Africa, where till now people have learned virtually nothing of Kṛṣṇa’s name, form, qualities and pastimes.

By your special mercy you have now engaged me in helping to get the African Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (ABBT) started. It is a great privilege to be given this responsibility for helping to get your books translated and distributed against all odds. If we can produce your books in even some of the major African languages (and there are at least two thousand major and minor ones), surely your books will touch the people’s hearts with the dust of your lotus feet, and Lord Caitanya’s moon will quickly rise.

Compared with the *muzungo*’s (white man’s) historical record of evil with world wars, inquisitions, exploitive industrialization, hedonism, wastefulness, animal cruelty, pornography, mental aberration, ecological pollution, invasions, colonization, atomic explosions, deadly weapons, extreme immorality (the list goes on and on), the record of evil of the black people of Africa is relatively insignificant. They actually deserve your gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Thank you for engaging me in this way as your insignificant servant.

*Your humble servant,*

Mahā-Viṣṇu Swami

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# Param Gati Swami

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

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

My dear master, every time I try to fathom the extent of your love, shelter, and compassion for those who dwell in this material existence, all I get is the feeling or glimpse of the unlimited ocean of mercy that floods from your heart.

ISKCON is the practical manifestation of your unconditional love, and your life was dedicated to creating it so that anybody could take the opportunity and benefit from Śrī Caitanyadeva's mercy.

While engaged in the distribution of the Lords message, we realize in practice that Yes! There is hope for this world. There is hope that everyone can achieve real happiness.

In order to carry out your Guru Mahārāja's orders, you went through great hardship and overcame all problems with firm determination. This recollection is a great source of inspiration.

This special occasion of your appearance day gives us a unique opportunity to reinforce our desire to follow your instructions and carry on with our service despite the worst adversities.

Books are the basis. Purity is the force. Utility is the principle. Preaching is the essence.

You have established these foundation pillars of ISKCON, and success is guaranteed for those who follow this formula. It is a fact that the *saṅkīrtana* movement will be established on this planet during the next ten thousand years. Hence, if we follow your instructions, the benefit will be enjoyed not only by us but by all those who come in contact with us. This is the conclusion of your divine instructions.

I pray to you on this very sacred appearance day of yours that I may remain in your service and always preserve this conclusion in my heart.

*Your disqualified servant,*

Param Gati Swami

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# Pārtha Sārathi Dāsa Goswami

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Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

In 1973, on a typically cold, damp, dark, dismal and dreary English day, I was returning from the unemployment office in my hometown, Oxford. I was leading a miserable existence with no hope. Addicted to things I don't have the courage to write down . . . a pathetic person . . . going nowhere . . . suffocating in the quagmire of *māyā* . . . floundering in the the flotsam and jetsam and lagan of the ocean of illusion . . . the worst and meanest of living entities . . . more degraded than Jagāi and Mādhāi, who at least took birth in Navadvīpa.

But in an instant it all changed. You reached out to me in the form of your dear disciple Prabhaviṣṇu Mahārāja. He invited me to a program at Oxford Town Hall that evening, and that's when my life took on some meaning. By your mercy I came in contact with you in two ways: through your disciples and your book, *Śrī Īśopaniṣad*.

I'm amazed at how you saved me. I can understand your saving others, but your saving me was an act of extraordinary, unparalleled mercy. But the problem is that I'm still ungrateful (*akṛta-jñā*) for what you have given me.

You have given me entry into the spiritual world, Goloka Vṛndāvana. You have given me faith in the holy name. You have given me ISKCON, a spiritual institution in which my *bhakti-latā* can be nourished. You have given me your commentaries. You have given me the divine association of my godbrothers and godsisters. You have given me a chance to become a *rūpānuga*.

But I stand before you with no gratitude—such is my condition. You have said that appreciation is synonymous with *śraddhā*, and that when a nondevotee appreciates spiritual activities, his spiritual life begins. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has explained that the beginning of *bhakti* is *śraddhā*, and that from there one progresses step by step up to *prema*. To be appreciative is to be grateful, and therefore since I am ungrateful I do not appreciate spiritual activities, have no *śraddhā*, and have not even begun the process of *bhakti*. Indeed, to be ungrateful for how you have given the world Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the gravest of sins.

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,  
Thou art not so unkind as man's ingratitude. [Shakespeare]

Recently, while serving your mission in the middle of winter in Ukraine, I experienced a minus-twenty-five-degree-Celsius wind while boarding an aircraft. Ingratitude is more piecing because it reaches the soul. The whole world is ungrateful to you. They don't understand what you have given them. Even some of your disciples have temporarily drifted from your lotus feet.

