



## **Homages from Ministries**



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# ISKCON Congregational Development Ministry

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

The Six Gosvāmīs met Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu after He had taken sannyāsa. It was therefore natural for them to meditate upon him as a member of the fourth āśrama. Eventually Lord Caitanya’s life as a gṛhastha became more and more known, and His followers started to worship Him as a householder—and that’s the way we see Him worshiped in your ISKCON temples all over the world.

In a somewhat similar way, ISKCON devotees got to know you first and foremost as a sannyāsī. That’s the āśrama you belonged to when you founded ISKCON and led the movement till the end of your manifest pastimes. It’s only natural that we mostly meditate on you in the form of a member of the fourth āśrama. Simultaneously, as your glories become more and more widespread and interest in all the phases of your earthly pastimes increases, devotees will keep discovering and appreciating your previous role as a gṛhastha also, dutifully maintaining your family while remaining absorbed in executing the instructions of your Guru Mahārāja to preach, and planning how to increase your preaching.

As the number of ISKCON devotees grows, and since most of them are home-based, the decades you lived as a home-based devotee will be more deeply explored. Your ISKCON will realize more and more that, alongside your activities as parivrājakācārya, you also provided a rich body of instructions by the way you lived as a householder—what would be called today a “congregational devotee.”

At the ISKCON Congregational Development Ministry we pray to become instrumental in inspiring your present and future followers to emulate what you showed while living at home: your absorption in the instructions of your spiritual master, your attachment to spreading the mission despite all odds, and the sense of being a servant of Kṛṣṇa, no matter what.

*Your servants at the ISKCON Congregational Development Ministry.*

## ISKCON Prison Ministry

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nāma-śreṣṭham manum api śacī-putram atra svarūpam  
rūpam tasyāgrajam uru-purīm māthurīm goṣṭhavātīm  
rādhā-kunḍam giri-varam aho rādhikā-mādhavāśām  
prāpto yasya prathita-kṛpaya śrī-gurum tam nato ’smi*

## Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā 2012

“I bow down to the beautiful lotus feet of my spiritual master, by whose causeless mercy I have received the supreme holy name; the divine mantra; the service of Lord Caitanya, the son of Śacīmātā; 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; and the desire within my heart for the loving service of Śrī Rādhikā and Mādhava in Vṛndāvana.”

*he guro jñāna-da dīna-bandho  
svānanda-dātaḥ karuṇaika-sindho  
vṛndāvanāsīna hitāvatāra  
prasīda rādhā-praṇaya-pracāra*

“O spiritual master, O giver of divine wisdom, O friend of the fallen, you are the giver of your own bliss, and you are the only ocean of mercy. Although dwelling in Vṛndāvana, you have descended for the welfare of fallen souls like me, and you are preaching the divine love of Rādhā for Kṛṣṇa. Please be kind upon me.”

I read your Vyāsa-pūjā homages almost every day. I have a collection. How your children love you! Recently I ran across the 2001 homage from Avatar Studios, an homage written by your beloved Śyāmasundara Dāsa (senior), and in it he wrote some very mysterious things. Playing the part of a fool on stage, he wrote:

You shouldn't have met those friends of mine . . .  
You shouldn't have brought them your sky-blue God . . .

Why didn't you just stay away from me  
And let my young heart fly away with the winds? . . .

Why did you have to speak my name?  
You shouldn't have touched my hand,  
You shouldn't have asked me to sing Kṛṣṇa with you,  
You shouldn't have asked me to dance! . . .

You shouldn't have caused me to love you so!  
You shouldn't have made me remember!

Mysterious, yes—but I knew what he meant. You shattered our dreams of dominance and independence. You disrupted our forgetfulness. I feel much the same way.

You are so great, and I am so small. You have important work to do, and I am a weak and unwilling yogī. I am dirty—please don't embrace me. I was caught up in my tragic game of enjoyment, but you forced my eyes open. But, Prabhupāda—please do not inconvenience yourself. Kṛṣṇa likes to play with you. I have put you in this uncomfortable situation.

Why did you make me dance? I was lame, fallen at the side of the road. Dancing was brutal, painful. But you lifted me up, gave me strength. You saved me. You saved me. A thousand times you have saved me. You saved me from the witch of self-delusion, a pit of misery, from “comfort” and “love.”

