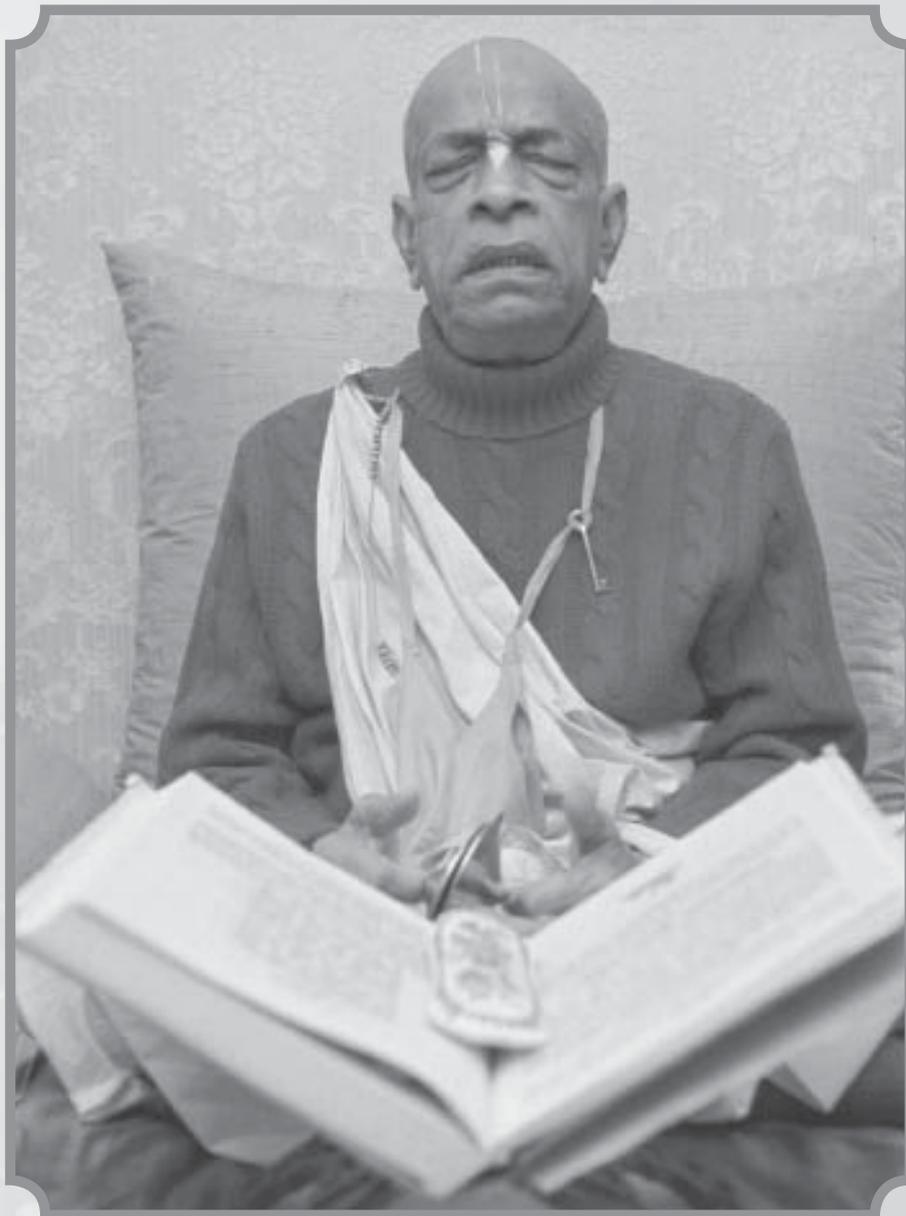




# HOMAGES FROM THE GBC





# Anuttama Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*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*

Fifty years ago this summer, in a tiny storefront on New York City’s Lower East Side, you officially established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). Outside of yourself, no one could understand your intention, or your vision.

Even the name you chose was puzzling. At that time your little group was far from “International.” You had arrived from India less than a year before, but the others were all Americans. Nor was it much of a “Society.” It was just a handful of youths, mostly dropouts from the mainstream, who occasionally spent time with you and were slowly, not so steadily, becoming committed to following your teachings.

“Krishna” was definitely there—you made sure of that. You did not teach about a faceless, nameless Supreme. Yours would not be the International Society for God Consciousness. No. You impressed upon your followers, your “Society,” that God is a person. His name is Kṛṣṇa, and chanting His name is the best path forward in this troubled age.

Your community was destined to become “Conscious” because of your presence. Many in your youthful clan were seeking consciousness-altering or consciousness-awakening before meeting you. But you started them on the path of being conscious of the basics of human life: you are not this body, life is meant to overcome suffering, and you are not the master of all you survey.

Beyond those simple concepts of spiritual knowledge, your young followers couldn’t begin to comprehend your expansive vision: That ISKCON would become a vibrant international society, one that would reach far beyond the boundaries of New York and—like the *Bhāgavatam* itself—become a “transcendental creation meant to bring about a revolution in the misguided lives of an impious civilization.”

But you saw the future. You laid out your vision in your Seven Purposes of ISKCON, which not only legally established the functions of your society but gave a glimpse of things yet to come.

Today, fifty years later, we need to pause, ponder, and remember the boldness, the courage, the compassion, and the urgency of your Seven Purposes. During this year, in which we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of ISKCON, we aspire to go beyond our limited vision to look anew at your purposes, to celebrate fifty years of progress—and lessons learned—and to renew our conviction and commitment to the amazing journey you have set us upon.

Let us contemplate briefly just one purpose, your first:

To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all peoples in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.

Such a beautiful vision! It is an expression of hope, founded on a radical proposition: that spiritual education and spiritual practice can address our most fundamental problems and provide, in a practical and systematic way, solutions to all of today’s ills.

Today those ills are so vast, so all-pervasive, and so disturbing. We live in a time of ever-increasing stress. Individuals are stressed; families are stressed; the global economy is stressed; relief efforts are

stressed; political systems are stressed; and the entire ecosystem is stressed. It is painful to see, and painful to contemplate.

And yet the mass of people remain, as you wrote when you landed at Boston Harbor, “covered by the modes of ignorance and passion. Absorbed in material life, they think themselves very happy and satisfied and therefore they have no taste for the transcendental message of Vāsudeva.”

We, your followers and modern-day members of ISKCON, are trying to heed your call. We want to awaken our own taste for the message of Vāsudeva. We pray to help you bring about “real unity and peace in the world.” Yet, too often our own shortcomings hold us back. Our sectarianism. Our arrogance. Our lack of faith. Our unwillingness to put the welfare of others before our own. Please forgive us for these shortcomings, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Please take us, despite all our flaws and weaknesses, and make us your instruments.

Much has been accomplished in the first fifty years of your movement, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Yet we have only begun to chip away at the ignorance, deceit, and corruption that rot the modern society, and if we are honest, our own hearts. As members of ISKCON, as your followers, we pray to realize that we will make a genuine difference, a genuine change in the world, only if we humbly and sincerely beg to comprehend your vision, your purpose, and, yes, your greatness.

If we begin to see as you see, Śrīla Prabhupāda—to see the Lord all around us, to see that the souls suffering in this world are our lost friends and fellow lovers of God, and that “systematically [propagating] spiritual knowledge” is the only way to “check the imbalance of values in life”—then only will the troubles that shake us, the obstacles that face us, and the material desires that plague us quickly fade.

At that time, by absorbing our minds in your vision, we will also find that your determination, your compassion, and your inspiration will flood our hearts. Then only we will become empowered and capable tools in your hands and, as members of your International Society for Krishna Consciousness, help to bring about the peace and unity that you envision for the world.

Your servant,

Anuttama Dāsa

## Badrinārāyaṇ Swami

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

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

You were sitting alone in Vṛndāvana,  
having taken shelter of the lotus feet of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.  
Yet you had a vision for the world.

People are simply wasting their human form of life  
with animal activities and suffering sorely for this.

Absorbed in compassion, you considered:  
“How will they be delivered?”

*dharmah projjhita-kaitavo*

“Completely rejecting all religious activities which are materially motivated”

*sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje*

“The supreme occupation (dharma) for all humanity  
is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service  
unto the transcendent Lord.”

But all the world was chasing after “the American dream.”  
Who would hear the message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*?

You boldly, bravely thought:

“Why not go there, turn America, and thus turn the world?”

Entering New York Harbor, greeted by the Statue of Liberty,  
with her promise to give shelter to the “huddled masses  
yearning to breathe free,”  
you were not impressed by the Manhattan skyline.  
“They are simply stacking stones.”

Starting alone in the Bowery,  
the drunkards, lying on the steps,  
would roll out of the way to make room for you.  
“In this way they offered their respects.”

It was far from easy.  
Now and then you checked the departure times back to India.  
You took the bus (three transfers required)  
to visit your edition of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*  
as it sat effulgent in the central library.  
You weathered the coldest winter to date in the city—  
declaring later “Hell is not hot. It is cold.”

Asked later why you came to America, you joked,  
“Previously some of my godbrothers went to England and failed.  
“Another went to Germany and failed.  
“I thought: If I am to fail, at least let me do so in a new place.”

But fail you did not.  
After only a few years, on Lord Jagannāth’s cart  
you rode triumphantly down 5th Ave., declaring it  
“the most important street, in the most important city,  
in the most important country in the world.”

A life member came to you in Kolkata,  
impressed by a yogī who managed to manifest one apple.  
You compared:

“We went to the West with nothing  
but faith in the Holy Name and the order of our spiritual master.  
From that has come so many devotees,  
so many books,  
so many festivals,  
so many Deities,  
and so many temples all around the world.”  
Then you added:  
“And in every temple—there are so many apples.”

This is the legacy we have received.  
This is the mood of an empowered Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*.  
You did not come to accommodate.  
You did not come to appease.  
You came, as you said, “for cultural conquest.”  
This is the mission we have received.

The world has never been more ready.  
The time has never been more ripe.  
Please give us the courage and conviction  
to push against the darkness and carry forth your light.

*Your insignificant servant,*

Badrinārāyaṇ Swami

## Bhakti Caitanya Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to you, the savior of the whole world.

In the *Bhakti-sandarbha*, *Anuccheda* 244, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī discusses serving the spiritual master. He quotes *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam* 3.7.19:

*yat-sevayā bhagavataḥ kūṭa-sthasya madhu-dviṣaḥ  
rati-rāso bhavet tīvraḥ pādāyor vyasanārdanaḥ*

“By serving the feet of the spiritual master, one is enabled to develop transcendental ecstasy in the service of the Personality of Godhead, who is the unchangeable enemy of the Madhu demon and whose service vanquishes one’s material distresses.”

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī then analyzes the verse as follows:

By serving great devotees, one develops a festival of *prema* (*rati-rāsaḥ*) for the feet of the eternal Lord (*kūṭa-sthasya*). The word *tīvraḥ* [intense] indicates that the result of serving is superior to just association. The accompanying result is described: *samsāra* (*vyasana*) is destroyed.

What struck me first when reading this is the statement “the result of serving is superior to just association.” This was your mood, Śrīla Prabhupāda. You were not one to simply sit and associate with your spiritual master, but you dedicated your life completely to serving him by spreading his mission. And as you pointed out in a letter once:

Just like I have written in the first publications of Srimad-Bhagavatam, “The spiritual master lives forever by his divine instruction and the disciple lives with him”, because I have always served my Guru Maharaja and followed his teachings, I am now even never separated from him.

What struck me next is how Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī develops this point by referring to a line from another *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse (11.19.21), a verse spoken to Uddhava by Lord Kṛṣṇa. The line is *mad-bhaktā-pūjābhyadhikā*, which Jīva Gosvāmī translates as “worshiping My devotee pleases Me more [*abhyadhikāḥ*] than worshipping Me.” By serving the spiritual master one attains more intense love for the Lord than by worshipping Him directly.

In your teachings to us, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you stressed this point persistently—that your disciples’ business in life is to serve you, and that in this way we will be able to approach Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Lord Kṛṣṇa, and not by any other method.

We are trying, Śrīla Prabhupāda. It is not easy to maintain and spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in this Kali-yuga, but we are trying. We pray to you on this day for your mercy to help us do this without becoming fatigued by the challenges, and particularly by our own weaknesses. We pray to be able to follow in your footsteps, as you followed in those of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, so that we will never be separated from you, and in this way we can become empowered to serve as you did.

It is a lot to ask for, but I don’t see how we can do anything else. Clearly we have no alternative.

Please bless us on this most wonderful day that we can become worthy disciples of you, the most worthy spiritual master. Please bless us with devotion, knowledge, and realization so we can properly carry forward your mission. And please bless us with the capacity to co-operate despite the difficulties and ironies of Kali-yuga.

We place ourselves at your divine lotus feet today, and beg for these mercies.

*Your lowly servant,*

Bhakti Caitanya Swami

## Bhakti Chāru Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisance on this most glorious day of your appearance. Let your divine glory spread all over the world for the benefit of all the living entities.

Many times you emphatically reminded us of the critical condition of Kali-yuga. In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy, you said, people would become degraded and violence would prevail everywhere. And sure enough, we are seeing that prediction come true. Sinful activities have become so rampant that breaking the four regulative principles is now the normal standard of life. There is violence wherever we look. In the name of religion, *adharmā* is gaining popularity, and violence in the form of terrorism is engulfing the world.

Recently, during Easter time, when the Christians in Lahore were celebrating that auspicious occasion, a suicide bomber detonated a bomb, killing more than hundred people and injuring over three hundred others. Less than a week earlier, two young suicide bombers sacrificed themselves to kill more than thirty people in a Brussels airport. An hour later, in the same city, another suicide bomber caused an explosion in a train station, killing more than twenty and injuring more than three hundred. Last November, gunmen and suicide bombers almost simultaneously hit a concert hall, a major stadium, and restaurants and bars in Paris, leaving 130 people dead and hundreds wounded. Since your departure from this planet, life has changed drastically, and violence, in a new shape, is terrorizing the world.

Since the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York fifteen years ago, the United States, which had been so open and liberal, has become much less so because of concerns about people's security. But even though the governments of many nations have taken measures to curb the violence, they haven't been successful, and terrorists are increasing enormously. A Muslim terrorist group named the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has taken over parts of those two countries. Its members brutally murder those opposed to them and even sell young women in the marketplace—all in the name of religion. And as the domain of these groups expands, so too do their atrocities.

Neither local governments nor the joint military efforts of Europe and America have been able to curb these terrorist groups. As a result, millions of people in the Middle East, mostly Muslims, are fleeing their homeland and taking asylum in neighboring countries and Europe.

It has become clear that the third world war will not be fought between countries with specific boundaries and by soldiers wearing uniforms. It will be a war of terror, and there will be no way to identify the terrorists until they've launched their deadly attacks. No political power or military or police force will be able to curb them, what to speak of defeat them.

Wondering what our role should be at a time like this, how we should deal with the situation, I think of how you acted in 1944 when Japan was about to bomb the British military base in Calcutta. When everyone was fleeing the city, you not only stayed on but went out on *harināma* with your servants and some trusting neighbors. You told one of your senior godbrothers, "If I chant the holy name, Kṛṣṇa will protect me, and even if He doesn't and I leave my body chanting the holy name, my life will be successful."

Although Calcutta faced imminent danger, for some reason Japan suddenly changed its plan and did not bomb the city. The reason may be mysterious to some, but it is clear to us that because of your chanting the holy name on *saṅkīrtana*, Kṛṣṇa saved that city.