On the occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā I pray that I can be grateful to you. My *guru-dakṣiṇā* is to always serve you, birth after birth, in this world and the next. I take the dust of the lotus feet of all your followers because I see they have something I don't have, which is genuine appreciation and gratitude for your priceless gifts.

*I remain your ungrateful aspiring disciple,*

Pārtha Sārathi Dāsa Goswami

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## Prahlādānanda Swami

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

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

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

Faith is the most important factor in the development of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is said that the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is essentially about developing faith. In the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* it is said that all the imports of the Vedic knowledge are revealed to one who has equal faith in both the spiritual master and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

But what is faith? What are we to be faithful to? And how is faith developed?

## What Is Faith?

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.41, purport), Śrīla Prabhupāda defines faith as an “unflinching trust in something sublime.” But faith can be flickering or firm. Those who perform devotional service with material desires and motivations have flickering faith. Thus, beginners in devotional service may not be familiar with devotional techniques and may become distracted by materialistic pursuits and conceptions. However, such flickering faith in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can become firm by following an authorized process under the guidance of experienced devotees. Lord Kṛṣṇa tells us that if we sincerely, patiently, enthusiastically, and with full conviction try to follow the regulated spiritual practices (*sādhana*) given by the *ācāryas*, He will give us the intelligence and purity necessary to advance in devotional service (*Bhagavad-gītā* 10.10–11).

If one is fortunate enough to get the association of devotees connected with Lord Kṛṣṇa, one may become inspired to hear from them. This inspiration will create the enthusiasm to follow the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and to achieve a higher state of consciousness and happiness. By applying the techniques of devotional activities and attitudes, one learns to prayerfully chant the holy names of the Lord with attention and devotional feelings. This brings one to the stage of spontaneous remembrance of the Lord’s forms.

Eventually, as a qualified devotee progresses from the stages of taste to attachment to the awakening of intense devotional feeling appropriate to a particular eternal spiritual identity, he or she achieves the ability to experience the spiritual atmosphere. Then, through increased purification, development of spiritual desire, and mercy received, one comes in direct contact with the Supreme Lord. At that stage, one understands the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness perfectly, and any doubts one might previously have had will be seen as bewilderment only, ignorance caused by the Lord’s illusionary energy.

In this way, progressive faith in Kṛṣṇa consciousness depends on our interest in reawakening our consciousness of Lord Kṛṣṇa and on our sincerity in following an authorized process that helps us achieve that goal.

## What to Be Faithful To?

In *Bhagavad-gītā* 4.10 Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa says that a soul under the spell of and conditioned by the illusionary energy develops three misconceptions. The first misconception is that there is nothing beyond the material energy and that therefore the soul is also a product of the material energy. Consequently, existence is limited to the experience of the material energy and sense gratification.

The second misconception is that through whatever form personality expresses itself, it will always be contaminated by material qualities. Therefore, even if there is a soul that survives the annihilation of the material body, its existence remains miserable.

The third misconception is that there is no higher experience beyond sense gratification. And since sense gratification is meaningless and frustrating, existence itself must ultimately be meaningless, too.

However, one who develops transcendental knowledge and awareness through following the process of devotional service first comes to understand the difference between the material body and the self—first theoretically, but later through direct perception. After that, one develops faith in a dynamic spiritual existence of perpetual knowledge and bliss as opposed to the miragelike reflection of material experience. Finally, by surrender, purified consciousness, and service with devotion, one becomes a personal associate of the Supreme Lord.

## How Is Faith Developed?

Faith is created by associating with devotees. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa suggests that we approach realized or experienced persons and that we submissively enquire from them to learn the science of devotional service. If we sincerely try to assimilate and clearly understand their instructions and follow them with determination, not becoming deviated by material conceptions or impulses, the Supreme Lord will be pleased with us and will gradually reveal Himself.

Thus, by the gradual process of pure devotional service, performed under able guidance, our dormant

Kṛṣṇa consciousness awakens, and all our doubts—the causes of neglect of spiritual life, fear of having a spiritual identity, and frustration arising from having no positive, fully satisfying goals in life—will gradually diminish and ultimately be vanquished.

