

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA TRIBUTES

23/08 2011 Celebrating the
appearance day of our
beloved spiritual master

“I shall be very happy to return to my Vṛndāvana, that sacred place. “But then why you are...?” Now, because it is my duty. I have brought some message for you people. Because I am ordered by superior, my spiritual master, that “Whatever you have learned, you should go to the Western countries, and you must distribute this knowledge.”

— Śrīla Prabhupāda, Lecture on Bhagavad-gītā 2.11,
New York, March 4th, 1966

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

BY SATYARĀJA DĀSA (STEVEN J. ROSEN)

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” — Henry Ford

The birth of this project holds a fond memory for me: Jayādvaita Mahārāja had phoned me up in Vṛndāvana — Govardhana, actually — as I was sitting in Keśava Bhārati Mahārāja’s office: “You have a call from Jayādvaita Mahārāja,” he said. I was surprised: “What? How does he even know I’m here?” No one can hide in ISKCON.

Jayādvaita Mahārāja proceeded to tell me about the project, asking me to be part of an editorial team to produce a yearly Vyāsa-pūjā book.

Now that I think about it, my first response may have seemed unenthusiastic: “There already is an annual Vyāsa-pūjā book!” He went on to remind me that the “official” Vyāsa-pūjā volume is limited to entries by “leading” devotees, i.e., by GBC people, temple presidents, and so on, but that the mass of Prabhupāda disciples are not represented in the book. This compilation, he said, would be different — any Prabhupāda disciple would be free to offer glorification, regardless of organizational affiliation or social standing, whether liberal or conservative.

I liked the idea immediately. It spoke to the importance of solidarity, community, and cooperation — three things that ISKCON needed so desperately.

It is no secret that Prabhupāda wanted his disciples to work together. As he wrote on one occasion:

Whatever imperfections and discrepancies may exist, if you all agree to my directions and cooperate in the right spirit then everything will turn out, but it will require everyone involved to be responsible and cooperate in executing and following the instructions of the Spiritual Master.

This mandate for cooperation is not some isolated sentiment. In fact, there is a “Vaniquotes” page on the internet that gathers together many of Prabhupāda’s proclamations on the subject. One who even casually peruses these statements can see how central it was to Prabhupāda’s way of thinking: [http://vaniquotes.org/wiki/Category:Cooperate_With_Me_\(Prabhupada\)](http://vaniquotes.org/wiki/Category:Cooperate_With_Me_(Prabhupada))

In Western culture, by contrast, independence is a highly regarded quality. From an early age we are encouraged to learn on our own, and to strive for personal achievement and self-sufficiency. Prabhupāda wanted us to pursue

these goals as well, but not at the expense of working together. His statements about cooperation — indeed, his very acts of forming and organizing a society — implicitly show an appreciation for community, solidarity, and collaboration.

Many of our godbrothers and godsisters, born in Western countries, are accustomed to the independent mode of thinking, and Prabhupāda was keenly aware of this. However, in his words and actions he sought to remind us that units — be they familial, communal, societal, national, or even global — are always integral to proper development, and are necessary if we want to continue to progress as human beings. Similarly, he taught us that his devotees would achieve the goals he had set for them only if the devotees learned how to work together.

Each devotee needs to “fly his own plane,” without doubt, but for a community of devotees to function properly, each pilot needs to work in conjunction with other pilots, so that all their individual planes don’t succumb to collision, crashing down as just so many piles of junk.

At this point in time, the world faces many complex issues: political, economic, social, environmental, and so on. And experts in each of these fields repeatedly tell us that we will only emerge victorious if we learn to think in terms of the common good, working together to see that everyone benefits. Selfishness just won’t do.

What forms the basis of solidarity varies between societies. In simple societies it may be mainly based around kinship and shared values. In more complex societies there are various theories as to what contributes to a sense of social solidarity. International solidarity, says Samora Machel, a prominent revolutionary socialist leader, is “not an act of charity but an act of unity between allies fighting on different terrains toward the same objectives.”

Jayādvaīta Mahārāja’s proposal to do this annual Vyāsa-pūjā book reminds us that we should be allies. Our fight is not with each other but with māyā. So few people in the modern world have any connection to Krishna consciousness. Those of us who do should stand together, by Prabhupāda’s grace, and work toward our common cause, a huge aspect of which, I think we can agree, is glorifying Śrīla Prabhupāda.

And that’s what this book is all about: Glorifying Prabhupāda.

The principle of glorifying devotees is at the heart of Krishna conscious spirituality, and Prabhupāda is at the heart of the Krishna consciousness movement. It was Prabhupāda who brought Krishna consciousness to Western shores — if not for him, few if any holding this book would have any idea who Krishna is. Thus, glorification of Prabhupāda is central to the process of Krishna consciousness. And so, without any further adieu, let the glorification begin...