This example provides us with a wonderful lesson: when the entire world is in the grip of terrorism, and pandemonium reigns—in that critical situation we, your loyal followers, must go out with *mṛdaṅgas* and *karatālas* and perform the *yuga-dharma* of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* without concern for our safety. If we take shelter of the holy name, Kṛṣṇa will protect us, and even if we die, we will achieve the ultimate perfection of our lives. Our faith in the holy name will be tested, and onlookers will see how the devotees have conquered the fear of death.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please give us the strength and courage to be able to act with this conviction. Please bless us that we can properly follow your footsteps, mold our lives according to the examples you so mercifully set for us, and become your true followers.

*Your humble servant eternally,*

Bhakti Chāru Swami

# Bhaktimārga Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

On a recent 45-day pilgrimage through the northeast United States, I had much time to contemplate. It was a walk to express my utter appreciation to you, with 1,500 kilometers (932 miles) under my feet.

Formally the trek was dubbed “Walking for Our Teachers.” My route took me from Boston’s Commonwealth Pier, where you first landed in America fifty-one years ago, to Butler, Pennsylvania, where you spent a good month, and then to New York City, where you began your mission, ISKCON, officially incorporating it in July 1966.

The society you initiated was a major milestone. The ISKCON Vaiṣṇava culture took hold, but not without trials and tribulations. Like a trekker walking the Pennsylvania mountain/valley terrain, over the last five decades ISKCON has climbed and descended quite a few steep slopes.

In your endeavor to cement ISKCON within the modern world, you worked to make it a recognizable force grounded in culture and education, rather than merely another religion added to an already pluralistic world of faith. We shall now see how effectively we can continue to market the Prime Entity, Kṛṣṇa, and mold your marvelous Society over the next fifty years.

There is much work to be done.

If I may, I would like to present to you and to the society of devotees my humble analysis of some of your contributions to the world and what makes you unique:

## The Cutting-Edge Guru

- 1) You pioneered the practice of kīrtana in the West, with emphasis on the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra.
- 2) You introduced to the West the culture of *bhakti yoga*, an ancient devotional lifestyle, with emphasis on serving the Supreme Deity, Kṛṣṇa.
- 3) You wrote and published books and articles and established the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT), presenting a scholarly Vedic library of writings on Eastern thought.
- 4) You established a worldwide spiritual mission registered as the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).
- 5) You became a strong and early voice promoting animal rights, especially the protection of the cow and the bull.
- 6) You strongly promoted a nonviolent vegetarian way of life (and were perhaps the first teacher of Vedic cooking in the West).
- 7) You introduced to the West the Vedic consecration of food as *prasādam*.
- 8) You promoted a God-centered agrarian culture, a back-to-the-land initiative centered on the family farm and an eco-friendly existence.
- 9) You initiated the world’s first large-scale program of sanctified vegetarian food distribution to the needy, in Māyāpur.
- 10) You strongly spoke out against drug and alcohol consumption as harmful.
- 11) You boldly promoted the science of the soul’s transmigration (reincarnation).

- 12) You strongly challenged atheism and Darwin’s theory of evolution and constantly promoted the principle that there *is* a God and that He is a person.
- 13) You introduced to the West the ancient techniques of *arcana*, or *pūjā*, honoring the Divine in His sacred image.
- 14) You promoted the anti-racist sentiment by propagating the all-inclusive philosophy that all souls are equal and that “We are not these bodies.”
- 15) You redefined the word *party*: Sing the holy names! Dance! Play music! Eat karma-free food! No intoxication! No lewdness! Serve each other!

Also, Your Divine Grace was a major positive influence on history’s most popular rock band, The Beatles, especially on George Harrison, who impacted a generation, if not more.

For all of the above, I offer you the utmost reverence and gratitude.

*Begging to remain your humble servant,*

Bhaktimārga Swami

## Bhaktivaibhava Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

*om̐ ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-salākayā  
caḡsur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

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

Quoting this verse in your purport to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.15.16, you give the following comment:

This gives the definition of the guru. Everyone is in the darkness of ignorance. Therefore everyone needs to be enlightened with transcendental knowledge. One who enlightens his disciple and saves him from rotting in the darkness of ignorance in this material world is a true guru.

Modern technology has invented cochlear implants for deaf people. They are electronic medical devices that replicate the function of the damaged inner ear. Although the devices are not free from risks, some deaf patients decide to undergo the surgery. It is touching to see the reactions of deaf people who are able to hear for the first time in their lives. They generally have an emotional breakdown and shed tears. For them the ability to hear is like a gift from God. They cannot believe their good fortune in being able to hear their own voices and those of their loved ones for the first time, what to speak of hearing music and birdsongs, which are such common experiences for those who can hear. It is a very emotional experience to see these people weeping because of feeling blessed.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, not only did you bless us with the ability to hear spiritual sound vibrations for the first time in our lives, but you also gave us the ability to see spiritual objects and think about spiritual

topics. In fact, you graced us with the spiritual perception of all our senses. Therefore, how much more than the cured deaf people should we feel emotionally overwhelmed, shedding tears out of deep gratitude for what you have done for us and the entire world! We had lost our ability to perceive Lord Kṛṣṇa uncountable eons ago. Spiritually blind, deaf, and dumb, we had been rotting in this material world.

The Greek philosopher Epictetus, who was born a slave, said, “He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has.” And William Arthur Ward, one of America’s most quoted writers of inspirational maxims, reminds us: “Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings.”

Kindly bless me to always feel the highest gratitude and joy for what you have done for this insignificant servant of yours as I practice and spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness for the remaining years of my life.

This year we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of your founding ISKCON. Already in many places throughout the world wonderful events have taken place in glorification of “ISKCON 50.” For example, on March 20th more than 20,000 students attended a youth festival organized by ISKCON Pune to celebrate the anniversary, and back in August of 2015 more than 14,000 devotees from 120 countries gathered in Netaji Indoor Stadium in Kolkata to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of your departure from India on the Jaladuta. ISKCON has set two new records in the Guinness Book of World Records, one for yoga and another for world book distribution. The 50/50 book campaign has been launched in many places, in which as many devotees as possible promise to distribute at least fifty books throughout the year. And there are many more remarkable events planned. ISKCON 50 is our big chance to make a global impact to glorify Your Divine Grace and your ISKCON movement. Kindly bless us to successfully stage the many more events to come.

*Your eternal servant,*

Bhaktivaibhava Swami

## Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisance in the dust at your lotus feet.

It’s very challenging for me to write an offering to you, because many years ago I devoted my entire life to you—what more can I offer? This is not an exaggeration, not figurative high talks. At some point I realized that there is no other goal in my life but to serve you. Since you entered my life, the rest has lost its significance.

A man is always looking for something or somebody to dedicate his life to. We are all servants by nature. And at the end of the day, the value of our life is judged not by what we are doing but by how and whom we’re serving.

Looking back, I am trying to evaluate how fortunate I am. I could have easily wasted my life serving pathetic people and their meager ideas. Trying to squeeze some meaning from my existence, I would have worked hard, getting excited about small victories and lamenting losses, much as I do today. In the same way as I do now, I would have regretted my mistakes and been proud of successful decisions. Everything

in my life would have been identical or almost identical, with only one exception. The overall result of all this hard labor, these gains and losses and joys and sorrows, would have been zero. No matter how huge a number is, when it's multiplied by zero we get zero.

However, the most terrifying part of this hypothetical scenario is not even the futility of a life without Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I know many intelligent, decent people who manage to forget about all-devouring death and find the meaning of life in their decency, their intelligence, and their good deeds. Unfortunately, that wouldn't have been my case. I know that I could never have cheated myself to that extent. At some point in my youth the futility of this world's pursuits became too obvious to me. That was exactly the moment when you appeared in my life. By His grace, Kṛṣṇa first created an unbearable vacuum in my heart and then immediately filled it up with your words.

Yes, it is difficult to write you an offering, since whatever I had, I've already given entirely to you. Gratitude expressed in words is often nothing but an attempt to avoid showing real gratitude with one's deeds. Nonetheless, in the Vedic culture there is a traditional way of expressing one's gratitude when it can't be put into words. The great Ganges is worshiped with a palmful of Ganges water, and the mighty sun, the source of all light and heat, is offered a small ghee lamp. Following this tradition, today I would like to offer you a story from your own life, narrated by one of your disciples, Mahābuddhi Prabhu. What is there in it from me, you might ask? The simple answer is: through the words of this wonderful story I admit my own utter poverty and express my sincere admiration for your magnanimous personality. What else can a beggar do but beg?

### How to Recognize a Real Guru

Teenagers always challenge their authorities, at least in the West. That is their favorite sport. What else is there for them to do? By dragging somebody down, they add significance to themselves. They cannot be proud of their own achievements yet, but the need to feel proud still burns in their hearts. Hence, that is what they are left with—to feel proud by tearing down others' achievements.

Somewhere in a little town on the West Coast of the US there lived a teenager, one of millions like him. It happened that he came across a huge poster with Śrīla Prabhupāda's image on it. The big caption under his picture read "The Guru of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness." The teenager at once took this as another great opportunity to overthrow someone. "Hah!" he thought, "another imposter guru. Let's see what kind of guru he is." Just a two-hour drive in his parents' car and he'd be in Los Angeles. Even before getting into the car, he had already come up with four qualities that, in his opinion, a real guru should possess:

He should know the Absolute Truth.  
 He has to know the process for realizing the Absolute Truth.  
 He has to be able to read my mind.  
 He has to be able to predict the future.

God only knows where he got this list from, but that didn't make him any less confident. "Today I shall expose him." The very thought of this made his heart feel warm and nice. Let's hear his story, then . . .

\* \* \*

"Would you like to see Śrīla Prabhupāda?" his secretary asked me.

"Of course, that's what I came for!"

In a few minutes I was in Śrīla Prabhupāda's room, where there were many people with long sticks wrapped in cloth, whom I later got to know as *sannyāsīs*. Dressed in shabby jeans and wearing long curly hair, I was a total stranger here—alone among the close circle of followers.

My challenging spirit in this (to my mind) hostile environment only got stronger. I sat down on the

floor next to the wall, looking at what was going on from under my eyebrows. My legs couldn't bend properly, so I kept adjusting my sitting position, trying to make myself comfortable. Śrīla Prabhupāda had just finished singing and was looking around. His glance stopped at me. Without taking his eyes off me, he distinctly said, "Why are you a *kṛpaṇa*?"

Being caught off guard, I thought, "What does he mean? "What the hell is a *creepana*?"

"A *kṛpaṇa* is a miser, opposite to a *brāhmaṇa*," Śrīla Prabhupāda responded, as if reading my thoughts. He continued: "*Brāhmaṇas* are those who have realized the Absolute Truth and teach others how to realize it. So why have you become a miser?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda was so heavy that the *sannyāsīs* in front of me instinctively moved aside and made a little aisle so there was an open space between me and Prabhupāda. He was looking straight at me and kept on challenging me. My mind exploded: "I see him for the first time, and he chastises me for being a miser even without knowing me?! Why does he say I'm a miser?"

"A miser is one who has some abilities but is not using them in the service of God, keeping them for himself only," said Śrīla Prabhupāda, again as if responding to my thoughts. All of a sudden I realized what was going on: "I've come to challenge him, but he's challenging me first."

Still looking at me, Śrīla Prabhupāda started explaining that the Absolute Truth is Kṛṣṇa, the reservoir of all perfections and opulences, and that the only process to know the Absolute Truth is bhakti, loving service to Kṛṣṇa. One after another, he was fulfilling my prerequisites for being a guru, and simultaneously, by Prabhupāda's lotus mercy, I was being kicked in the face for my nonsense challenging spirit.

I felt naked under his glance and started to look around shyly, trying to understand if everyone else had become aware of my nakedness. Nonetheless, my stubborn mind, not wanting to surrender, grasped the last straw: "Still, he hasn't foretold the future."

The very moment I thought that, Śrīla Prabhupāda called his secretary and asked him to open a big one-volume *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that had the commentaries of the major *ācāryas*. At this time, the early 1970s, Prabhupāda had not yet read from the Twelfth Canto. Still, on that occasion he asked his secretary to turn to the Twelfth Canto, which contained predictions for the Age of Kali. He looked down at the book and then again looked up at me, sitting there with my curly hair hanging down to my shoulders, and said, "People will think they're beautiful by having long hairs." Prabhupāda then explained many of the Twelfth Canto's predictions for this age, and I felt defeated even though I hadn't even opened my mouth. By Kṛṣṇa's grace I hadn't made any offenses other than to offensively come before Prabhupāda in a challenging spirit.

Once the audience was over I immediately ran down the stairs without looking at anyone, jumped into the car, and pressed the gas pedal. My cheeks were burning. I felt as if everyone had been laughing at me. One thought kept recurring in my mind: "Why did he call me a miser?"

I began to go through everything the old man with a strong Indian accent had said. By the time the car was approaching my house, my mental argument was subsiding. "Why don't you just face it? You've been defeated." I had thought myself the smartest kid and often wondered how others hadn't noticed it. Nobody had ever defeated me in an argument before. Yet, looking within, I gladly noticed that I had a special sweet feeling of being calm and secure. "He defeated me, and that means he can guide me."

As soon as I got home I made out a check from my first checkbook. My pen was wavering as I wrote "One thousand dollars." That was almost all my savings. The next morning I took the check to Los Angeles and gave it to a devotee standing behind the counter of the temple gift shop. He was very surprised and offered to take me up to see Śrīla Prabhupāda. I refused politely, thinking, "I barely survived the first meeting." The devotee said, "Wait here." While I waited, the devotee gave my check to Śrīla Prabhupāda and then returned to relay Prabhupāda's words to me: "Tell him that he has understood everything correctly."

That was my first meeting with Śrīla Prabhupāda.

\* \* \*

Some time ago I also used to argue with you, Śrīla Prabhupāda—mentally, with the words in your

books. Your words seemed too dogmatic to me. No use trying to hide it now; they would often hurt my ego and would thus irritate me with their peremptory nature. Just like that young man, I was constantly feeling that you were throwing me a challenge. “Cats, dogs, asses, foolish scientists . . .” Alas, I did understand that you were addressing me. There was no way I could agree with all that, and yet I carried on reading your books to find some contradictions and to refute you. Every new argument of mine would be crushed by your cast-iron logic, and often I, like Mahābuddhi, felt as if you were reading my mind and knew all my arguments even before I did. Yet my mind continued to argue desperately, afraid to admit defeat and be forced to agree with you. I can’t even remember how long these inner arguments continued. But I clearly remember the sweet feeling of complete security that came upon me when I laid down my arms and bowed in front of you, irrevocably accepting your superiority.

Thank you for defeating me so thoroughly, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

*Your servant ever since,*

Bhakti Vijñāna Goswami

## Bhūrijana Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you were born in a different age and of a different culture, yet your message timelessly rings true and relevant. Many times you said you were not propounding yet another one-eyed, faith-filled religion. Rather, you were teaching the essential religious/spiritual principle beyond birth, country, culture, body, intelligence, and mind. You taught us that all souls are intrinsically servants of Kṛṣṇa.

Anyone who neglects Kṛṣṇa’s service, you would say (often citing Kṛṣṇa at *Gītā* 7.15), is a rascal. And with each passing year it seems truer and truer that, as you said, they indeed are “all rascals”:

Politicians are rascals:

“They are simply changing forms of government: electing one rascal, rejecting him, electing another rascal, and rejecting him. Because the candidates are all rascals, the people have no alternative but to elect a rascal. They are thinking, ‘By electing this rascal, we shall be happy.’”

False gurus are rascals:

**You:** I can declare that they are all nonsense.

**Journalist:** I wonder if you could elaborate on that a little bit.

**You:** I can say, furthermore, they're all rascals.

The members of the public are rascals:

“What is the public? All rascals. They are killing cows and drinking and topless dance, bottomless dance. What is the value of this public? All rascals.”