*Śrīla Prabhupāda's aspiring servant,*

Prahlādānanda Swami

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## Puruṣatrāya Swami

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*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale  
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn̄ iti nāmīne*

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

Oh Prabhupāda! Meditating on you, I wonder where you are now. For sure you are with Kṛṣṇa, but what are you doing there in Goloka? There is no doubt about your being with Kṛṣṇa, but I'm curious what your service in the abode of Kṛṣṇa is. What would be your role among His personal *parikaras* in the intimate circle of Kṛṣṇa? I can hardly conceive of how wonderful it is to be face to face with Kṛṣṇa. Anyhow, any service done in the presence of Kṛṣṇa is the quintessence of perfection. It is the absolute *sac-cid-ānanda* reality. You, Prabhupāda, perfectly accomplished your mission among us, and now you have returned to Goloka to live eternally with Kṛṣṇa. For us, this is enough to know. This kind of meditation purifies us and inspires with the confidence to persevere on the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Meditating on you attaches our consciousness more and more to Kṛṣṇa.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa says that those whose intelligence is exclusively engaged in Him and whose mind is fully absorbed in Him will surely acquire His own *bhāva* and live eternally with Him. That is the ideal condition of life in this material world—the *śreya uttamam*, the summum bonum, the highest good.

As we can testify by remembering your own example, this perfect stage of the human being was manifested totally in you. You personally showed what the *sāstras* call the *jīvan-mukta* stage, the stage of being liberated while still in this mortal world. You embodied the living example of a fully Kṛṣṇa conscious person. When you were among us, your presence irradiated pure vibrations of *prema-bhakti*. Even the most skeptical person could see and feel these extraordinary qualities in your personality. Therefore, there is no doubt that you, Prabhupāda, are now close to Kṛṣṇa. As for us, we have not only hope but certainty that we will be with Kṛṣṇa at the proper time. Your sole desire was to bring everybody to Kṛṣṇa. We have your assurance that we will achieve this supreme goal—provided we strictly follow your instructions. Who else in this world can give such assurance?

*Your servant,*

Puruṣatrāya Swami

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# Śacīnandana Swami

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Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!

On your divine appearance day, it is our greatest privilege and joy to glorify you with the choicest words and sentiments we can find. Thank you for this undeserved opportunity.

## Your Words of Power

In your heart you always reside in Vṛndāvana, where Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are eternally present and where devotion to Their lotus feet is everything. To meet you is possible only by the mercy of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and only by your mercy is it possible to meet Them.

It is for this reason that you are able to speak words of power—words which can lift one up.

Words of power are not mere sentences added to the unlimited ocean of sound vibration—words without any spiritual effect on the consciousness.

No, words of spiritual power are able to affect the consciousness of the hearer in such a way that he or she experiences faith in Kṛṣṇa and the desire to serve Him.

When you were walking with Graf Dürkheim, a well-known German philosopher and writer, he asked you how you were able to elevate your disciples to spiritual understanding. Graf Dürkheim had been mortally wounded during World War II when he was hit by a hand grenade. During that time he left his body and saw it from above. Eventually he returned—but he could never forget how he had seen his apparently lifeless body lying on the battlefield. This experience convinced him that he is the eternal soul, different from the body. On the basis of this realization, he started a well-respected school for self-realization.

When on that morning walk, he wondered how you as a guru would effect this spiritual understanding in your disciples: “How do you make them understand that they are souls?” Your answer was straightforward, simple, and powerful: “I tell them what Kṛṣṇa speaks in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. That’s all!”

Words of power carry the spiritual energy and the power of blessings. They are all that is required.

While on a holy name *vrata* last year, I found myself using my limited reading time to read only your *Bhāgavatam*, no other books. As I bathed in your nectarean words, I had a wonderful experience. Despite a terrible pain in my back, I could actually experience being lifted beyond the level of mind and body. The pain was still there—but I had transcended it!!

Once you said, “This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is for approaching Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, to associate with Kṛṣṇa in His sublime pleasure dance.”

And in my initiation letter you told me I would go back to Godhead if I would chant sixteen rounds daily and follow the four regulative principles. Alone I am useless—but by your mercy everything is possible.

I have trust in your words because they are words of power—infused with blessings.

But these words of power will only work if I am eager to satisfy you. When a disciple can please his spiritual master, all auspiciousness and the fulfillment of all his spiritual desires will be granted. However, if he displeases the spiritual master, only inauspiciousness will surround him—and insurmountable obstacles.

This is exemplified in the pastimes of Mādhavendra Purī.

His disciple Īśvara Purī served him by cleaning him in his last days and by constantly reciting the holy name and pastimes of the Lord.

Mādhavendra Purī was so pleased with Īśvara Purī that he blessed him, saying, “May you obtain the treasure of love of God, *kṛṣṇa-prema*.”

Mādhavendra Purī’s disciple Rāmacandra Purī, however, received an opposite result by offending his exalted Guru Mahārāja, who then rebuked him, “Out of my sight, you sinful rascal!”