TRIBUTES
BY
SANNYASI
DISCIPLES

PRABHUPĀDA'S HUMILITY—A HOMAGE

Sometimes someone would address Lord Caitanya as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Lord would block his ears and say “Viṣṇu! Viṣṇu! Viṣṇu! I am just an ordinary living entity. Do not address me as God.” He did not like the implication where Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* addressed each other as Nārāyaṇa. Similarly, Śrīla Prabhupāda did not like being addressed as a pure devotee. “How do you know I am a pure devotee?” He did not like sentimental assertions. He always described himself as a humble servant of his spiritual master, Oṁ Viṣṇupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja. His claim was that he had 100% faith in his spiritual master as a representative of Kṛṣṇa. He even said once in my hearing, “I do not know Kṛṣṇa. I only know my Guru Mahārāja.” So he was very humble. But he defended himself in comparison to other swamis, yogis and impersonalists. Once when another’s swami’s name was mentioned, Prabhupāda said, “But what is his realization?” As a humble servant of his guru mahārāja, he was better than all imitators, professional holy men, and those who do not accept the Supreme Personality of Godhead. That much he would boldly declare. “I kick on their faces with boots.” He was humble like Hanumān, depicted as kneeling on one knee with his hands in *praṇāmas* before Lord Rāma, but ready to fiercely attack the *rākṣasas* or non-believers.

Other spiritual movements are known primarily by the name of their founder, such as the Ramakrishna Mission, but Prabhupāda kept himself in the background and propagated the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. When challenged as to his miraculous powers, he said he had none. He said his only power was the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa and speaking the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* by which he was converting *mlecchas* (uncivilized men) into Vaiṣṇavas. A tall claim but not one that he personally took credit for. “Who knew that you would come to me? Who knew that I would come to you? It is all Kṛṣṇa’s arrangement...” The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement grew by Lord Caitanya’s blessings, not by any personal magic of Prabhupāda, he said. After the disappearance of his guru mahārāja and the demise of the Gauḍīya Maṭha, his godbrothers had become entangled in a fight to possess the temples. But Prabhupāda, without any support, had preached sincerely and he saw the results as the mercy of Lord Caitanya.

He said he was not a great scholar or a great devotee. He wrote that he was crippled in so many ways that he didn’t think he had a hope for going

back to Godhead. But if one of his disciples could become a pure devotee then he could carry Prabhupāda back to Godhead just as Dhruva Mahārāja carried his mother back to the spiritual world. That was his humble estimation of his standing before the Lord. Prabhupāda wrote in a Vyāsa-pūjā offering that he had no hope of direct service to the Lord for many crores of births, but what he aspired for was the service of his guru mahārāja. That is his glory and his qualification as the direct servant of the Lord. He worked tirelessly to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the world and he allowed his disciples to address him in his *praṇāma-mantra* as “being very dear to Kṛṣṇa in this world, having taking shelter of the lotus feet of the transcendental Lord.” He places himself at the lotus feet and tells his disciples they may take shelter of him even though he sees himself as “an insignificant beggar, Abhaya Caraṇa Dāsa.”

Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami

Kīrtanānanda Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my obeisances at your lotus feet.

Trying to glorify the supreme glorious is not easy. Whatever we might say about you is less than you really are. You did what no previous *ācārya* has ever done, namely take Kṛṣṇa consciousness outside of India. Because the whole world is now copying America, you had the intelligence to understand that if you could convince the American youth of the value of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, they could help you spread it all over the world.

Your boldness, rooted in unlimited faith in Kṛṣṇa, who can make the impossible possible, is perhaps your most glorious quality. At any rate, it worked! You came to New York and opened a little storefront on Second Avenue, and gradually it expanded all over the world.

My only prayer is that I may continue to help you in some small way or some great way, whatever you desire, to continue to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness to every fallen conditioned soul.

Your disciple,

Kīrtanānanda Swami

Mukunda Goswami

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

It was said in the papers
That William Shakespeare
Won Millennium Man,
A title most dear.

Kṛṣṇa's sweet realm,
Our natural place,
Brought here by your grace
To a lost human race.

But you, Prabhupāda,
Carved superior words,
Not caring for labels
Fleeting as birds.

Hundreds of temples
Throughout the globe;
Thousands of *bhaktas*
Donned the robe.

From Bharat you brought
Things ascendant.
The first *mṛdaṅga*
Was bliss transcendent.

Your warmth and concern,
Unequaled on earth,
Gave love to your children
And filled them with mirth.

The Lord's gorgeous clothes
Never fail to capture;
All who see them
Partake of the rapture.

The knowledge you brought
Has no equal, not here,
Where so-called learning
Goes in circles, it's clear.