False scholars are rascals:

“There are 640–45 editions of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Simply cheating. Amongst them, there are big, big scholars. Not scholars. All rascals, but they cheat.”

From your vantage point of pure *bhakti*, anyone lacking devotion to Kṛṣṇa is a rascal:

“Now you have got the machine; you go there. No. You cannot go. You are so limited. Even you cannot go to the moon planet, which is so nearest. You cannot go. But still, we are proud of our airplanes, sputniks. We are thinking, ‘Now we have become God.’ These rascals, they do not know what is God. They are all rascals.”

Good rascals and bad rascals, with some rascals more sincere and others less, but yet “all rascals,” determined to avoid Kṛṣṇa and His service.

Once a pious *paṇḍita*, a scholarly leader of the Indian independence movement, inquired from Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura: “Do the *paṇḍitas* of the Kāśī School accept the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [as the rightful commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*]?”

Your Guru Mahārāja replied, “They look upon the *Bhāgavatam* as only one particular book among others, a particular *Purāṇa* among other *Purāṇas*. They do not adopt it solely.” Then he explained his own viewpoint, which is that of all the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*: “We think there is no need for any other book than the *Bhāgavatam*. Only those other books are acceptable that say something in its favor; the deliberations that go against it are not worth being called spiritual.”

The *paṇḍita* then asked whether or not this was a universally accepted conclusion, or were there deliberations against the *Bhāgavatam*.

Your Guru Mahārāja then replied in a wonderful way that so much reminds us of you: “There is no deliberation in the world which is not against the *Bhāgavatam*. All the different currents of thoughts of *jīvas* averse to God from time immemorial are against it.”

And translating, publishing, and distributing that book, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, was your life’s mission. You are humble but direct as you describe your books as unique and revolutionary.

We are not very big scholar. We have no such qualification that we can compose very nice literature. There may be so many mistakes or . . . Whatever it may be, but it is revolutionary. That is a fact. It is revolutionary. Otherwise, why big, big scholars, professors, university authorities, librarians, they are taking? They are thinking they know that this literature will revolutionize the whole world. Because there is . . . in the Western world there is no such thought. They agree. So why it is revolutionary? Because there is an attempt to glorify Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Nothing more. There is no literary career.” [Class on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.8.20, Māyāpur, 30 September 1974]

Many things within your movement will undoubtedly shift and be adjusted as necessity and time apply their irresistible pressures. But your books, which are meant solely to glorify Kṛṣṇa, should never shift from being ISKCON’S center. Devotees should study your books, for they contain your instructions, your essential teachings, and are central in keeping meaningful your position as ISKCON’S founder-*ācārya*.



Being on the wrong side of the line that divides devotees from conditioned souls, I too am a rascal. Yet you are my glorious master, and as the years pass I pray to become increasingly dedicated to you and your service. I remain forever indebted to you for your continued tolerance and for allowing me to make my offerings to you.

*Your servant,*

Bhūrijana Dāsa

## Bīr Krishna dās Goswami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

This morning in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class we read from the Fifth Canto, chapter 1, verse 41. In your translation and purport you explain that Mahārāja Priyavrata considered hellish the opulences he had achieved in this world. He gave up everything and took to complete absorption in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, having experienced a higher taste.

In the class, I gave several examples of devotees who, before they joined your movement, had opulences such as wealth, strength, renunciation, knowledge, beauty, or fame. Of course, these are the same opulences Kṛṣṇa possesses in unlimited degree. The devotees I cited gave up all attachment to these opulences simply by experiencing the higher taste of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Hence they gave up everything and engaged full-time in hearing and chanting.

The question was raised by one of the participants as to when and if it was appropriate for us to follow in the footsteps of these great personalities at a certain stage in life. The connection was made to our different services in guiding the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. In other words: Is there a stage in life where we should renounce everything and simply engage in hearing and chanting?

My response was to cite your example—how you were determined to continue with the active preaching mission as long as you were able:

On the morning of Prabhupada’s departure [from the temple on New York’s 55<sup>th</sup> Street], a few devotees came to his room to make a last attempt, begging him not to travel. He said nothing, though he was obviously set on leaving. His servants were packing his bags, and everything was ready to go. Nevertheless, even as he left his room and got on the elevator, a few men followed, still suggesting he not go.

“Prabhupada, please reconsider,” said Rāmeśvara Swami. Śrīla Prabhupāda had remained jolly so far, despite his physical weakness, and despite his disciples’ pleading. But now his face changed.

“Don’t travel,” one devotee said. And another added, “Just stay. Sit down and rest.”

Prabhupāda turned, and his eyes were very deep. More than ever he seemed not of this material world. “I want the benediction to go on fighting for Kṛṣṇa,” he said, “just like Arjuna.”

Everyone remained silent, and the important instruction burned into their memories. The elevator opened on the main floor, and hundreds of waiting devotees chanted and cheered as Śrīla Prabhupāda walked to his car.

On the way to the airport the devotees again began talking about how degraded Kali-yuga was. “But you have to go on preaching,” Prabhupāda advised them. “You have to go and try to save these people.” [*Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta*, chapter 50: The Lame Man and the Blind Man]

The example you set in this one exchange with the devotees has been my inspiration throughout the years.

There are many such examples, such as the profound determination you showed in coming to the West at an age when most Vaiṣṇavas were retiring to the holy places to engage in *bhajana*. You focused on the mission of your spiritual master, remembering the injunction Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura gives us in the *Gurv-aṣṭaka*—that by the mercy of the spiritual master one gets the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, and that without the guru’s mercy one loses Kṛṣṇa mercy.

As we age and mature in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, there is a natural desire to retire from so many activities. That desire arises first of all from the service to your mission. Service to your mission yields the fruit of devotional service, which is attraction to hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa and renunciation of the objects of this world:

*vāsudeve bhagavati bhakti-yogaḥ prayojitaḥ  
janayaty āśu vairāgyaṁ jñānaṁ ca yad ahaitukam*

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

So, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am praying to you for the benediction of being able to go on fighting for you and Kṛṣṇa till the very end of this body. My body belongs to you, to be used in your mission.

In this way, my complete success in spiritual life will be assured. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving this lesson to me.

*Your servant,*

Bīr Krishna dās Goswami

## Devāmrita Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most respectful obeisances at your lotus feet.

Desiring to be of suitable service to you is our eternal quest.

Whatever little expertise we have amassed derives from your service, and we strive to reinvest it in you.

The yearning to become an effective instrument in your hands is the king sitting on the throne of the *bhakti* life you have given us.

Because of the opportunity to engage in your service, we gradually find that our incongruous motivations, like species besieged by climate change, head for extinction.

Your devotees, begging for increased shelter at your lotus feet, seek divine intelligence to better serve your mission.

You explained:

Krishna's plan becomes very easy for us when we follow Krishna's orders, otherwise, we are following Maya's plan and become frustrated at every step. Following Krishna's orders means chanting daily 16 rounds, following the four rules and regulations, rising early, associating with devotees, like that. Unless these principles are followed, we cannot expect Krishna's protection. [Letter to Jayadeva, 23 July 1972]

Currently the tossing seas of an increasingly pluralistic *bhakti* society pitch and roll the ISKCON boat—waves of global diversity often drenching your dedicated deckhands as they rally to keep your ISKCON ship on course.

Amidst the spiritual introspection and deliberation necessary for guiding the diversity so it can thrive in unity, there is the grand panacea, though so lofty and sublime. This complete remedy tugs at our hearts and heads, impelling us forward due to your mercy:

Although he is the first living entity, Lord Brahmā is not in the category of *viṣṇu-tattva*. Rather, he is part of the *jīva-tattva*. Nonetheless, by the grace of the Lord, who instructed him through the heart (*tene brahma hṛdā*), Lord Brahmā could create a huge universe. Those who are actually pure devotees of the Lord are instructed by the Lord through the heart, where the Lord is always situated. *Īśvaraḥ sarva-bhūtānāṃ hṛd-deśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati* (Bg. 18.61). If he follows the instructions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the living entity, even though an insignificant creature, can perform the most difficult tasks by the Lord's grace. Lord Kṛṣṇa confirms this in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.10):

*teṣāṃ satata-yuktānāṃ bhajatāṃ prīti-pūrvakam  
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṃ taṃ yena mām upayānti te*

“To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me.”

Everything is possible for a pure devotee because he acts under the instructions of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Through His inconceivable energy, a pure devotee can perform tasks that are supposed to be very, very difficult. He can perform tasks not even previously performed by the Lord Himself. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 16.67, purport]

Gazing far overhead at the pragmatic reality and necessity of this consummate, final solution, we prostrate ourselves before you, desiring life-after-life progress toward this pressing practical necessity, though it be so stunningly exalted—life's ultimate goal.

*Aspiring for your service,*

Devāmrita Swami

# Dīna Sharaṇa Devī Dāsī

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

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

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda  
Founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

On this auspicious day of your appearance,

The whole world of ISKCON and friends and  
Your disciples are rejoicing and celebrating

50 Years ISKCON 2016  
Joy of Devotion

.....  
This is our “centenary”  
Because none of us will witness

100 years ISKCON 2066  
.....

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda  
Founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

All of your personal achievements and  
All of your sincere and loyal disciples’ achievements  
Are now coming to maturity and to  
A crossroads on the way to Godhead.

Your legacy and the future of your mission  
Belong to the new generation.

The new generation’s future starts now,  
Nourished by fifty years of  
efforts, sacrifices, faith, and loyalty.

Despite difficulties and mistakes,  
Your disciples are still  
Holding up high the light of Kṛṣṇa consciousness  
In your name,

Because you have shown us

“The Lord of your heart.”

.....

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda  
 Founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

For this wonderful, rare, and priceless gift  
 To the human race of all creeds and colors,  
 From the core of my heart on this auspicious day of your appearance  
 I, a fallen soul, thank you.

Had you not, out of deep compassion,  
 Taken upon yourself the dangerous journey  
 To countries outside India,  
 None of us would have ever had  
 The great fortune of coming in touch with

“The lord of our heart.”

.....

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda  
 Founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

As with most of your disciples,

The first few years of my life  
 Were spent roaming around this material world,  
 Searching.

After much failure,

The second few years of my life  
 Were spent practicing spiritual life under your guidance,  
 Trying to understand and serve

“The Lord of my spiritual master’s heart!”

The third few years of my life  
 Left me stripped of all hope for material and spiritual success:  
 Cheated, deprived, and stranded . . .

“Will there be a life after this? Where are you,  
 “O Lord of my spiritual master’s heart!?”

For the last few years of my life,  
 I beg you to allow me

to always remember you,  
to never forsake your association,  
to always be filled with your unconditional love forever,

“O lord of my heart!”

May your holy name alone remain on my lips,  
Never again to leave the core of my heart!

On this auspicious day of your appearance,

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda  
Founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness,

I am begging to become your servant.

Dīna Sharaṇa Devī Dāsī

## Giridhārī Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Since this year we celebrate ISKCON’s fiftieth anniversary, I have been privileged to make several presentations on “The Seven Purposes of ISKCON” to devotees throughout our zone. In the course of making these presentations, I have personally gained deeper understanding of your vision for ISKCON, and perhaps more importantly, how to better realize it. This too was the case with those who attended the presentations.

Most astounding for many devotees to hear was that you crafted these seven purposes back in 1953, when starting the League of Devotees in Jhansi. As early as then you were clearly envisioning a world-wide movement to propagate the teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Only a short thirteen years were separating you from officially registering your ISKCON society in 1966.

Your seven purposes read like *sūtras* in that they are complete but at the same time thickly condensed. Throughout your books and recorded lectures, you provide insights and instructions that help your followers unpack these *sūtra*-like purposes. You left nothing ambiguous; your intentions were crystal clear. As we mined your teachings, we found many valuable gems that seemed to speak directly about the seven purposes.

\* \* \*

Your first purpose is “To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all peoples in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world.”

You once said that your books would be the “lawbooks for the next ten thousand years, the golden era when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s *sankīrtana* movement would spread widely. Your books would be the foundation upon which ISKCON rests, the basis of everything. You directly spoke about this in two letters:

My first concern is that my books shall be published and distributed profusely all over the world. Practically, books are the basis of our movement. Without them our preaching has no effect. [Letter to Maṅḍalibhadra, 20 January 1972]

Books are the basis of our movement. Whatever appreciation we are getting on account of our books, it is because we are following the path chalked out by exalted devotees. [Letter to Tuṣṭa Kṛṣṇa, 9 January 1976]

Translating, publishing, and distributing transcendental literature were clearly at the forefront of your mission. But at the same time you were equally concerned that your disciples carefully study your books.

So we should have good association, by study of good books like *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, we should realize ourself. Otherwise, our mind will remain always an enemy, an enemy. And enemy, as the enemy is always prepared to do harm, so my mind will drag me to things which will make me entangled more and more in this material miserable life. [Lecture on *Bhagavad-gītā* 6.4–12, New York, 4 September 1966]

Don’t think that simply our books are meant for selling. No. It is meant for reading also. If we read regularly, at least two hours, three hours, that is *tapasya*. *Tapo divyam*. [Lecture on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.5.1, Vṛndāvana, 23 October 1976]

In 1976, perceiving that many devotees were not familiar with your books, you had a letter sent to all GBC members and informed them of your plan to institute formalized study, with examinations.

Here in India many persons often criticize our sannyasis and brahmanas as being unqualified due to insufficient knowledge of the scriptures. Factually, there are numerous instances when our sannyasis and brahmanas have fallen down, often due to insufficient understanding of the philosophy. This should not be a point of criticism nor a reason for fall down, since Srīla Prabhupāda has mercifully made the most essential scriptures available to us in his books. The problem is that not all the devotees are carefully studying the books, the result being a fall down or at least unsteadiness. . . . [Letter approved by Śrīla Prabhupāda and sent to all GBC members by Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami, 7 January 1976]

You wanted all prospective candidates for *brāhmaṇa* initiation to pass a written examination to attain a Bhakti-śāstrī degree, and for *sannyāsa* candidates to attain a Bhakti-vaibhava degree.

After hearing how much importance you placed on the study of your books, many devotees attending the presentation vowed to study them more deeply, enroll in *śāstra* courses, form study groups, and regularly listen to your recorded lectures.

\* \* \*

Your second purpose is “To propagate a consciousness of Krishna as it is revealed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.”

When you founded your Society in 1966, you carefully chose the term “Krishna consciousness” instead of “God consciousness” to emphasize the specific, attractive personality of Kṛṣṇa, who is the Supreme Being mentioned in so much of Vedic literature as the source of all that exists.

“Kṛṣṇa consciousness” was of course your translation of the first line of a verse by Rāmānanda Rāya that Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī included in his verse anthology, *Padyāvalī*, and that is quoted in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya* 8.70):

*kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā matiḥ  
krīyatām yadi kuto 'pi labhyate  
tatra laulyam api mūlyam ekalan  
janma-koṭi-sukṛtair na labhyate*

“Pure devotional service in Kṛṣṇa consciousness cannot be had even by pious activity in hundreds and thousands of lives. It can be attained only by paying one price—that is, intense greed to obtain it. If it is available somewhere, one must purchase it without delay.”

You desired that this “consciousness of Kṛṣṇa” be propagated “as it is revealed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.”

Perhaps, throughout the whole world, it is the first time—we are preaching *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is. We are the only institution in the world that we are preaching *Bhagavad-gītā* as it is, and people are liking it. Before that, for the last two hundred years, so many swamis, yogīs and, . . . they tried to preach Hindu philosophy, Vaiṣṇavism. Not a single person was a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, not a single person. Now you see so many young men. Why? Why this difference? Because we did not present *Bhagavad-gītā* adulterated. [Conversation, Hyderabad, 12 April 1975]

Studying quotes such as these, attendees at our presentation resolved to give up the speculative tendency to say “I think” or “maybe” when they presented the philosophy to others. Rather, they would repeat what you said, either verbatim or in their own words when needed.