Sanātana Gosvami pleaded with Lord Caitanya, “Please don't embrace me.” He was covered with oozing sores. But here I am covered with the itching psoriasis of selfishness, the eczema of forgetfulness, and the oozing sores of madness and desire, and yet you have embraced me with your gentle kindness. You are a Vaikuṅṭha angel helping a wounded animal, a street dog. You are working for every soul in the world. You do not consider our past—instead you give us a future.

*Dhīra* or *adhīra*, you indiscriminately distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and the carnivores become gentle, and you deliver the guṇḍās and aborigines. You are personally taking Kṛṣṇa to every village in the world, including prison villages.

Inmate Bhakta Jermaine Archer writes:

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Dear Chandra,  
Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Thank you so much. I feel alive, blessed, fortunate, as if a void has been filled within me. Your guidance, the mantra, the information has opened my heart and mind to so many aspects of real life, not this physical illusion. Hare Kṛṣṇa!

I am learning the soothing, healing effects of the sweet, sacred Hare Kṛṣṇa Maha Mantra. I understand that the goal of physical existence is self-realization, reconnecting with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, returning to Kṛṣṇa. I also have accepted that spiritual death is much worse than physical death. I am beginning to see through the illusion. My life is becoming one of service—service to my fellow prisoners, to prison guards, to family, to you, to whoever I can serve, by serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead to the best of my ability. I feel love and I know I cannot, nor do I wish to, escape Him.

Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Inmate Bhakta Ricky Jones writes a prayer a day in your honor, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Here are a few:

November 10

Dear Lord Kṛṣṇa, my heart's desire is for my love for You to be so strong that the thought of You never leaves my mind, even for a second. I want my chanting of Your name to be like Hanumān's, so pure and powerful that it is able to melt solid granite.

November 11

Oftentimes I sit and make plans for the future. I wonder what will happen when I am released—how I will make a living, if I can still depend on my family, and on and on. I sometimes forget the futility of putting my trust in this material world. I know if I am serving You none of these things will trouble my mind. You will take care of me no matter what the future holds. Precious Lord, my only plan is to depend on You.

November 12

O mighty Lord Kṛṣṇa, there is a man-eating monster within me that threatens my existence. That monster is my attachment to material nature. Through the power of mantra I vow to slay that man-eater the same way Bhima slew the evil Raksasa. Your holy name can deliver me from the greatest of dangers.