Mādhavendra Purī withdrew his blessing from Rāmacandra Purī, who subsequently started to develop material desires and became a blind and dry philosopher. He gave pain to devotees’ hearts and even offended the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

These incidents are well known to all Vaiṣṇavas and serve as a great instruction for everyone.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you conquered my heart when I was young and foolish. And you have kept it since then in your firm and loving grip. As I look back over the past years, I see that I have unfortunately only matured in age, not so much in wisdom. When I search my heart for good qualities, I find none of my own. There are only the blessings you have given me. Your own investments. I sincerely beg you to remain patient with me. Kindly overlook my Rāmacandra Purī qualities and enhance your blessings. My intentions are good, but my heart still needs your strength—your words of power—to prosper and heal and thus grow toward what is an ideal disciple.

Lately you have appeared more and more in my remembrances and dreams. I see this as your kind investment in me as I transition into the second half of my spiritual life. From this I can see that you care so much. I am most obliged by your love.

I am truly worthless. But you have given me the most coveted position, where I can try to serve you and the Divine Couple. I am trying, but my attempts are severely handicapped by my conditioned nature. Kindly accept whatever little service I can give and make me better.

Kindly excuse my mistakes.

Today I am the most happy person to have you as my guide and master.

Śrīla Prabhupāda-*kī jaya!*

*Your humble servant,*

Śacīnandana Swami

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## Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami

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

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

### Homage

Your limousine is parked in the parking lot. You are going on a morning walk with your disciples. I long to always be among them, within hearing distance of your words, not treading on your heels but near enough to hear you speak.

Let me approach you, O spiritual master. You are the only way to Kṛṣṇa. And Kṛṣṇa is the only way to happiness. Please accept my prayer and the first question I asked you: “Can we reach a spiritual level from which we don’t fall down?” You answered in one word, “Yes.” Let me finally attain it, soon, in this lifetime. There is so little time left, and the path of devotional service is like a razor’s edge. Please keep my hand steady (even though I am growing old) so there will be no more bloodshed. I want to be a proper devotee. Only you can guide me to stay on the path. Only you can show me Kṛṣṇa.

### A Letter to Lord Kṛṣṇa about Śrīla Prabhupāda

My dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, I finished my sixteen rounds. But because of the headaches, I will not be able to chant the extra hour and a half. I want to spend some time writing to You. I know You through the scriptures. For the devotees, You are the swift deliverer from death. In Your original, topmost form You are human-like, a beautiful adolescent. Everyone loves You in Vṛndāvana, and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī loves You the most. Even the cows and trees love You, as do Your parents and the younger and older *gopas* and *gopīs*. This is your confidential form in Goloka Vṛndāvana. It is rare for a spirit soul to enter this spotless *nara-līlā* with You, but it is possible for all living beings. One has to contact a pure-devotee spiritual master and take shelter of him. He can recommend us to You. But we have to be a hundred-percent detached from material pleasures and a hundred-percent inclined to satisfy You. If we hold on to the lotus feet of the spiritual master, You may accept us even if we are not perfect. That is why it is so important to follow Śrīla Prabhupāda, exactly as he trained us, so that he will recognize us and recommend us to his Lord.