\* \* \*

Your third purpose is “To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to Krishna, the prime entity, and thus to develop the idea, within the members, and humanity, at large, that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (Krishna).”

You taught us right from the beginning that Kṛṣṇa could be approached only through His pure devotees.

In the *Ādi Purāṇa* there is the following statement by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, addressed to Arjuna: “My dear Pārtha, one who claims to be My devotee is not so. Only a person who claims to be the devotee of My devotee is actually My devotee.” No one can approach the Supreme Personality of Godhead directly. One must approach Him through His pure devotees. [*Nectar of Devotion*, Chapter Twelve]

Naturally, the purpose of Vaiṣṇava *saṅga* is to have the great fortune of serving the Vaiṣṇavas. In Chapter Twelve of *The Nectar of Devotion* you sweetly paraphrase several verses extolling the extraordinary benefits of Vaiṣṇava-sevā.

In the *Padma Purāṇa*, there is a nice statement praising the service of the Vaiṣṇavas, or devotees. In that scripture Lord Śiva tells Pārvatī, “My dear Pārvatī, there are different methods of worship, and out of all such methods the worship of the Supreme Person is considered to be the highest. But even higher than the worship of the Lord is the worship of the Lord’s devotees.” A similar statement is in the Third Canto, Seventh Chapter, verse 19, of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: “Let me become a sincere servant of the devotees, because by serving them one can achieve unalloyed devotional service unto the lotus feet of the Lord. The service of devotees diminishes

all miserable material conditions and develops within one a deep devotional love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. . . .”

A similar statement is found in the First Canto, Nineteenth Chapter, verse 33, of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: “There is no doubt about one’s becoming freed from all reactions to sinful activities after visiting a devotee or touching his lotus feet or giving him a sitting place. Even by remembering the activities of such a Vaiṣṇava, one becomes purified, along with one’s whole family. And what, then, can be said of rendering direct service to him?”

You taught us that service to Vaiṣṇavas paves the road to Goloka, and that offending them paves the road to hell. *Apa* means against, and *rādha* means devotion. An *aparādha*, therefore, is an act that stops devotion. The *Skanda Purāna* lists six types of *vaiṣṇava-aparādhas*: (1) to kill a Vaiṣṇava, (2) to blaspheme a Vaiṣṇava, (3) to not offer obeisances upon seeing a Vaiṣṇava, (4) to get angry at a Vaiṣṇava, (5) to not feel delighted upon seeing a Vaiṣṇava, and (6) to think ill of a Vaiṣṇava. All of these constitute offenses, of varying grades of seriousness. But one thing is sure:

If the devotee commits an offense at the feet of a Vaiṣṇava while cultivating the creeper of devotional service in the material world, his offense is compared to a mad elephant that uproots the creeper and breaks it. In this way the leaves of the creeper are dried up. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 19.156]

In his *Upadeśāmṛta*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī states that service to Vaiṣṇavas is based on six loving exchanges: offering gifts in charity and accepting charitable gifts, revealing one’s mind in confidence and inquiring confidentially, and accepting *prasādam* and offering *prasādam*. Indeed, to facilitate these six exchanges was the reason you established ISKCON:

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness has been established to facilitate these six kinds of loving exchanges between devotees. This Society was started single-handedly, but because people are coming forward and dealing with the give-and-take policy, the Society is now expanding all over the world. [*Nectar of Instruction*, verse 4, purport]

Anyone who is trying to be aloof from this Krishna Consciousness Society and yet engage in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is living in a great hallucination, for this is not possible. From this statement by Dhruva Mahārāja it is clear that unless one is associated with devotees, his devotional service does not mature; it does not become distinct from material activities. The Lord says, *satāṁ prasāṅgān mama vīrya-saṁvido bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyanāḥ* (SB 3.25.25). Only in the association of pure devotees can the words of Lord Kṛṣṇa be fully potent and relishable to the heart and ear. Dhruva Mahārāja explicitly wanted the association of devotees. That association in devotional activities is just like the waves of an incessantly flowing river. In our Krishna Consciousness Society we have full engagement twenty-four hours a day. Every moment of our time is always busily engaged in the service of the Lord. This is called the incessant flow of devotional service. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.9.11, purport]

A pure devotee desires only to engage in loving service to the Lord in the constant association of the Lord and His eternal associates, as stated in the previous verse (*dāsānudāso bhavitāsmi*). As confirmed by Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura:

*tāṅdera caraṇa sevi bhakta-sane vāsa  
janame janame haya, ei abhilāṣa*

To serve the Lord and the servants of His servants, in the association of devotees, is the only

objective of a pure, unalloyed devotee. (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.11.25, purport)

Gaining deeper insights as to why you established ISKCON, devotees attending our presentation promised to take Vaiṣṇava-saṅga and Vaiṣṇava-sevā more seriously, and not take them so much for granted. To do this, they vowed to base devotee association on the six loving exchanges established by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and of course to avoid Vaiṣṇava *aparādha* like the plague.

\* \* \*

Your fourth purpose is “To teach and encourage the Sankirtan movement of congregational chanting of the holy name of God as revealed in the teachings of Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.”

You taught us that the descent of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was an extremely rare event—so rare, in fact, that it takes place only once in a day of Brahmā, or once every 8,640,000,000 years. That’s how often the Lord Himself comes in the guise of His own devotee to practice and teach the most sublime process of attaining *kṛṣṇa-prema*: *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana*.

As the emissary of Śrī Pañca-tattva, with full faith in the order of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, you fearlessly chanted the holy name in Tompkins Square Park in 1966 and attracted your first followers. Traveling the globe over the next eleven years, you attracted thousands more through your chanting and inspired others to go out and do the same.

Your instructions are clear: public chanting is the main way of propagating Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement has started performing *saṅkīrtana-yajña* in different places, and it has been experienced that wherever *saṅkīrtana-yajña* is performed, many thousands of people gather and take part in it. Imperceptible auspiciousness achieved in this connection should be continued all over the world. The members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement should perform *saṅkīrtana-yajñas* one after another, so much that all the people of the world will either jokingly or seriously chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, and thus they will derive the benefit of cleansing the heart. [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.24.10, purport]

One of your dear godbrothers once said that you were successful in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness around the world because of two things. You had full faith in the order of your spiritual master, and you also had full faith in the holy name.

Hearing what you taught, both in word and through example, the attendees promised to organize and participate in more public *harināma* programs. This, they said, would benefit them and others.

\* \* \*

Your fifth purpose is “To erect for the members, and for society at large, a holy place of transcendental pastimes, dedicated to the personality of Krishna.”

It is well known that you established Śrīdhām Māyāpur as ISKCON’s world headquarters. You envisioned a transcendental city of many thousands, all playing their roles to serve the Lord. The center of that city would be the *adbhūta-mandira*, the magnificent temple predicted by Nityānanda Prabhu, from which *nāma-saṅkīrtana* would be broadcast all over the world.

Kṛṣṇa also wonderfully fulfilled your desire to establish large temples in Vṛndāvana and Mumbai. By the time of your departure, you had established 108 temples, and now there are nearly 600. In this way you have established not only one but many “places of transcendental pastimes, dedicated to the personality of Krishna.”

You clearly wanted your followers to establish temples, but at the same time you cautioned that the main purpose of a temple was to maintain proper standards of Deity worship, hold classes, distribute

*prasādam*, and serve as a base from which devotees would go out to preach.

I have seen the pictures of the Deity installation you have sent. It appears to be very nicely done. Stick to the principles. All the brahmana devotees appear to be very nice. Do this and be happy. In your country hundreds of temples like this must be opened. Town to town, village to village. I am very pleased. Another temple opened, another book published, that is the success of this movement. Without book distribution the temple worship standard will also diminish. Therefore both of them should go side by side. I can see in the pictures so many outsiders offering respect with awe and veneration. This Deity worship is very important. As soon as you get sufficient initiated brahmanas, try to open another center. [Letter to Kuruśreṣṭha, 28 December 1976]

Hearing these insights on the purpose of establishing temples, the attendees made firm commitments to personally assist with Deity worship, regularly attend temple programs, and participate in public preaching programs.

\* \* \*

Your sixth purpose is “To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler and more natural way of life.”

To establish practical working models of *varṇāśrama-dharma*, you desired to establish sustainable Kṛṣṇa conscious communities that would provide devotees and visitors with a better alternative to the chaos of the present godless civilization. Basing these communities on the principles of “simple living and high thinking,” devotees would grow their own food, protect the cows, weave their own cloth, and use the balance of their time for practicing and teaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Our farm projects are an extremely important part of our movement. We must become self-sufficient by growing our own grains and producing our own milk, then there will be no question of poverty. So develop these farm communities as far as possible. They should be developed as an ideal society depending on natural products not industry. Industry has simply created godlessness, because they think they can manufacture everything that they need. Our Bhagavad-gita philosophy explains that men and animals must have food in order to maintain their bodies. And the production of food is dependent on the rain and the rain of course is dependent on chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Therefore let everyone chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, eat nicely and keep their bodies fit and healthy. This is ideal life style. We do not condemn modern civilization but we don’t like to get it at the cost of God Consciousness, that is suicide. [Letter to Rūpānuga, 18 December 1974]

Most of the attendees had never visited an ISKCON farm community, nor were they living in rural areas. Thus they had no direct experience of the model you envisioned. But they did have some thoughts on how they could apply some of the principles of simple living and high thinking, even in the city. One devotee said she could start by being satisfied with less, by using older clothes instead of buying new ones, by using the same mobile phone instead of buying the brand-new model, and by restricting Internet usage to things only important for her profession and Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Others said they would try to reduce time-wasting activities that drew time away from their spiritual practices. Others wanted to start supporting an ISKCON farm project somewhere in the world.

\* \* \*

Finally, your seventh purpose is “With a view towards achieving the aforementioned purposes, to publish and distribute periodicals, magazines, books, and other writings.”

Publishing and distributing books were, as you often said, your most important activities. You

labored long and hard to translate your books, and you worked equally hard to get them published and distributed. In the early years you did all that yourself; later you inspired your disciples to help you. The Bhaktivedanta purports were your devotional ecstasies, fully saturated with Kṛṣṇa’s mercy. Producing and distributing books fulfilled the order Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura gave you to “teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness among the English-speaking public, especially in the Western countries,” but also expressed your personal compassion as you strived to save mankind from its path to destruction.

There is no doubt about it, to distribute books is our most important activity. The temple is a place not for eating and sleeping, but as a base from which we send out our soldiers to fight with maya. Fight with maya means to drop thousand and millions of books into the lap of the conditioned souls. Just like during war time the Bombs are raining from the sky like anything. [Letter to Rāmeśvara, 3 August 1973]

Our first business is this book distribution. There is no need of any other business. If the book distribution is managed properly, pushed on with great enthusiasm and determination and at the same time if our men keep spiritually strong, then the whole world will become Krishna conscious. [Letter to Satsvarūpa, 5 January 1976]

I will never die. I shall live forever in my books, and you will utilize. [Press Conference, San Francisco, 16 July 1975]

The attendees responded more to this seventh purpose than to all the others. Most had come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness by receiving one of your books. All felt greatly benefited by reading them. Many had distributed them and personally witnessed how your words transformed people’s lives for the better. They vowed to study your books more carefully, to teach from them, and to distribute them. They understood that this was our “family business,” and that it was everyone’s responsibility to participate in some way, be it small or large.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for so kindly giving us the seven purposes of ISKCON and for providing clear directions on how to practically apply them. Please bless us so that we can play our parts in making your glorious ISKCON into the preaching mission you envisioned. We offer our bodies, minds, and words in your service.

*Begging to remain your humble servant,*

Giridhārī Swami

## Girirāj Swami

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

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

**Full Faith: Our Greatest Treasure**  
**Śrīla Prabhupāda and ISKCON after Fifty Years**

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciple Dhanañjaya Dāsa told me that at his initiation Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “*Dhanañjaya* means ‘winner of wealth,’” and added, moving his arms all around, “Money is flying in all directions—you simply have to learn the art of catching it.”

The next morning Dhanañjaya raised a question related to a purport he had read in Prabhupāda’s *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam* (1.12.33):

*Mahārāja Marutta*: . . . [He] conducted one sacrifice called Sañkāra-yajña by which the Lord was so satisfied that He was pleased to hand over to him the charge of a mountain peak of gold. This peak of gold is somewhere in the Himalaya Mountains, and modern adventurers may try to find it there.

“Śrīla Prabhupāda,” Dhanañjaya asked, “Is it true that there is mountain peak in the Himalayas made of solid gold?”

“Yes, there is such a peak.”

“Do you know where it is?”

“Why do you want to know?” Prabhupāda asked.

Dhanañjaya perceived that ISKCON was not doing well financially, and so he said, “Well, if you tell me where it is, I’ll get a rucksack [backpack] and a special hammer and chisel and go to the top of that mountain, hack away at the gold, fill up the rucksack, and come down, and then we can use that gold in Kṛṣṇa’s service. So would you let me know where that mountain peak is?”

“No,” Prabhupāda replied.

“Why not?” Dhanañjaya asked.

“That would become too controversial,” Prabhupāda said. Then he added, “Actually, more valuable than gold are devotees. You should make devotees.”

Dhanañjaya took that instruction to heart and has always tried to make devotees—and along with making devotees, keeping devotees. Naturally, if we gain some wealth, we don’t want to lose it—we want to preserve it and increase it.

As Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote,

It is better to maintain a devotee than to try to convince others to become devotees. It is the duty of the GBC to *maintain* the devotees, keep them in the highest standard of Krishna Consciousness, and give them all good instruction, and let them go out and preach for making more devotees. Your first job should be to make sure that every one of the devotees in your zone of management is reading regularly our literatures and discussing the subject matter seriously from different angles of seeing, and that they are somehow or other absorbing the knowledge of Krishna Consciousness philosophy. If they are fully educated in our philosophy and if they can get all of the knowledge and study it from every viewpoint, then very easily they will perform *tapasya*, or renunciation, and that will be their advancement in Krishna Consciousness. So first thing is to instruct all of your temple presidents and the other devotees to read daily, just as we have done in our morning class in Los Angeles, . . . reading one *śloka* each morning in Sanskrit and reciting it all together and then discussing it thoroughly by seeing different new things. So you introduce this system and train the devotees first. Don’t be too much concerned for the time being with nondevotees. Now we must fix up what devotees we have got in the knowledge of Krishna Consciousness; then we will succeed. What good are many, many devotees if none of them are knowledgeable? [Letter to Satsvarūpa, 16 June 1972]

In a similar vein, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote,

So I want you leaders especially to become very much absorbed in the philosophy of *Bhagavad-gita*, *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and become yourselves completely convinced and free from all doubt. On this platform you shall be able to carry on the work satisfactorily, but if there is lack of knowledge, or if there is forgetfulness, everything will be spoiled in time. So especially you must encourage the students to read our books throughout the day as much as possible, and give them all good advice how to understand the books, and inspire them to study the things from every point of view. In this way, by constantly engaging our tongues in the service of the Lord, either by discussing His philosophy or by chanting Hare Krishna, the truth is that Krishna Himself will reveal Himself to us and we shall understand how to do everything properly. Now we have got so many students and so many temples, but I am fearful that if we expand too much in this way we shall become weakened and gradually the whole thing will become lost. Just like milk. We may thin it more and more with water for cheating the customer, but in the end it will cease to be any longer milk. Better to boil the milk now very vigorously and make it thick and sweet, that is the best process. So let us concentrate on training our devotees very thoroughly in the knowledge of Krishna consciousness from our books, from tapes, by discussing always, and in so many ways instruct them in the right propositions. [Letter to Hansaduta, 22 June 1972]

Śrīla Prabhupāda has a disciple named Tuṣṭa Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, who had been a follower of Sai in Hawaii and had joined ISKCON when Sai, along with other followers, had come to surrender to Śrīla Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda initiated Sai as Siddhasvarūpa Dāsa, and Tuṣṭa Kṛṣṇa eventually came to serve in Bombay. There he met and engaged with Mr. Nair, who eventually tried to cheat Śrīla Prabhupāda and committed many grievous offenses against him, the Deities Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī, and the devotees. In response to a letter from Tuṣṭa Kṛṣṇa, Prabhupāda wrote:

Your next question, after leaving this material realm does the devotee remain forever with his spiritual master? The answer is yes. But I think you have got some mistaken idea in this connection. You speak of pure devotee, that he is *saktyavesa avatara*, that we should obey him only—these things are the wrong idea. If anyone thinks like that, that a pure devotee should be obeyed and no one else, that means he is a nonsense. We advise everyone to address one another as Prabhu. Prabhu means master, so how the master should be disobeyed? Others, they are also pure devotees. All of my disciples are pure devotees. Anyone sincerely serving the spiritual master is a pure devotee; it may be Siddhasvarupa or others, a-Siddhasvarupa [the Sanskrit prefix *a* means “not”]. This must be very clearly stated. It is not that only your Siddhasvarupa is a pure devotee and not others. Do not try to make a faction. Siddhasvarupa is a good soul. But others should not be misled. Anyone who is surrendered to the spiritual master is a pure devotee—it doesn’t matter if Siddhasvarupa or non-Siddhasvarupa. Amongst ourselves one should respect others as Prabhu, master—one another. As soon as we distinguish here is a pure devotee, here is a non-pure devotee, that means I am a nonsense. Why you only want to be in the spiritual sky with Siddhasvarupa? Why not all? If Siddhasvarupa can go, why not everyone? Siddhasvarupa will go, you will go, Syamasundara will go, all others will go. We will have another ISKCON there. Of course, Mr. Nair must stay. [Letter to Tuṣṭa Kṛṣṇa, 14 December 1972]

Another ISKCON in the spiritual sky—what would that be like? The supreme spiritual planet has different sections. In one, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya’s pastimes are talking place, and in another, Lord Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. “This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is for approaching Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa,” Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “to be associated with the Supreme Lord in His sublime pleasure dance. That is the aim of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, . . . to enter into the dancing party of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.” (Lecture on the song *Nitāi-pada-kamala*, 21 December 1968, Los Angeles)

In his letter to Tuṣṭa Kṛṣṇa, after saying that we will have another ISKCON in the spiritual sky, Śrīla Prabhupāda added, “And if somebody does not go, then I shall have to come back to take him there.” In other words, every one of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s followers is meant to meet him in the spiritual sky and

serve him eternally; and when we meet him we'll find that his other followers are also there, and thus our relationships with one another are also eternal, through Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Later, another of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples, Upendra Dāsa, wrote him:

There are times when I take all my relationships within ISKCON and the pleasures and difficulties as something like a dream only. I am reminded of the time you explained to me that there is no reality in this world save and except the Divine Name and service to Him. In the *Śrīmad-Bhagavatam* I have also read that all this having to do with past, present, and future is a dream only. I am understanding, "Yes, even these relations as my wife, my children, or my friends or close godbrothers in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, ISKCON, are like sticks meeting in a stream, to be separated in time, but with the same end of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, back to home, or the ocean—that they are still part of these past, present, and future of the measuring temperament, though the devotional service and sentiments therein are eternally developing or lasting." It was raised that "No, our relationships formed here in ISKCON with one another are eternal in themselves in addition to the service, that ISKCON and we members as we are known now shall be known there." All this I was unable to support scripturally, and lest I make an offense and direct error, I place this before you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied:

As to your question concerning whether relationships between devotees are eternal, the answer is "yes." This is confirmed by Sri Narottama dasa Thakura: *cakhu-dan dilo yei, janme janme prabhu sei*—"He is my lord birth after birth." In this way you have to understand, by studying carefully the philosophy. [Letter to Upendra, 7 January 1976]

Once, at the opening of a bank, Śrīla Prabhupāda quoted the saying that "money attracts money," that wealth attracts wealth, but where did the original wealth, the devotees in ISKCON, come from initially?

*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya* 2.6) explains the mood and method of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu: '*loka nistāriba*'—*ei īśvara-svabhāva*: "I shall deliver the fallen souls." This statement characterizes the Supreme Personality of Godhead." A few verses later (*Antya* 2.13–14), we find a description of His method for delivering people who could not meet Him personally:

*tā-sabā tārīte prabhu sei saba deśe  
yogya-bhakta jīva-dehe karena 'āveśe'*

*sei jīve nija-bhakti karena prakāśe  
tāhāra darśane 'vaiṣṇava' haya sarva-deśe*

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

This passage describes how Lord Caitanya empowered Śrīla Prabhupāda, who elaborates on this principle in his purport:

As stated in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya* 7.11):

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

Unless one is empowered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, one

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

The first devotees in ISKCON were inspired and engaged by Śrīla Prabhupāda—or by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu through Śrīla Prabhupāda. And following Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Prabhupāda manifested the same mood: *loka nistāriba*—“I shall deliver the fallen souls.”

In our line, in ISKCON, we are meant to receive mercy and to distribute it, to taste Kṛṣṇa consciousness and to share it with others—by the grace of Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

To distribute the mercy and message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Prabhupāda translated many books, with full faith in his spiritual master—Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—and Śrīmān Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote:

It is to be admitted that whatever translation work I have done is through the inspiration of my spiritual master, because personally I am most insignificant and incompetent to do this materially impossible work. I do not think myself a very learned scholar, but I have full faith in the service of my spiritual master, His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. If there is any credit to my activities of translating, it is all due to His Divine Grace. . . . He was very fond of seeing many books published to spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Therefore our society, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, has been formed to execute the order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Concluding Words]

In 1971, one of our early life members in Calcutta, Shyamsunder Maheshwari, approached Śrīla Prabhupāda when I happened to be in the room. He said, “So many spiritual organizations begin well, in the presence of the founder, but after the founder dies the institutions break apart because the followers fight over the material assets of the institution. What will happen to ISKCON after you leave?”

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “That will not happen in ISKCON, because these American and European boys and girls have had enough of material opulence and enjoyment, from before they came to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In fact, they have given up their material wealth and facilities to join ISKCON, so they will not fight over these things.”

In 1973, Śrīla Prabhupāda was invited to be guest of honor at a series of lectures and discussions to be held at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in Girgaum Chowpatty, South Bombay, on the subject of how the *Bhagavad-gītā* could solve the world’s problems. The president of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Lilavati Munshi, was eager to meet Prabhupāda, and she extended a personal invitation for him to join her for tea in the library of her quarters, also in the Bhavan building, just before the conference. And so Śrīla Prabhupāda, accompanied by Śyāmasundara, Śrutakīrti, and me, went to meet Mrs. Munshi.

Several other conference presenters—sādhus, swamis, and political figures—and other important persons were also there to meet Śrīla Prabhupāda, but even within this group of esteemed leaders, everyone accepted Prabhupāda as *the* leader.

As soon as Prabhupāda was seated, everyone started praising him for the wonderful work he had done in spreading Indian culture throughout the world. Mrs. Munshi in particular was astonished by Prabhupāda’s success. “How did you do it?” she kept asking. “How did you get them to shave their heads? How did you get them to wear *dhotīs* and *kurtās* and *tilaka*? How did you get the girls to wear saris?” Prabhupāda explained that although there had been many editions of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, it had not been presented “as it is” and there had not been any programs to train students to follow its principles. Although there were so many branches and institutions of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan—both within and outside India—and although they were disseminating books, there was no program for training young men and women to become followers of Vedic culture. Books were required, and training was also required. And he had given both.

Then Mrs. Munshi brought up a point that was on many people’s minds. “Quite often when the founder of a mission is present,” she said, “the mission is very successful—it flourishes and prospers—but after the founder leaves, things deteriorate. So what will be the future of your movement after you go?”

“The future of my mission is very bright,” Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “as long as my disciples follow my instructions. Just like Gandhi—he had so many programs, but after he left, his followers changed everything. He wanted village organization, he wanted the economy to be based on agriculture, and after he left, Nehru and others changed the whole program. They wanted to industrialize India and imitate the West. So, he had his program, but after he left his so-called followers changed everything and everything became spoiled. So in the same way, if I leave and my followers change what I’ve given, what can I do?” By saying this, he challenged us, his followers, with the responsibility of remaining faithful to his instructions.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or *bhakti-yoga*, begins—and progresses—with faith (*ādau śraddhā*). This *śraddhā*, faith and attraction, matures and intensifies into *prema*, pure love of Godhead, and ultimately *mahā-bhāva*, the most exalted stage of ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa.

ISKCON is built on the foundation of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s faith in his Guru Mahārāja and Kṛṣṇa:

*yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau  
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ prakāśante mahātmanaḥ*

“Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed.” (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.23)

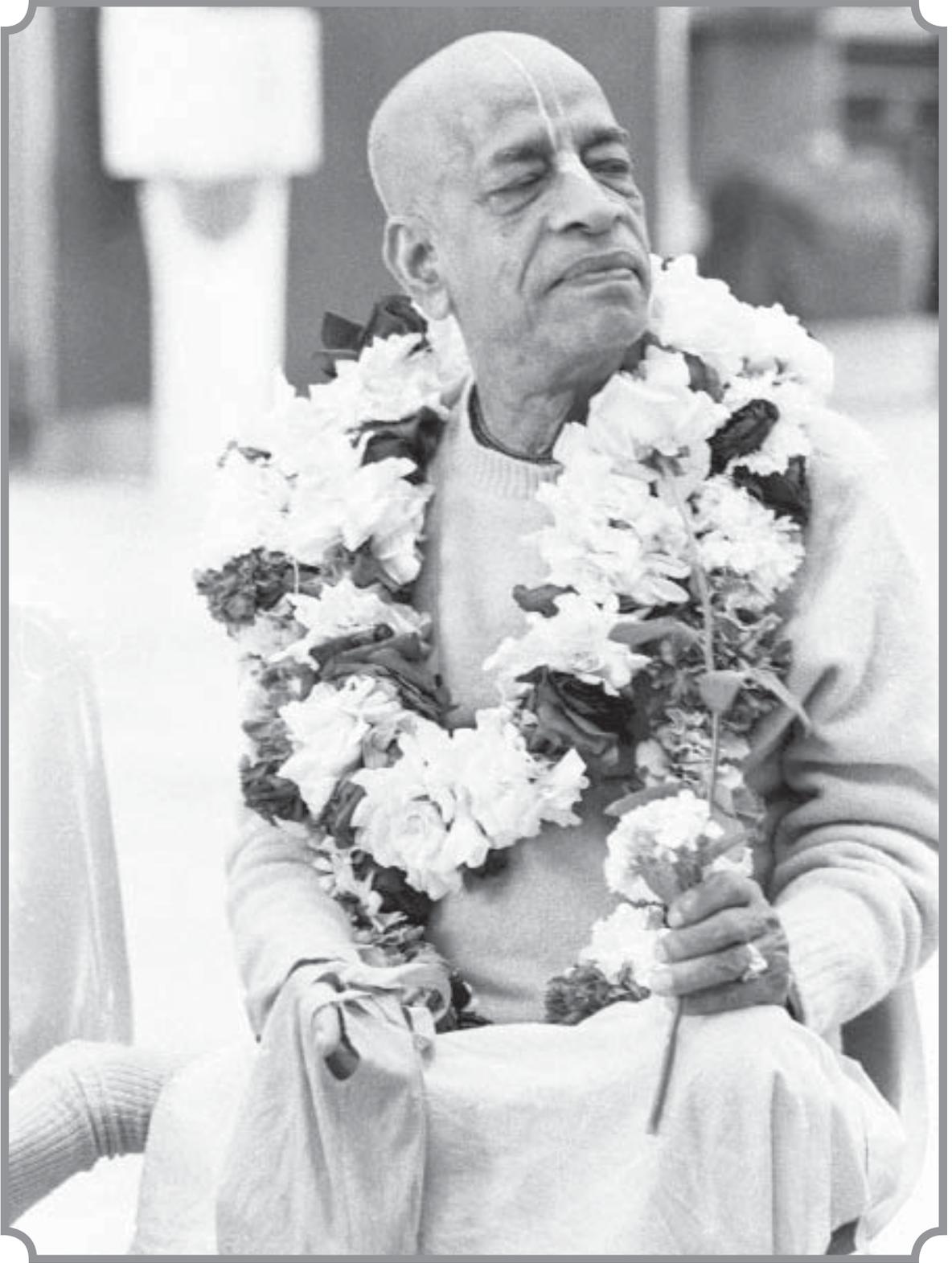
Śrīla Prabhupāda’s faith in his spiritual master and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is manifest in every aspect of ISKCON and is the cause of its success. He wrote:

[We] took up the mission of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to preach the cult of Caitanya Mahāprabhu all over the world, under the protection of all the predecessor *ācāryas*, and we find that our humble attempt has been successful. . . . “To one who has staunch faith in the words of the spiritual master and the words of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the secret of success in Vedic knowledge is revealed.” The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is being propagated according to this principle, and therefore our preaching work is going on successfully, in spite of the many impediments offered by antagonistic demons, because we are getting positive help from our previous *ācāryas*. . . . [T]he success of the ISKCON party, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, which strictly follows guru and Gaurāṅga, is increasing daily all over the world. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura wanted to print as many books as possible and distribute them all over the world. We have tried our best in this connection, and we are getting results beyond our expectations. [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi* 12.8, purport]

And in his last year with us, Śrīla Prabhupāda explained:

Now, I’ll say from my practical life . . . It is not pride. Actually everyone knows that my Guru Mahārāja had thousands of disciples. So out of thousands of disciples, practically I am little successful. That everyone knows. Why? Because I firmly believed in the words of my guru. That’s all. There may be many other godbrothers, maybe very learned and very advanced, favored, whatever it may be. . . . So I think sometimes that “Why this wonderful thing has happened to me?” So I search out. I search out only that I cent percent believe in the words of my spiritual master. That’s all, nothing else. *Guru-mukha-padma-vākya*, *cittete koriyā aikya*, *āra nā koriho mane āśā*. Don’t think of any nonsense. Simply execute what your guru has said. That is success. [Conversation, Bhubaneswar, 28 January 1977]

Faith in Śrīla Prabhupāda and his line is our greatest treasure. If we lose that, then everything is lost. In the same conversation in Bhubaneswar, a disciple gave the translation of *guru-mukha-padma-vākya*,



*cittete koriyā aikya, āra nā koriho mane āśā*—“My only wish is to have my consciousness purified by the words emanating from his lotus mouth”—and Prabhupāda responded, “Then he’s safe. And as soon as he manufactures—finished. So don’t do it. *Yasya deve parā bhaktir yathā deve tathā gurau/ tasyaite kathitā*. This is the secret of spiritual success.”

I can only pray to develop such faith, and to remain in the association of devotees who have that faith, whether in this realm or that, in ISKCON here or in the spiritual world.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

*Śrīla Prabhupāda’s aspiring servant eternally,*

Girirāj Swami

## Gopāl Krishna Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I beg to offer my most respectful obeisances at your divine lotus feet. This year we are going to celebrate your 120th birth anniversary. First I want to apologize for not having submitted my Vyāsa-pūjā offering in time last year. I also admit that I am most unqualified to describe your unlimited transcendental glories and achievements.