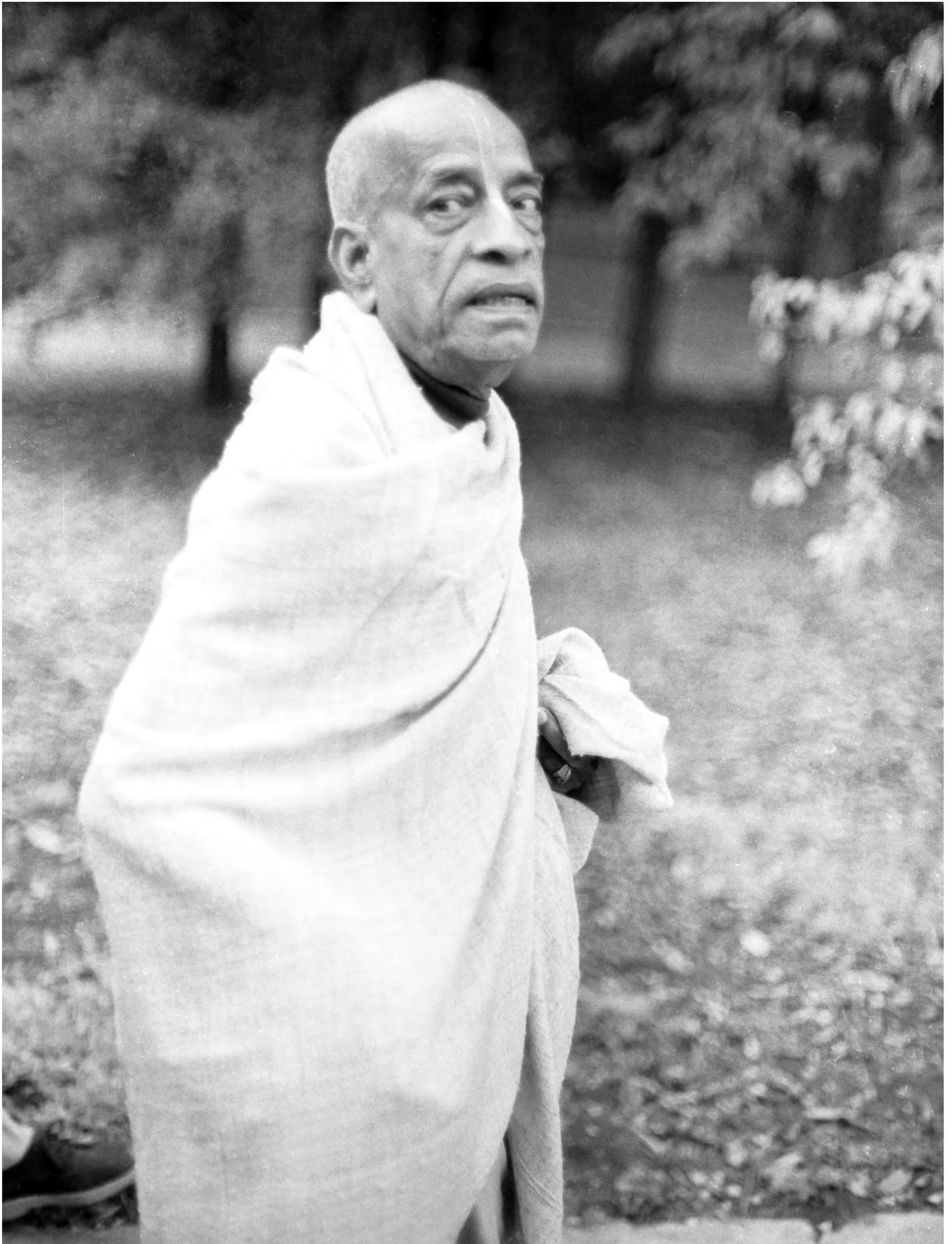
Our inmate Bhakta Ben Baker at a Super Max facility in Arizona writes:

Lord Sri Nityananda's mercy is very unlimited. He accepted me before I even realized who I was or what I needed. And what to say of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is the savior of the most fallen. I believe the whole process is called *ceto-darpana-marjanam*, which is the process of devotional service. Where is the difficulty? It is such a simple process.

Most of your ISKCON family doesn't know that without your prison preaching in India before coming to America there wouldn't be an ISKCON. Śrīpād Bhaktivedānta Vaiṣṇava Mahārāja, a disciple of Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Mahārāja, tells the story:

Before coming to America Swami Mahārāja [Śrīla Prabhupāda] was already preaching in Janak-pura, New Delhi, at Tihar prison, the biggest jail in Asia, and he needed so many prerequisites to get to the West. He needed transport, a P-form, the No-Objection certificate, and other things. Somehow, Kṛṣṇa had provided everything, but he still had no American visa, and to secure it he needed a letter of recommendation from someone of stature.

He approached Dr. Radhakrishnan, the president of India, at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Dr. Radhakrishnan, perhaps in a protective mood considering Swami Mahārāja's age, refused.



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Swami Mahārāja chastised him: “You are the president but what are you doing to reform the dacoits? Mahāprabhu even saved Jagāi and Mādhāi.”

“Ok, then, I’ll arrange you to give *Bhāgavata pravacana* in the local jail for some time and let us see.”

After Swami Mahārāja completed the prison program, Dr. Radhakrishnan was so pleased that he arranged for his visa.

I did not want to dance. I had accepted the reign of *māyā* in the forced labor camp called the earth planet. I did not want to dance, but you dragged me back by the hair to your side. Glorious is that master who does not abandon his wayward servant.

For all of us in ISKCON, in jail or not, you are the last word in freedom. You are the ultimate shelter. What do you call that person who sees the best in the worst? What do you call that person who comes down, opens wide the dungeon gates, and says, “Go—you are free!”?

Redeemer, hero! *Jagad-guru*, friend of the world! Savior, Mahapatita-pāvanadeva Śrīla Prabhupāda!  
Bound by your love, we remain

*Your servants in the ISKCON Prison Ministry.*