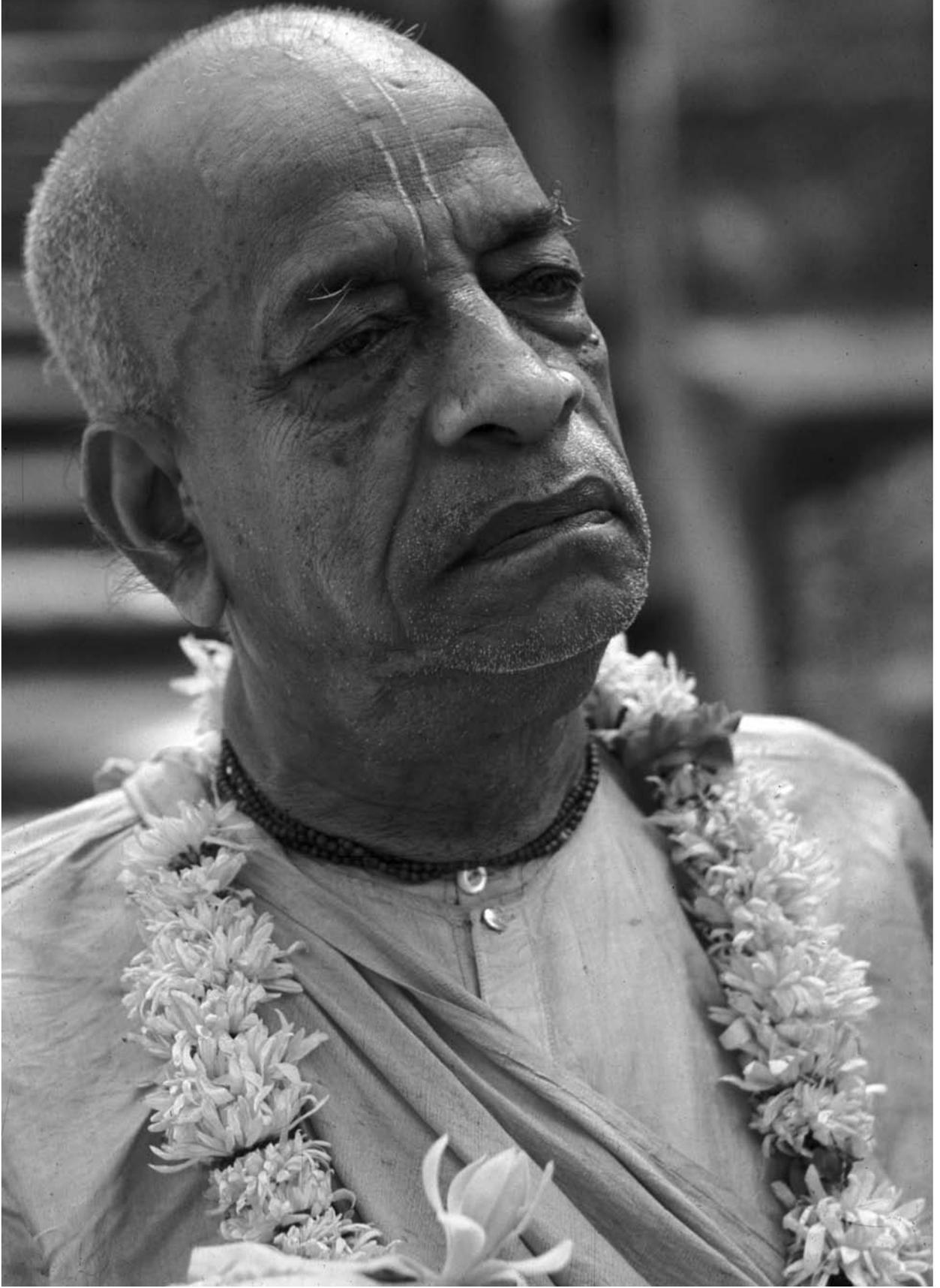
We can add to what Prabhupāda has given us in his books by reading *Prema Sampuṭa*, by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, and other books by the *ācāryas*, but we must not take anything that contradicts what Prabhupāda has given us. Prabhupāda demanded surrender in everyday ways by his orders to his disciples, and they followed him in complete surrender, similar to the “lawless love” of the *gopīs*, who did whatever Kṛṣṇa desired of them. Kṛṣṇa, You will give Yourself to us if we give ourselves to You, and we do this by giving ourselves to the orders of Śrīla Prabhupāda. At the time of death, if You recognize us as a faithful servant of Prabhupāda—and if Prabhupāda himself recalls us and recommends us—we will be granted acceptance by You. I feel confident that Prabhupāda will retain me, even though I have fallen down since his disappearance. I believe he has forgiven me and counts in my favor the many years of sincere service I rendered to him. I pray that he continue to accept my activities of body and mind as surrender and service to him.

This is how the system of guru and disciple works in relation to You, Lord. You are occupied in pleasure pastimes with Your intimate disciples, and through Your Viṣṇu expansions You are maintaining all the universes. But You sent the wonderful, particular spiritual master to rescue us, and You want to see how we are obedient to him. You want us to learn about You and Your entourage through Śrīla Prabhupāda. You want us to read his books. You want us to love him. He said our love for him would be proven by how we cooperate with the devotees in his Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. Thus we are being tested.

Now there is an increasing library of memories, memoirs, videos, and audio recordings of his *vapuḥ* and *vāṇī*, his physical presence and his teachings, and if we are wise we will take advantage of them. We can see his glances and his walk and hear his voice. It is like being with him, and we should not miss it. He is especially present in his books. He said, “If you want to know me, read my books.” I pray to You as Śrī Kṛṣṇa and as Lord Balarāma, the original guru. I pray for the inspiration to maintain and strengthen my relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda, and I pray that all his followers may do this. Let us always show our gratitude to You, Lord, for sending Śrīla Prabhupāda, by our exclusive devotion to his lotus feet and our practical work on his behalf. He has shown the way to save the world and has boldly declared the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement to be the panacea for all ills. We may not know the intricacies of how the movement’s potency for good will spread through the world, but we must simply be faithful to his statements and declarations. We must work as his *celas*, his disciples, and wonderful things will be achieved, by Your grace.