On August 13, 2015, we celebrated the Golden Jubilee of your *Jaladuta yātrā*. Our Kolkata temple organized a major celebration on this auspicious occasion. You struggled in India before starting your journey to America. You agreed to travel on a cargo ship. You experienced sickness, dizziness, headache, vomiting, and lack of appetite during your thirty-five-day sea voyage. You even suffered two heart attacks. After your second heart attack you thought that your mission might not be successful. But Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared to you in a dream, in which He was guiding the boat. He assured you there was nothing to fear and you should go ahead with your mission.

This year we are celebrating the Golden Jubilee of your incorporating ISKCON as a legal society and opening your first ISKCON temple, in New York. A friend had suggested that you call your society the International Society for God Consciousness, but you insisted that the word *God* was vague whereas *Krishna* was exact and scientific. Two months ago we had a big celebration in Mumbai, in which several ISKCON leaders, many temple devotees, and thousands of congregational devotees participated. During the last week of May we are going to have a big festival in Delhi, in which important political dignitaries and over three thousand devotees will participate.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you offered the entire world a way to live peacefully by uniting under the banner of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Your transcendental fame is increasing every day as your movement continues to spread all over the world. More people are taking to Kṛṣṇa consciousness because of the enthusiasm of your devotees and the potency of the holy name and your books. Your books are transcendental weapons that cut through all the layers of ignorance and false ego. Recently I had the privilege of presenting to the Indian prime minister the deluxe edition of your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, produced by Madhusevita Prabhu. The prime minister appreciated the *Gītā* very much and was pleased to hear that it has been translated into more than seventy languages. On several occasions he mentioned that ISKCON was doing good work.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the real inspiration behind all our activities—preaching, book distribution,

temple construction, *prasādam* distribution, farm development, etc. History will recognize you as the savior of humanity.

On this most auspicious day I fall at your lotus feet and beg for forgiveness for my countless offenses. Please continue to engage me in your ISKCON society, birth after birth.

*Your insignificant servant,*

Gopāl Krishna Goswami

## Guru Prasād Swami

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most prostrated and heartfelt obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace and your limitless mercy.

I continue my yearly glorification of your embodiment of the twenty-six qualities of a Vaiṣṇava. The next quality is *māna-da*, respectful. Of the four cardinal principles laid down by Lord Caitanya in his *ṭṭṇād api su-nīcena* verse, none of which are easy to achieve, perhaps respecting others is the most difficult. Certainly though freedom from desire for any respect is almost equally demanding, to honor others in one's mind is not a simple task. But you mastered the art of honoring everyone, a quality born of tolerance, which was boundless in your person.

After you arrived in the US you lived in the midst of degradation and sinful activity. Still, you addressed everyone as Mr. Robert, Mr. David, etc, though all your original followers were young enough to be your grandchildren. Although you were superior to everyone, you addressed them with all due respect, seeing them as servants of Kṛṣṇa. Such respect for all can manifest only in a realized pure devotee who sees all living entities equally (*paṇḍitaḥ sama-darśinaḥ*). One example of your humble and respectful demeanor occurred while you were in an airport lounge, waiting to depart. Many devotees were crowded around you, blocking some of the other passengers. When an airport official complained to the local temple leader, he stood up and commanded that all ISKCON devotees should leave the lounge, and you immediately humbly stood up and prepared to do so. Such humility, which governed your every dealing with both devotees and nondevotees, endeared everyone to you when they saw such a rare quality so prevalent in your divine person.

The next quality, which is the natural consequence of respecting others, is *amānī*, the absence of false prestige. Your constant sacrifice for all fallen conditioned souls is the main evidence of this quality. Not only was your every effort a proof of your selflessness, but practically everything you did was superhuman and totally bereft of any personal consideration. You left the transcendental peace of Vṛndāvana for the misery-ridden streets of New York. You relinquished a peaceful sādhu life to accept many difficulties in order to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness, following the mood of Prahāda Mahārāja: *naitān vihāya kṛpaṇān vimukṣa eko*. This year we celebrate worldwide the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the glorious movement you left in the form of ISKCON, a legacy that inspires us to mold our lives in pure *bhakti* and to carry out your mission.

I sincerely pray that some day I can achieve one drop of these Vaiṣṇava qualities of respectfulness and absence of false prestige on the recommendation of Caitanya Mahāprabhu in His *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, and

most importantly by receiving your merciful empowerment. Thank you for this opportunity to make your service my life's work.

*Your insignificant servant,*

Guru Prasād Swami

## Jayapatākā Swami

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

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

My dear spiritual father,

Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lord Caitanya, and various *ācāryas* predicted your appearance and your spreading of Lord Caitanya's message all over the world, directly and through your assistants. I pray to you that I will always be able to assist you in spreading Lord Caitanya's transcendental *vāṇī*, and that those following me will also be inspired to assist you. The following song I have composed in Bengali highlights Nitāi-Gaura's dissemination of *kṛṣṇa-prema* and glorifies your role in assisting Lord Caitanya in this effort, especially in the Western countries and, for that matter, all over the world. I hope this song will be useful in the daily spiritual ceremonies of the temples.

*Your insignificant servant,*

Jayapatākā Swami

সেনাপতি ভক্ত জয় শ্রীল প্রভুপাদ

**Senāpati-bhakta, Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda**

by Jayapatākā Swami

নিতাই গৌরাঙ্গ নিতাই গৌরাঙ্গ ।  
পতিত পাবন নিতাই গৌরাঙ্গ ॥

*nitāi-gaurāṅga nitāi-gaurāṅga  
patita pāvana nitāi-gaurāṅga*

Nitāi-Gaurāṅga! Nitāi-Gaurāṅga! Savior of the fallen, Nitāi-Gaurāṅga!

জয় প্রভুপাদ জয় জয় প্রভুপাদ ।  
জয় প্রভুপাদ জয় শ্রীল প্রভুপাদ ॥ ১ ॥

*jaya prabhupāda jaya jaya prabhupāda*  
*jaya prabhupāda jaya śrīla prabhupāda* || 1 ||

All glories to Prabhupāda! All glories, all glories to Prabhupāda! All glories to Prabhupāda! All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!

প্রতি যুগে ক্রমে ক্রমে অন্ধকার বাড়ে ।  
এই কলিতে নিতাই গৌর পতিত উদ্ধারে ॥ ২ ॥

*pratiyuge krame krame andhakāra bāḍe*  
*ei kalite nitāi-gaura patita uddhāre* || 2 ||

From age to age, darkness increases progressively. But in this Kali-yuga, Nitāi-Gaura deliver the fallen.

সত্য ত্রেতা দ্বাপরেতে অসুর নিধন ।  
এই কলিতে গৌর করে প্রেম বিতরণ ॥ ৩ ॥

*satya tretā dvāparete asura-nidhana*  
*ei kalite gaura kare prema vitaraṇa* || 3 ||

In Satya-yuga, Tretā-yuga, and Dvāpara-yuga, the Lord kills the demons. But in this Kali-yuga, Lord Gaura freely distributes *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

রূপ মধুরিমা, হরি নাম, সদাচার ।  
গৌর মাত্র ভারতদেশে করিল প্রচার ॥ ৪ ॥

*rupa-madhurimā, hari-nāma, sadācāra*  
*gaura mātra bhāratadeśe karila pracāra* || 4 ||

His weapons were His extremely sweet unparalleled beauty and the congregational chanting of the Holy Names of Kṛṣṇa. His force comprised His practice of the highest level of Vaiṣṇava behavior, etiquette, and purity. But He disseminated love of Kṛṣṇa only in India.

দূর দেশে ভক্তিহীন জীবে উদ্ধারিতে ।  
সেনাপতি ভক্ত গৌর পাঠালো পাশ্চাত্যে ॥ ৫ ॥

*dūra deśe bhakti-hīna jīve uddhārite*  
*senāpati-bhakta gaura pāṭhālo pāścātye* || 5 ||

To deliver people devoid of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* in remote countries, Lord Gaurāṅga sent a commander-in-chief devotee to the West.

ভক্তিবদান্ত স্বামী শ্রীল প্রভুপাদ ।  
সেনাপতি ভক্ত জয় শ্রীল প্রভুপাদ ॥ ৬ ॥

*bhaktivedānta svāmī śrīla prabhupāda*  
*senāpati-bhakta jaya śrīla prabhupāda* || 6 ||

That commander-in-chief devotee (*senāpati-bhakta*) was His Divine Grace Abhayacaraṅāravinda Bhaktivedānta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda. All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!

পৃথিবীতে আছে যত নগরাদি গ্রাম ।  
সর্বত্র প্রচারিত হইবে মোর নাম ॥

ভবিষ্যত বাণী সাধু গুরু পুরাণে ।  
প্রভুপাদ রূপ দিলা বাস্তব প্রমাণে ॥ ৭ ॥

*prthivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma*  
*sarvatra pracārita haibe mora nāma*

*bhaviṣyat vaṇī sādhu guru purāṇe*  
*prabhupāda rupa dilā vāstava pramāṇe || 7 ||*

Lord Caitanya said, “My name will be preached in every town and village throughout the whole world.” Prabhupāda fulfilled this prediction, along with many others made by the *Purāṇas*, saintly persons, and spiritual masters.

গুরু আজ্ঞায় প্রভুপাদ গ্রন্থ প্রকাশিলা ।  
ভক্ত সবে কোটি কোটি গ্রন্থ বিতারিলা ॥ ৮ ॥

*guru-ājñāya prabhupāda grantha prakāśilā*  
*bhakta sabe koṭi koṭi grantha vitarilā || 8 ||*

Prabhupāda wrote books on the order of his guru, and the devotees have distributed those books in the hundreds of millions. Thus he established that books are the basis of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

খোল নৃত্য গীত সহ শ্রীনাম কীর্তন ।  
হরিকথা প্রসাদ সেবা অপূর্ব ঘটন ॥ ৯ ॥

*khola nṛtya-gīta saha śrīnāma-kīrtana*  
*hari-kathā prasāda-sevā apūrva ghaṭana || 9 ||*

Discussion of the topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa; the honoring of *mahā-prasāda*; the rendering of many kinds of devotional service; and the singing of the Holy Name accompanied by dancing and the playing of *mṛdaṅgas*, *karatālas*, and other musical instruments—all these took place wonderfully.

দেশে দেশে কৃপা শ্রদ্ধা শিক্ষা দীক্ষা দিল ।  
দিব্য জ্ঞান প্রচার শক্ত্যে ভক্ত সংখ্যা বাড়ে ॥ ১০ ॥

*deśe deśe kṛpā śraddhā śikṣā dīkṣā dila*  
*divya-jñāna pracāra śaktye bhakata bāḍila || 10 ||*

In country after country, all over the world, he bestowed mercy, instilled faith, gave instructions, and

performed initiations. Thus by his potent dissemination of transcendental knowledge, the numbers of devotees increased. Prabhupāda showed personally how to apply the principle of “preaching is the essence.”

মন্দিরে কীর্তন পূজা-আদি অনুষ্ঠান ।  
গৃহে সেবা, নামহট্টাদি কৃষ্ণ-ভক্তি দান ॥ ১১ ॥

*mandire kīrtana pūjā utsava dekhi' trāṇa*  
*grhe sevā nāma-haṭṭādi kṛṣṇa-bhakti-dāna* || 11 ||

By witnessing and participating in temple *kīrtanas*, ceremonies, worship, and festivals, many people were delivered. By practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness in their homes, worshipping the Deities, and by participating in Nāma-haṭṭas, Bhakti-vṛkṣas, and other congregational expansion programs, many people developed ever-increasing *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* and gave it to others. In this way, Kṛṣṇa consciousness went viral by application of the maxim “utility is the principle.”

বিশ্বের নানা প্রাপ্ত হতে বৈষ্ণবগণ ।  
ভারতে আর্ষভ্রাতায় করে আলিঙ্গন ॥

‘জয় গৌর’ বলি নবদ্বীপ পরিক্রমা ।  
মস্তকে লেপন করে ধাম ধূলিকণা ॥ ১২ ॥

*viśvera nānā prānta hate vaiṣṇavagaṇa*  
*bhārate āryabhrātāya kare āliṅgana*

*‘jaya gaura’ bali navadvīpa-parikramā*  
*mastake lepana kare dhāma dhūlikaṇā* || 12 ||

Vaiṣṇavas from all over the world come and circumambulate Navadvīpa-dhāma. They take the dust of the holy *dhāma* on their heads, and without any prejudice regarding caste, color, creed, or nationality, they embrace their Indian brothers and chant “*Jaya Gaura, Jaya Gaura, Jaya Śāci-nandana!*” In this way they achieve transcendental unity in diversity.

বিশ্ব চালক ম-লী করিলা গঠন ।  
মিলে মিশে সেবা করার নির্দেশ অর্পণ ॥ ১৩ ॥

*viśva cālaka maṇḍalī karilā gaṭhana*  
*mile miśe sevā karāra nirdeśa arpaṇa* || 13 ||

He formed the Governing Body Commission (GBC) as the ultimate managing authority for ISKCON and instructed everyone to serve cooperatively according to the GBC’s direction.

প্রভুপাদ সখগরিলা কৃষ্ণভাবনামৃত ।  
স্বর্ণযুগের জয়পতাকা হইল উত্তলিত ॥ ১৪ ॥

*prabhupāda saṅcārilā kṛṣṇabhāvanāmṛta*  
*svarṇayugera jayapatākā haila uttolita* || 14 ||

Prabhupāda infused Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the world, and thus the victory flag of the ten-thousand-year golden age was hoisted.

## Kavicandra Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my obeisances.

Although this is your appearance day, when thinking about it I recall your disappearance. At that time I thought that as far as my personal life goes there would not be much difference, since I was always serving you in separation anyway; very rarely was I personally with you.

But I was thinking of what an impact your absence would have on us as a society. That is becoming more evident as we grapple with many issues for which we cannot reach conclusive agreements. We know that you would have finished each of these issues up in a minute: “What is the difficulty? Just do like this.” Our crazy minds can interpret things in so many ways.

Now I am very close to the age you were when you left Vṛndāvana for the West, determined to fulfill your Guru Mahārāja’s order to preach in the English-speaking world. I have been trying to take your orders to heart for forty-five years, and the more I try the more I see how far I have to go. I realize more and more that I am nothing but a display of your causeless mercy.

I hope to become genuinely grateful and at this age really begin to serve you.

*sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje  
ahaituky apratihātā yayātmā suprasīdati*

“The supreme occupation [dharma] for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.6)

That is a serious goal to strive for.

You have given so much, because you have given Kṛṣṇa. How can we thank you except by taking to heart your order to “overflow” the world with . . .

(1) The Holy Names, the *mahā-mantra*—

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

(2) Your transcendental books, which you labored so intensely to produce.

(3) *Kṛṣṇa-prasādam*, your secret weapon.

I have not done much and am in awe of what other, more sincere followers are doing. But I can report some positive news.

Overall book distribution is increasing, especially in India.

You wanted a “world *saṅkīrtana* party.” Now there are many *kīrtana* parties that travel widely, chanting

publicly and distributing books. In New Your City, Rāma Rāya Prabhu has been doing at least six hours of public chanting every day for several years.

Now I am at the “fag end of my life,” as you used to say:

Yes, from the very beginning I went to New York because I thought that Krishna Consciousness is the most important idea in the world, so let me go to that place, New York, which is the most important city in the world, and if I am able to do anything for Krishna and my Spiritual Master, even I am at the fag-end of my life, at least let me try for it there. So my dreams have all come true, and all of you nice boys and girls are getting the credit. When I was alone in your New York, I was thinking, who will listen to me in this horrible, sinful place? All right, I shall stay little longer, at least I can distribute a few of my books, that is something. But Krishna was all along preparing something I could not see, and He brought you to me one by one, sincere American boys and girls, to be trained-up for doing the work of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Now I can see that it is a miracle. Otherwise, your city of New York, one single old man, with only a few books to sell for barely getting eatables, how he can survive, what to speak of introducing God-consciousness movement for saving the humankind? That is Krishna’s miracle. Now I can see it. [Letter to Sudāma, 23 December 1972]

You have given us all the guidelines. I pray that you will not abandon me and that I can use whatever time I have left doing service in the spirit of genuine gratitude. Humilty is far from my condition, but I do realize that you are dragging me along.

“While there was much roaring and crying at the Bhaṭṭathāri community, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu grabbed Kṛṣṇadāsa by the hair and took him away.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 9.233)

*kabe jībe doyā, hoibe udoya,  
nija-sukha bhulī’ sudīna-ḥṛdoya  
bhaktivinoda, koriyā binoya,  
śrī-ājñā-ṭahala koribe pracār*

“When will compassion for all fallen souls awaken within this Bhaktivinoda, and when will he thus forget his own happiness and with a meek heart set out to propagate by humble entreaty the sacred order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu?” (Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s song beginning *Kabe Ha’be Bolo*)

Your heart is filled with limitless compassion, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Please let me have one drop of it so that I can “forget my own happiness.”

*Your aspiring disciple,*

Kavicandra Swami

## Madhusevita Dāsa

*nama om 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 sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe  
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

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

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet.

Nearly forty-three years have passed since I joined your transcendental movement, and throughout these years never for a moment have I thought that my life, present or future, could be separated from the life of ISKCON.

I have not been an exemplary devotee, but my attachment to your Society, the society of devotees, kept my consciousness on track.

Rhetoric not being my strength, I won't be able to write noble, high-sounding words to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of ISKCON, but one thing I can say with no hesitation: without this movement we are all lost.

Many things have happened during these fifty years, some positive, some not.

At this point in time, when your faithful disciples have either left this world or are quickly aging, it has become clear that we are at a junction: we will either pass on to future generations a strong ISKCON Society, or leave behind a confused and precarious scene.

You gave the formula for maintaining your movement united, alive, and vibrant:

[If we keep Kṛṣṇa in the center, then there will be agreement in varieties. This is called unity in diversity. . . . Please try to maintain the philosophy of unity in diversity. That will make our movement successful. [Letter to Kīrtanānanda, 18 October 1973]

The following is an excerpt from a presentation on "Unity in Diversity" I made this year in Māyāpur:

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is facing, and will face even more in the future, the challenge of maintaining its unity, all the while allowing for diverse expressions of devotion to manifest. Unity means oneness in purpose: the satisfaction of the founder-*ācārya's* desire. All diversities must be characterized by this one purpose in order to be accepted as bona fide. The preservation and expansion of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is the desire of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

So our purpose should be to satisfy your desire to maintain and expand the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement; only then shall we remain united at your lotus feet.

In another excerpt from the presentation I emphasized that to successfully implement the unity-in-diversity principle, we need absolute clarity both within ISKCON and around it:

### **Unity in Diversity within ISKCON**

An inescapable and urgent need of our Society is defining a clear set of criteria for determining whether a group or institution and their projects should be recognized as a bona fide expression of variety within ISKCON. Such a set of criteria will be a most important legacy for posterity.

### Unity in Diversity around ISKCON

There may also be groups or institutions that are favorable to ISKCON but only partially fit the required criteria. Their support is not to be discouraged. Though it may not be possible to recognize them directly as being components of ISKCON's internal variety, we should, to varying degrees, either affiliate them or develop relations with them.

I will end my humble offering with a prayer: Please let your honest and faithful devotees, particularly those who had the great fortune of your *vapu* association, be illuminated from within the heart and empowered to make ISKCON the shining and everlasting manifestation of your mercy on this world by realizing unity in diversity.

I don't see how we can return to your eternal association without having realized this fundamental desire of yours.

Please keep me in your movement forever.

*Your humble servant,*

Madhusevita Dāsa

## Mālatī Devī Dāsī

Dear Lord and Master, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I bow before you, offering my repeated humble obeisances again and again.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please show me your face  
And make me a miracle of Your Divine Grace.  
You are my master, I am your slave—  
Please let me serve you day after day after day.

Śrīla Prabhupāda! Śrīla Prabhupāda! You declared it was true,  
That you were a “cowboy” always serving that supreme boy of blue hue.  
Devotees may speculate (it's quite natural to do),  
But in that San Francisco apartment we all clearly heard it from you.

ISKCON 50 is dedicated to you, who brought hope of spiritual bliss into our lives. In terms of eternity, fifty years is but a blip in time, but those precious first fifty are indelibly embedded in our hearts, our minds, our thoughts, our words, our bodies, and our daily lives. Fifty years of transformation. Fifty years of wonder. You've never left us; you're with us every day. Please allow me to never again stray. Fifty years with you in my life, and my heart still cries, “I want to surrender, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Please help me surrender, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Please let us serve you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! Please let me serve you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!”

Thus far 2016 has been an interesting and unusual year . . .

ISKCON 50 puts us to the test.  
 Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, don't let us rest.  
 Please let us act in service to you.  
 Please let me always remain with you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, our Lord and Master, this is my prayer. It is nothing new: it is how I am always remembering you. Dear Lord and Master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, please keep my head at your lotus feet, without which, where would I go?

*Your Dāsī,*

Mālātī Devī Dāsī (as named by you)

## Mukunda Goswami

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

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

Your lectures and talks put things in perspective;  
 Things puzzling us were made objective.

We read verses to make our cases,  
 To find they faltered in some times and places.

Confusion abounded in many scriptures;  
 Opposing facts seemed to alter pictures.

Chaos would reign on this spiritual plane,  
 But your studied wisdom made things plain.

“Hindu granny-wisdom,” one poet called it;  
 You solved problems with your unfailing wit.

\* \* \*

Prahlāda silently watched the ghastly action  
 Of his father's slaying, but his only reaction

Was to garland the killer with satisfaction.

Can spiritual dimensions supersede conventions?

Arjuna first denied to kill his kin.  
He was right to think, “I don’t want to win.”

Right from the mundane point of view,  
But Kṛṣṇa’s advice was painfully true.

Arjuna respected his leaders,  
Not wishing to strike at seniors and teachers.

Kṛṣṇa’s purpose was to make him mad,  
But all things considered, that wasn’t so bad.

In the end he fought with zest—  
Aligning with Kṛṣṇa was for him the best.

In that extreme setting he did what was right:  
He followed the Lord and stood to fight.

Initial refusal and deepening sadness—  
Arjuna’s madness Kṛṣṇa turned to gladness.

\* \* \*

When Aśvatthāmā killed boys in their sleep,  
Arjuna acted—his thought was deep.

He did what was legit; racked the culprit.

By marring his looks and driving him out,  
He disgraced the soldier without a doubt.

Thus he kept the Vedic rule  
And punished the *brāhmaṇ* who’d acted so cruel.

Kṛṣṇa instructed in *Gītā*’s chapter two,  
Shame for the honored’s the final coup.

\* \* \*

Conch shells are pure, though animal bone,  
And Deity rooms are their true home.

Many times contradictions appear,  
Making things muddy, unclear.

Animal feces are said to be murky;  
We have to bathe to expunge things so dirty.

Yet cow dung's so pure that though it's excrement,  
It purifies things and makes them pleasant.

No matter it seems filthy, tainted, and toxic,  
This animal waste's a cleansing tonic.

Many times contradictions appear,  
Making things baffling and often unclear.

In *śloka*s and teachings, discord abounds,  
But you found the answers in your flawless sounds.

*Śāstra*, *guru*, *sādhū* rescue,  
Providing answers of higher virtue.

Saints, we see,  
Can make all contradictions flee.

Clapping in *kīrtana*, hand-lines are erased,  
Fright'ning the crows, who flee in haste.

Lord Brahmā lusting after his daughter  
Made us wonder; it seemed like slaughter.

But you explained it wasn't freaky—  
Lust on his part wasn't so sleazy.

Kṛṣṇa danced with spouses not His,  
Causing many to quiz.

Morality can be mundane,  
But how do we know  
What's right or wrong  
When we're not on the spiritual plane?

The Lord was a thief, caused motherly rage,  
But affection for Him overcame her rage.

He wasn't punished for such stealing;  
Motherly love became the main feeling.

*Guru*, *śāstra*, and *sādhū*, we see,  
Can make all contradictions flee.

Can spiritual dimensions supersede conventions?

There's a right and a wrong, a line to draw,  
But some seem to be above the law.

About contradictions we had to ask you  
Because they baffle not just a few.

Many times contradictions appear,  
Baffling the mind, making things unclear,

Sometimes apparent and sometimes for real,  
But the answer's somewhere, the real deal.

Selective quoting's a dangerous thing,  
But your teachings solved everything.

\* \* \*

Daily we sing we must avoid the faithless,  
But preaching prevails, and we try every day.

Gallons of blood to make one see the light;  
The thankless task can make things all right.

Approaching the faithless on every street  
Makes for satisfaction. It's all so sweet.

The *bhakti-śāstras* are our priceless source  
Of knowledge that gives all our preaching its force.

Speaking without them makes arguments weak;  
Without them words seem to be bleak.

And shunning them dilutes our speech.  
Their wisdom puts souls within reach.

Still, we have to think on our feet—  
Intellect conquers the man on the street.

Bowing to circumstance, time, and place,  
But not compromising, the saving grace.

Not changing a thing, as you advocate,  
Preaching goes forth and makes things straight.

Mukunda Goswami

# Nirañjana Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

Today disciples, granddisciples, and hundreds of thousands of your other followers all over the world are gathering to pay homage to you on the occasion of your divine appearance in this material world. I feel fortunate and privileged to be among them today.

Recently I was reflecting on something you wrote in your purport to the following *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse (1.15.27):

*deśa-kālārtha-yuktāni hṛt-tāpopaśamāni ca  
haranti smarataś cittam govindābhīhitāni me*

“Now I am attracted to those instructions imparted to me by the Personality of Godhead [Govinda] because they are impregnated with instructions for relieving the burning heart in all circumstances of time and space.”

In your commentary, you write:

When Arjuna was face to face with being vanquished in his acquired power and prominence, he wanted again to remember the great teachings of the *Bhagavad-gītā* just to teach all concerned that the *Bhagavad-gītā* can be consulted in all critical times, not only for solace from all kinds of mental agonies, but also for the way out of great entanglements that may embarrass one in some critical hour.

Although Arjuna’s words were clear and concise, it was your words that created a stir in my heart. Reflecting on their deep meaning, I momentarily thought of my past, when there was never a thought of Kṛṣṇa in my life, no *Bhagavad-gītā*, and no Śrīla Prabhupāda to guide me. Contrasting those memories with my life as it is now, I became overcome with a mixture of emotions. Foremost among them was gratitude, but then a bewildering question arose in my mind: “How is it possible for anyone to survive in this world without knowing that it’s only by remembering Kṛṣṇa that we can solve the problems of life?” At that moment I simply could not conceive how a living being with a consciousness developed enough to be called human could survive by clinging on to the fallible and futile conception that there is a shelter in this world other than that which comes from remembering Kṛṣṇa.

Of course, there’s always “temporary relief,” and the storehouse of solutions available under this heading is filled with an unlimited supply. “Try heat for relief of the cold. Try cold for relief of the heat. Try food for relief of the hunger. Try intoxication for relief of having to cope. Try speculation for relief of the unknown. Try this and try that . . .” There is no end to the list of placebos. And those who look only for relief will forever get the opportunity to go on looking for more and more. Why? Because relief cannot fully satisfy the hankering soul. Unfortunately for them, they will never learn that life has so much more to offer than the search for relief. Due to their misfortune, they will never be able to hear you.



Śrīla Prabhupāda, somehow, by some stroke of good fortune, something I still cannot fully comprehend even today, you intervened in my life. You taught me that shelter is not the same as relief. Sure, as you wrote in the purport above, remembering Kṛṣṇa brings relief from all kinds of mental agonies, and remembering Kṛṣṇa is also the way out of great entanglements which may embarrass us in some critical hour. But what you showed me and anyone else willing to have their eyes opened with your torchlight of knowledge is that remembering Kṛṣṇa is the natural state of existence and our only shelter in life. And the best way for me to remember Kṛṣṇa is to cling to your instructions and eternally serve under the shelter of your divine lotus feet.

Yes. There is another personality who has captured my mind and who has been indelibly implanted within the core of my heart. For me, remembrance of you is nondifferent from remembrance of Kṛṣṇa. You are the lord, master, and proprietor of my heart. It was you who saved me from the hell where there was no thought of Kṛṣṇa, no *Bhagavad-gītā*, and no . . . I can't even write it. You were there, but I had not as yet heard what you were saying.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. My debt to you is incalculable and can never be repaid. But to simply say "thank you" will never be enough for what you have done for me.

My only prayer to you on this most auspicious day of your divine appearance in this material world is, Please don't ever leave the core of my heart, and please keep me eternally engaged under the shelter of your divine lotus feet.

*Your eternal servant,*

Nirañjana Swami

## Prahlādānanda Swami

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

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

### **Keeping Śrīla Prabhupāda in One's Heart**

The more we follow Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions, the more Śrīla Prabhupāda will appear and remain within our hearts. By his divine association, we will also have the association of all the previous *ācāryas* in our disciplic succession, including the Six Gosvāmīs, along with the Pañca-tattva and Lord Kṛṣṇa and His associates in Goloka Vṛndāvana.

In the material world, people have different ideas about success and failure, but only an activity performed with pure devotion and resulting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a successful one. Consciously or unconsciously, every living entity is constantly consulting with the Supersoul within their heart. Kṛṣṇa consciousness will come to one who consults with Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and who understands His desires directly, or indirectly through His representatives, before he or she acts. Such a person will then act out of

devotion to please Śrī Kṛṣṇa; otherwise, he or she will be lost in the whirlpool of material misconceptions.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s mission in this material world is to deliver the conditioned souls. Since in Kali-yuga He came as Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in this age service to Lord Kṛṣṇa means service to Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mission. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu requested that we try to assist those we meet in reviving their eternal, spiritual relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa by giving them the holy name, a transcendental book, spiritual knowledge, *prasādam*, a smile, and so on. During such exchanges, Lord Kṛṣṇa will give us the transcendental intelligence and expertise to help ourselves and others advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, pure devotional service. This will truly satisfy our spiritual masters and will keep Śrīla Prabhupāda, along with all other great spiritual personalities, within our hearts. That is the secret of spiritual success.

*Śrīla Prabhupāda’s servant,*

Prahlādānanda Swami

## Rādhānātha Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my sincerest obeisances, and my life as a servant of your servants.

This year, throughout the world, in hundreds of temples, in thousands of homes, and in millions of hearts, the fiftieth anniversary a great milestone in the success of your life’s mission, your founding the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, is being celebrated.

As I write this offering I am sitting in a little storefront on the Lower East Side of New York City, in the place where fifty years ago the seed of your lifelong aspiration became a tiny flowering bud—about to blossom and spread its fragrance across the world.

Here, while gazing out my window, I am listening to recordings of your memories of those beginning days. In your own words, you bring us back to 1922: “When this friend, Mr. Mullik, took me to Bhakti-siddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, he immediately asked me that ‘You are educated young boys. Why don’t you take up Lord Caitanya’s message and preach in the Western world?’... In the very first sight, he told me.”