*Yours in the service of Śrīla Prabhupāda,*

Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami



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# Śukadeva Swami

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Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!

I am extremely indebted to you for allowing me to be part of your divine mission. It has kept me sanguine in mind and has given my life purpose. Preaching is the essence, and that is true for every genuine devotee. For such a devotee, there is nothing material to gain. He lives in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and tries to help others become Kṛṣṇa conscious, and that service may take any number of births. That service may take any number of devotees. For the devotees, there is no dearth of service. By giving us Kṛṣṇa consciousness, you have pulled us out of self-centered life and given us an all-embracing life of devotional service.

Your mission has given us many devotees who can render service in a variety of ways, and I always have something to learn from everyone.

Your life and teachings keep me from forgetting the reality of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Without your mercy, who can overcome the influence of body and matter? By simply chanting Kṛṣṇa's names, we find that our needs are more than taken care of. Our only anxiety is how to stick to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You have given us the way to fill our days with remembrance of Kṛṣṇa and service to Him. It is true that for a devotee it does not matter whether he is in this world or another, in this body or another, because the Kṛṣṇa conscious way of life is our eternal way of life, ever satisfying and fulfilling.

Please bless me that I stay on the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and serve your mission till the end of my present life and the lives to come.

*Your lowly servant,*

Śukadeva Swami

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# Trivikrama Swami

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Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your holy lotus feet.

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

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

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

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

I remember my father appreciating a particular athlete, saying how he performed extraordinarily but made it look so easy. In a similar way, you showed us by your personal example how easy and natural it was to be Kṛṣṇa conscious. You were just being yourself, and at the same time you were always fully

engaged in Kṛṣṇa’s service. Simultaneously you were inviting us to follow in your footsteps, to also be fully engaged in devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. Not only did you invite us, but you gave us the easy method to follow you by creating your ISKCON Society, where all of us could be practically engaged twenty-four hours a day in service to Kṛṣṇa.

Over the years we have come to realize that being a pure devotee is simple, but that it is still rarely achieved. As you used to say, “It is simple for the simple, but difficult for the crooked.” I personally have to admit that I have yet to become a pure devotee. Of course, this obliges me to appreciate your exalted personality more and more. To see that you are actually a very rare soul. Therefore it is easy to continue to glorify you every year on this most auspicious day, to appreciate how you have made the difficult look so easy. But still, I know that the best glorification I could offer you would be to become fully Kṛṣṇa conscious myself, to become free from any influence of the material energy. If that happy day were to arrive, then your position as the deliverer of the fallen would be most firmly established.

Of course, I do have that hope, and I don’t think I am “hoping against hope,” as I see I have made some tangible spiritual progress . . . by your mercy. However, as the song goes, “But I still got so terribly far to go.” The desire for name and fame, for enjoying with the opposite sex, for claiming proprietorship of the fruits of one’s work, are just some of the formidable obstacles that confront us all on our journey to full devotion to you and Kṛṣṇa.

Therefore I am praying that you continue to cast your mercy in my direction. Please don’t become indifferent to me or see me as a hopeless case, for on my own I have no ability to overcome the waves of the material energy that are repeatedly attempting to distract me from my actual position as a servant of Kṛṣṇa. I do need your help—I really, really do! On my own I do not have the strength to overcome *māyā*, so please don’t kick me away from your pinkish lotus feet.

*Your servant,*

Trivikrama Swami

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## Umāpati Swami

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

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

### Following Śrīla Prabhupāda

I offer my unending gratitude to Śrīla Prabhupāda because he has taught me to be a fool.

In the beginning, when Śrīla Prabhupāda started preaching in New York, we had no other source of knowledge about Kṛṣṇa. We were completely dependent on Śrīla Prabhupāda.

He gave us a few little rules to follow and later a few rules about Deity worship. And this was all we knew.

Today we have many sources of information and the writings of great *ācāryas*, but sometimes we make mistakes because we forget an important point.

In *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-bhajanāmṛta* (48), Śrīla Narahari Sarakāra Ṭhākura writes:

A disciple may hear some instructions from another advanced Vaiṣṇava, but after gaining that good instruction he must bring it and present it to his own spiritual master. After presenting it he should hear the same teachings again from his spiritual master with appropriate instructions.

Of course, we cannot directly ask Śrīla Prabhupāda questions anymore, but we still have his books and other instructions. Whatever we may learn from other sources, even the previous *ācāryas*, we must

compare with the teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda, not necessarily to see whether the *ācāryas*' teachings are correct, as the previous *ācāryas* cannot be wrong, but also to see whether we truly understand.

We have seen disciples try to study the works of the previous *ācāryas* or take shelter of some teacher and then come up with a conclusion different from that of Śrīla Prabhupāda. But Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

Every disciple must consider himself completely unaware of the science of Kṛṣṇa and must always be ready to carry out the orders of the spiritual master to become competent in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. A disciple should always remain a fool before his spiritual master. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 7.72]

That is the trick. We must know ourselves to be ignorant no matter how much we have read or heard. Only Śrīla Prabhupāda understands the science of Kṛṣṇa, and whatever knowledge we may acquire, we must understand through his teachings. This is not only for the direct disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda but also for the disciples of those who strictly follow him. For these people, their spiritual master will carefully present the teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

We must all know that we are fools and no one can guide us except Śrīla Prabhupāda and those who strictly follow him.

Śrīla Prabhupāda reminds us: "In the beginning one must have a preliminary desire for self-realization." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.10)

I thought I knew something about self-realization when I met Śrīla Prabhupāda, but after forty-three years I have understood that I know nothing about it at all. Now this little fool can do nothing but follow Śrīla Prabhupāda.

How wonderful!

Umāpati Swami

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## Varṣāṇā Swami

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Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you on this auspicious occasion of your appearance!

We find ourselves in a world so distracted with useless sounds that the word of God coming through guru, sādhu, and *śāstra* is severely challenged in receiving its proper respect, attention, and honor. So many words are spoken, written, and transmitted to seduce our attention by the manner in which they are whispered, sung, or shouted. They surround us, flashing across digital screens and billboards, transmuted in size and color to passionate rhythms that resonate with morbid remembrances of darkness and death.

Today's sound waves are increasingly poisoned by the toxic tones arising from polluted minds, resulting in a contaminated environment and thus an ecological crisis both internally and externally.

In this entire phantasmagoria, the message is basically the same: "Buy me, enjoy me, consume me. I will make you successful, fulfilled, and happy."

Such utterances may succeed in temporarily stimulating the mind and senses, but they cast a dark and depressing shadow over the self.

The value of words is cheapened and lost as their quantity increases and quality decreases. We shrug off this devolution as commonplace, saying "After all, they're only words."

These hollow words are a place of refuse meant for crows. Conversely (and fortunately), words backed with integrity, words that mean what they say, words born of realization, put into action and infused with compassion—such meaningful words are a refuge that is attractive to swans.

When spoken by swanlike souls, words are dynamic; they *become* what they *say*. The power of divine sound effects the first stage of creation. From the words "Let there be light," light was manifested.

Today a beautiful revelation and manifestation emerged from a meditation on your words.

After waking in my cabin at the start of the *brāhma-muhūrta* and offering obeisances to my favorite

picture of you, I raise my focus from your lotus feet to your eyes—the index of your mind, a mirror for us to view both the conditioning and potential of our hearts.

Gazing upon your picture keeps my outer world aligned and integrated with the image engraved on the core of my heart.

The picture on the wall captures a moment which, like everything related to you, is not frozen in time but continues to flow forth with significant meaning, offering hope to future generations.

It was taken during your second visit to the palace. Walking in the newly constructed portico, you stopped at regular intervals to tap your cane on the solid walls. These were the places you wanted windows installed.

“We will have artificial lighting” our leader explained. But you gently though firmly insisted, “No, natural lighting. Not artificial.”

This episode is intimately related to your previous visit. While in the center room of your palace, you asked if Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vṛndāvanacandra would be installed on the altar.

“No, we are going to install you.”

“That is proper” was your response.

Bali Mardan Mahārāja informed you that the lighting in the room would originate from jewels and gems inlaid in the pillars. The effect would be reminiscent of the natural lighting inside Kṛṣṇa’s palaces in Dvārakā.

Your response to that suggestion holds a place among my most precious memories of you. Turning to gaze on the devotees surrounding you and with the simplicity of a child, integrated with the humility of a servant fused with the authority of our master, you simply waved your cane in a graceful arch. Like a farmer cutting overgrowth from his field, you cleared the ether and focused our attention before implanting seeds of gratitude in us.

You spoke words that revealed your heart. “These devotees are my jewels.”

This statement had a sobering and purifying effect on all. It offered a brighter perspective on the blessed souls living in our midst, those who we are so prone to take for granted.

Now, many years later, with this remembrance lingering fresh within my mind, I go outside for a *japa* walk. My perception is clear and bright from contemplating your words. Everything takes on a fuller and deeper significance, for the *dhāma* is a gemlike devotee who illumines our consciousness and affirms our convictions.