After describing your lifetime in preparation to fulfill your Guru Mahārāja’s will, and your historic voyage across the world on a cargo ship, you bring us with you to New York City in 1965, “When I came to your country without any friend, without any means. Practically just like a vagabond I came. But I had full faith that ‘My Guru Mahārāja is with me.’”

You describe your hopes, struggles, and limitless compassion as you passed through one challenge after another. A Vṛndāvana sādhu wearing the simplest saffron cloth and white plastic shoes, wandering alone, seeking to share the treasures of the spiritual world in New York City, the massive, ever-expanding capital of materialistic life.

In the recording you continue:

I was maintaining myself by selling these books for one year. . . . In this way by selling these books I had only \$200, and I dared to take one apartment and storefront. The storefront was \$125 per month, and the apartment was \$75. I had only \$200. So I advanced him \$200. I did not know how to pay next month’s rent. . . .

I started in 1966, lecturing in the storefront and living in that apartment in 26 Second Avenue. Then gradually, these American boys and girls began to come. I started my *kīrtana* in Tompkins Square. More and more, these young Americans, they came to me, and things were organized. Then I registered this Krishna Consciousness Society under the religious act of New York, and gradually people took interest. . . . In this way, five or six students used to come.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in your ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa you see everything as Kṛṣṇa's sacred property. Every living being is very dear to you. Still, through your own intimate words we gain a glimpse into how especially dear ISKCON is to you. How especially dear to you are those early devotees who helped when you were practically alone. How especially dear to you, for all time to come, are devotees who endeavor to follow your teachings, encourage your devotees, and offer favorable service to your beloved society. We all have the opportunity to show our love for you by cooperating to serve your life's mission, ISKCON, as it passes through both euphoric celebrations and, at times, inconceivable heartbreaks and challenges.

As I gaze out of my window into the clamor of New York City, I see people rushing about, desperately seeking relief from the onslaughts of conditioned life or searching for anything that might bring them a trace of satisfaction. But, as I remember you, my heart fills with hope and gratitude.

In this lifetime, all that really matters is how we please you. You asked us to sincerely chant the names of God and follow Kṛṣṇa's teachings. With tears of love you appealed to us to assist you in fulfilling the order of your Guru Mahārāja by sharing the Matchless Gift of devotional service with each other, and with everyone.

Rādhānātha Swami

## Rāmāi Swami

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

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

You state in your purport to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 7.101:

In order to become an empowered preacher, one must be favored by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu or His devotee, the spiritual master. One must also request everyone to chant the *mahā-mantra*. In this way, such a person can convert others to Vaiṣṇavism, showing them how to become pure devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you were that empowered preacher favored by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, by all adored,  
A true follower of the Lord.

He toiled hard with every limb;  
Around the world were signs of him.

There was no person so very great,  
No power in heaven could master fate.  
Caitanya's message, he answered the call:  
He gave the mercy to one and all.

His strategy completely planned  
Divine ecstasy to flood the land.  
Kali forced in far wilds to dwell,  
Prabhupāda spread the holy name well.

A beloved son, the heir of bliss.  
Who could ever do more than this?  
Great love and happy fate thine.  
Our guru's service so sublime.

Empowered to preach, a sight to behold,  
He always appeared like glistening gold.  
An aristocratic wave of his hand—  
He seemed to be ruler of the land.

Even those who lived in the sky  
Were astonished to see many comply  
With the divine movement of Gaura Hari.  
From Māyā's grip they were able to flee.

Their senses now willingly restrained,  
From sinful activities they refrained,  
Feeling happy and deeply content.  
He saved them from their predicament.

Ever eager to hear him speak,  
They offered him a lofty seat  
And listened to sweet words of nectar  
Like a honey-bee, a pollen collector.

Spiritual general with a commanding voice,  
He was the natural leader of their choice.  
Rapt attention they did give;  
Happily he told how they could live.

Now, therefore, please hear my rede  
And mark my words with duteous heed:  
Let us rejoice and let us declare,  
"Only he showed compassion and care!"

No debt to saints or brāhmaṇs, no,  
Nor spirits, gods, or self I owe.

One duty now remains alone:  
To follow my father to our spiritual home.

Although no longer in our association,  
Something that causes deep agitation,  
Prabhupāda is our savior and guide,  
In whom we can always confide.

Could he who every joy bestows,  
Whose body like the lotus shows,  
The friend of all, who charmed the sight,  
Whose flashing eyes were darkly bright,

Leave his disciples so far behind,  
To whom he was gentle and kind?  
This world is wrecked and tempest-tossed,  
Like a vessel with her rudder lost.

How are we to continue on  
Without our master to save us from  
A cruel and doubtful fate,  
Something not to contemplate?

This sudden fall from bliss to grief  
Appears untrue, beyond belief.  
My mind is deeply distraught—  
In a dream I seem to be caught.

While it seems he is far away,  
In my heart he shall always stay.  
Take comfort, because he is within.  
My whole life I dedicate to him.

*Your insignificant servant,*

Rāmāi Swami

# Romapāda Swami

*om̐ ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-salākayā  
cakṣur unmilitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

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

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

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

My dear and most respected spiritual master and eternal father,

Please accept my most humble and respectful obeisances in the dust of your most merciful lotus feet!

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Service to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is our life and soul.

Though we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of ISKCON through abundant festivals and events all this year—a milestone that in itself is a great tribute to your vision and your spiritual potency, attesting to the fact that a worldwide saṅgha of Vaiṣṇavas can thrive as a cohesive organization even decades after your physical departure—naturally a thoughtful person looks forward, considering what elements must be in place, strengthened, and developed to ensure the organization’s well-being for the next fifty years.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you indicated several key elements necessary for ISKCON to flourish, including “intelligence and organization”; strictly following core spiritual standards and practices; carefully reading and studying your books, as well as broadly distributing them; establishing the role of the GBC as the ultimate managing authority; and unity in diversity.

[I]f we keep Kṛṣṇa in the center, then there will be agreement in varieties. This is called unity in diversity.

I am therefore suggesting that all our men meet in Mayapur every year during the birth anniversary of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. With all GBC and senior men present we should discuss how to make unity in diversity.

But, if we fight on account of diversity, then it is simply the material platform.

Please try to maintain the philosophy of unity in diversity. That will make our movement successful.

[Letter to Kīrtanānanda, 18 October 1973]

With all the diversity that existed during your time, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you saw the need for fostering a healthy balance with unity. Inevitably, through the passage of time, diversity has increased and will continue to increase. Securing a platform of unity within a natural proliferation of diversity is essential to ensure that our third and fourth generations will be celebrating ISKCON 100!

Systematic education and training among all committed members of ISKCON will be needed, particularly regarding the teachings you gave in your books, promoting and cultivating their core values within the members. These values include *sama-darśana*, *ahimsā*, *icchā*, *prīti*, *amānitva*, and *dharma*: equal vision, absence of cruelty, making proper choices, affection, humility, and nurturing right action. As well, education and training about the organizational structure you wanted for maintaining a world-

wide Society of Vaiṣṇavas will likewise be increasingly required as we go forward in time. Encouraging individual initiative, springing from a spontaneous and volunteer spirit, is the art of management; at the same time, connecting with the core principles and structures of organization you gave us is likewise essential. Training leaders who can sustain such a vision, while leading with the artful capability of balancing initiative with adherence to core principles, will be increasingly required—all the while in pursuance of internalizing the broad and diverse teachings you gave us.

Assisting in and ensuring the success of this awesome task is a challenge demanding faith and courage. Seeking diversity without connecting with and fostering the core principles of unity will produce only chaos. That would not be the same ISKCON you entrusted us with. We pray that you mercifully empower us with the requisite purity and courage to succeed in carrying your worldwide Society of Vaiṣṇavas into the next generation.

*bhayaṁ dvitīyābhiniveśataḥ syād  
īśād apetasya viparyayo 'smṛtiḥ*

“Fear arises when a living entity misidentifies himself as the material body because of absorption in the external, illusory energy of the Lord. When the living entity thus turns away from the Supreme Lord, he also forgets his own constitutional position as a servant of the Lord.

*tan-māyayāto budha ābhajet taṁ  
bhaktyaikayeśaṁ guru-devatātmā*

“This bewildering, fearful condition is effected by the potency of illusion, called *māyā*. Therefore, an intelligent person should engage unflinchingly in the unalloyed devotional service of the Lord, under the guidance of a bona fide spiritual master, whom he should accept as his worshipable deity and his very life and soul.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.2.37)

Please accept my prostrated obeisances again and again. Please keep me eternally in your loving service.

Aspiring for your eternal service,

*Your humble disciple,*

Romapāda Swami

## Śivarāma Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Recently, while writing of Kṛṣṇa's *dāmodara-līlā*, I was spellbound by the similarities between the deliverance of Kuvera's sons and that of your followers. To be more precise, I was captivated by the parallels between Nārada and Your Divine Grace in setting the terms of liberation for your dependents.

Upon further research into your teachings, I understood that as the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON you have the prerogative of setting the terms of liberation for your followers, and that Lord Kṛṣṇa is duty-bound to honor those terms.

If Your Divine Grace permits, I shall elaborate on what I have written above.

After Mother Yaśodā captured Kṛṣṇa, the Lord slowly pulled the mortar to the twin *arjuna* trees, where He thought, “In a past life those two trees were the demigods Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva, who were cursed by Nārada to become trees in Vraja. Although normally I would have nothing to do with such materialists, I must fulfill Nārada’s promise and deliver them.”

There is no record of Nalakūvera and Maṇigrīva having performed any significant devotional service. At best they were worshipers of Lord Śiva, and their only act of *bhakti* was recalling Nārada’s curse, standing in Vraja as trees and waiting for Kṛṣṇa’s mercy. Yet despite their lack of standard qualification, the two attained perfection, *prema-bhakti*. And the reason was that Nārada desired it. Being bound by his devotee’s love, Kṛṣṇa was obliged to liberate Kuvera’s sons. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you elaborate on this relationship between the pure devotee and Kṛṣṇa in this way:

And there is Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura’s *Prārthanā, āśraya laiṅ bhaje, kṛṣṇa nāhi tare tyāge*: “One who takes *āśraya*, shelter of a devotee, Kṛṣṇa does not give him up. Kṛṣṇa accepts him.” *Yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādaḥ . . .* Because if that person who is giving shelter, if he’s pleased, Kṛṣṇa is immediately . . . If he recommends a fool, “Oh, Kṛṣṇa, here is a devotee!” Kṛṣṇa will accept immediately. It doesn’t matter whether he’s a fool or rascal. Because he is recommended by representative, he will be accepted. [Conversation, Indore, 12 December 1970]

And this is exactly what happened with Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva. While writing of Kṛṣṇa’s obligation to fulfill Nārada’s promise to Kuvera’s sons, I was reminded of your promise to your followers. How many times had you said, “Chant sixteen rounds and follow the regulative principles, and by Kṛṣṇa’s grace you will go back to Godhead.”

Now you must agree to very rigidly follow the rules and regulations, i.e., chanting sixteen rounds of beads daily, rising early and attending Mangala Arati, observing the four principles, attending the classes, eating only bhagavata prasadam as well as working under the instruction of my representatives, such as your GBC representative and Temple President, and if you follow this procedure very strictly then your life will be glorious and you will go back to Home, back to Godhead, this I can guarantee. [Letter to Ghanaśyāma, 16 February 1973]

Your guarantee brings the same result as the curse of Nārada: Kṛṣṇa becomes obliged to accept a great devotee’s faithful followers.

And the similarity does not end there. Like Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva, we, your followers, did not follow the ideal standard of *sādhana*. When you came to America, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you asked devotees to chant sixty-four rounds. However, when they were unable to do so, you eventually settled on sixteen as a minimum.

This indicates that you adjusted the terms by which Kṛṣṇa would accept us. And for those with implicit faith in Your Divine Grace, it is obvious that you set the conditions upon which the liberation of your followers, for all time to come, would take place.

There are some Vaiṣṇavas who doubt that members of ISKCON can actually go back to Godhead in one lifetime. They argue that the deep conditioning of Westerners, the compromised *sādhana* of sixteen rounds, a lack of training in Vaiṣṇava culture, and perhaps a lack of understanding of esoteric teachings are combinedly too great a handicap. Their opinion is that our insufficient qualification can only ensure rebirth as a devotee in which a higher grade of *bhakti* can be practiced.

But that is not the example of Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva. Whatever standard Nārada set for the *devas*’ liberation, Kṛṣṇa accepted. Similarly, whatever standard you set for our liberation, Kṛṣṇa will accept. That is the conviction of devotees who accept that you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are as dear to Kṛṣṇa as Nārada is.

Therefore, although Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva attained perfection through causeless mercy, and members of ISKCON attain perfection through *sādhana*, some measure of *sādhana* is to be found in Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva, and similarly a measure of mercy—your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda—is found in us. Our *sādhana* and its perfection are your mercy.

In chapter 17 of your *Nectar of Devotion* you explain the two paths of perfection in this way:

Elevation to this stage of ecstasy can be possible in two ways. One way is by constant association with pure devotees. The other way is by the special mercy of Kṛṣṇa or by the mercy of a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Elevation to the ecstatic stage of life is generally attained through association with pure devotees, while elevation to that stage by the special mercy of Kṛṣṇa or His devotee is very rare. The purport is that one should execute devotional service rigidly in the association of devotees so that there will be certainty in raising oneself to that ecstatic position. In special cases, of course, there is special favor from Kṛṣṇa, and although we should always expect that, we should not sit idly and simply wait for Kṛṣṇa's special mercy; the regular duties must be performed. It is just as when, sometimes, it is found that a person who never attended school or college may be recognized as a great scholar, or an honorary degree from great universities may be offered to him. But this does not mean that one should avoid school and expect to automatically receive an honorary degree from some university. Similarly, one should devoutly execute the regulative principles of devotional service and at the same time hope for Kṛṣṇa's favor or for His devotee's favor.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda! Thank you. Thank you for your mercy—mercy that has made the path of perfection easy for us. May we always remember that your arrangement with Kṛṣṇa also set requirements for us to which we agreed at the time of initiation. May we always remember that you did not want us to stand like trees but to engage in *sādhana* and preaching. May we always remember that you have settled on the terms of our liberation with Kṛṣṇa and that if we are true to our vows, you will, like Nārada, be true to yours. Kṛṣṇa will see to it.

*Your servant eternally,*

Śivarāma Swami

## Tamohara Dāsa

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

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

**After Fifty Years**

You left alone that day in Calcutta;  
 There was no fanfare; there were no cheers.  
 None could predict your mission's success,  
 Now in full bloom after fifty years.

You came to a dark place in the world,  
 Filled with conflict, anxiety, and fears.  
 Your message of truth brought peace and hope,  
 Enlightening the world for fifty years.

Knowing Caitanya's grand divine plan,  
 Through your faith the Holy Name appears,  
 Re-awakening our covered hearts  
 As Kṛṣṇa's Name spreads for fifty years

You gave us bhakti, simple but sublime,  
 Devotional love that brings joy and tears.  
 You taught with patience, firmness, and love,  
 Guiding your disciples for fifty years.

Your teaching was clear, simple, and bold;  
 It only required that we open our ears.  
 Hearing your words, it all became clear,  
 Increasing our faith for fifty years.

"Every town and village" was the goal.  
 Not content till the whole planet hears,  
 You traveled the world, planting the seeds  
 That still bear fruit after fifty years.

Your ISKCON movement is saving the world,  
 Even while Kali's nescience nears.  
 You captained the ship on a spiritual course  
 As your mercy flows for ten thousand years.

Tamohara Dāsa