In the early morning hours the *dhāma* is shrouded in darkness, the only light emanating from your palace’s golden dome and numerous stained-glass windows. Darkness serves as an appropriate backdrop to highlight the significance your palace enshrines.

A few days ago a winter storm covered the frigid landscape beneath a blanket of soft snow. Freezing rain clad the trees in ice. Electric lines broke, facilitating Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vṛndāvanacandra in blessing the devotees with a cherished candlelight *darśana*, in which Their Lordships could be seen to dance to the flickering flames.

As the first rays of light heralded the approaching sunrise, the *dhāma* awakened. She awarded a glimpse into the beauty perceived only by a truly Kṛṣṇa conscious soul.

Such beauty opens the heart of the beholder because it emerges from a love too vast to be contained within the heart of the creator. And thus, another face of His divine presence is revealed to bless all of His creation. With this vision, I feel your words being affirmed by the wonders around me.

The trees glistened and shimmered as they danced in the wind. Every twig emanated tiny rainbows of light as the rising sun’s rays pulsated through the alternating clouds and clear sky. The whole landscape came alive with an eagerness to convey a message and a truth.

Dressed in garments of white, crowned with an effulgence of golden sunrise, and garlanded with crystals as bright as gems, the *dhāma* appeared as a candidate for initiation into a life not born from the darkness of the womb, but one eligible for enlightenment by reflecting on the truth.

With the expanding influence of dawn, the sapphire vault of heaven opened wide above my head.

The snow, eclipsing the drab colors of a dormant landscape, became the hue of revelation—dazzling the intellect while eluding its grasp, purifying the imagination with divine imagery.

Wisps of snowflakes dance in currents of air surrounding the dome of your palace, to be imbued with the golden aura it radiates. I circumambulate your *samādhi* with a longing and prayer that my path may ever follow in your footsteps. With such a morning meditation and *sādhana* to guide my sight, all my fears dissolve and transform into joy while my burden grows increasingly light.

With the memory of your precious words awakened and reenacted within me, I return to my cabin after glancing once more at your palace from the western side. It glows in the rising sun, like a magnificent jewel box, overflowing with treasures which, the more they are distributed, the more they increase; the more they are contemplated, the fresher they become; the more the winter season of the universal cycle darkens the world, the more these jewels glisten.

In my cabin I gaze again upon the picture on the wall. Though the colors are fading with time, the corresponding internal image grows more vivid, distinct, and instructive as the years pass.

I feel inspired to tell this story not to inform you but to be formed and re-formed *by* you. I contemplate your instructions, not to master them, but to be mastered *by* them. I repeat your words, not so much that others can read them, but that I may be read *by* you.

In the absence of your physical presence our relationship with you is more dependent on sound. Your presence and influence remain living within the words of your instructions, and your sincere followers abide with you there.

Such is the superior nature of sacred words above and beyond mundane sound. I pray that your words, coming down from Goloka, further descend from my mind to my heart and expand from there to manifest devotional service in my life.

Bless me that my life may reflect the illumination of your gemlike devotees, who continue to emanate and radiate their realizations of your wisdom and love.

May their unfailing influence dispel the darkness within me so as to awaken attention to the holy name—the origin, goal, and shelter for all souls whose lives are lost in a world which is so distracted with other forms of sound.

*Aspiring to become the servant of your servants,*

Varṣānā Swami

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## Vedavyāsapriya Swami

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Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to your transcendental self!

On this auspicious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā, I am meditating upon the causeless mercy of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa that manifested in the form of empowerment in your divine personality. Ordinarily, if one works for someone, one gets remuneration through the transaction of the material energy. Even though it is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa's energy that is being transacted, the result is not permanent and thus one fears losing it. Therefore there is no fulfillment and but rather lamentation. On the other hand, you taught us to work for the cause of Kṛṣṇa with His own energy, without remuneration. Then there is no question of fear or lamentation. What I realize is that this way of Kṛṣṇa consciousness provides the transparent pathway for the Lord's mercy to travel unimpeded.

By your example you taught us how to serve the Lord both practically and instrumentally. In a practical way, you always remained in a transcendental situation by following your Guru Mahārāja's orders, and instrumentally you empowered your disciples and granddisciples with instructions and with the opportunity to serve Kṛṣṇa in varieties of ways for His pleasure. In this way the succession of empowerment as been continued. The secret of the unbroken chain of disciplic succession is thus empowerment manifested in the disciple or granddisciple who follows your instructions and orders. I wish to seriously follow your instructions and sincerely act on your orders so that I may become your instrument to propagate Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for providing me with an opportunity to serve you.

*Your servant,*

Vedavyāsapriya Swami