The magic you worked...
Best food on the planet.
Sparkling restaurants
So all could have it.

Conclusions of seers,
The greats of the past,
You passed on unchanged,
With words built to last.

Singing and painting...
The culture conquest.
Plus troves of learning
That passed every test.

For thousands of years,
Even after the wars,
Your lawbooks will heal
This earth's many sores.

A miracle based
On transparent transmission,
Committed to give
The already given.

Yet to think on your feet
Always inspired
Thousands of people;
Such words they admired.

Rejoinders, one-liners
At ends of your talks,
Delighted your students,
Gave hecklers hard knocks.

Always new,
The teachings of yore,
Unrivaled philosophy
Written before.

Father to many,
Without a wife,
Your love for your children
Gave them new life.

The greats of the past
You revered to your last
Breath of spring,
Not yarning the past.

You talked with us often
While running ISKCON
Throughout the world,
Righting things wrong.

When money
And legal problems arose,
You'd write a letter
Solving all woes.

Each disciple you loved
Through and through,
Followed the way
Of Mahāprabhu.

Spreading His message
To each continent,
The words that you spoke
Made devotees abundant.

You knew how to capture
Those who were bound,
In novel ways
We never found,

Repeating a message
Many would heed.
"No miracle," you said,
Though hordes disagreed.

Great wisdom past,
Not current folklore,
From your wise guru
That went before.

To many lands
You'd fly constantly,
Spreading God's word
So confidently.

You never bragged
And never lagged,
Like a lofty soldier
Who never flagged.

Behind and in front,
Defense of your flock
Was a sine qua non,
Not a second thought.

Yet always the scholar
Who'd mastered Sanskrit;
Consummate knowledge
Brimming with wit.

Your favorite subject
A language profound
That made all others
Weep in their sound.

You wrote as we slept,
Books by the dozens,
Giving deep teachings
To white-faced cousins.

Earth dwellers were thinking
"All is well,"
But unfortunately
They all lived in hell.

A pinprick, you wrote,
Would deflate, not bloat,
A civilization
That had no vote.

When adversity struck
And threatened the core,
You won victory
And evened the score.

Leading all struggles,
You battled with brains,
Finding a way
To overcome pains

That attacked your ISKCON
So many times;
You fought them all,
Ousting their crimes.

Of the centuries past,
Real history shows
You achieved something
That more than glows.

Seers and sages
Like you, we're told,
Gain lasting fame
In Lord Kṛṣṇa's fold.

Mukunda Goswami

Jayapatāka Swami

My dear spiritual father, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vānī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Please accept my respectful obeisances. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

This very insignificant disciple of yours is taking this opportunity to offer you homage. During your manifested *līlās*, I offered myself to you, saying “I am yours,” and you said, “I accept you.” I was very much pleased to be your servant. Many disciples find it difficult to get some personal association with their guru or some direct instructions from him, but you were very kind to me and gave me many personal instructions. I do not remember all of them, but I remember some.

In 1968, in San Francisco, I was fortunate to be engaged by your representative His Grace Jayānanda Prabhu in building the *ratha* cart, and on the Ratha-yātrā day he shaved me up. At that time he told me I should go to see you in Montreal. You were very kind to me when I traveled there and took shelter at your lotus feet. You engaged me as an assistant to your secretary. I had some meager duties—such as to stand near your room on call when the secretary went shopping. If you needed any help I would go in and help you.

At that time the devotees complained that I was chanting too loudly in the temple. You heard my reasons and said I should chant in the park. You approved my loud chanting but said I should not disturb others, so I was sent to the park to chant.

You also gave me the service of picking a rose for you every day. You said it would increase your longevity.

In this way, from the very beginning you showered me with instructions. At that time I was made the temple president in Montreal. I thought I was very young for such a position, but you told me not to be body conscious and take up the service. For your pleasure I took up the service, and you said, “Please open more branches. An astrologer told me I will open 108 branches.” You also instructed that I should train someone to take up the services I was doing and go out to open a new branch. So I trained someone and made them the president in Montreal, and then I went to Toronto to open a new center. I was the president in Montreal, but I handed over the charge of the temple to

Jagadīśa Prabhu. Then you called me to LA and told me you were going to send me to India to help Acyutānanda Prabhu.

At that time you instructed that I should treat your godbrothers with respect. You also said that in the future ISKCON would have many, many congregational devotees. While waiting for your order to actually depart for India, I went to Chicago to help Bhagavān Prabhu open a temple there. Then I received a call that I should go to India. I went to Canada, then London, and then India.

At first I stayed in the Gauḍīya Maṭha, and at that time I met some of your godbrothers. You wrote to me that now that I had come to Calcutta, we should have our own place. We got a place in south Calcutta, and soon thereafter we received you at the airport. You said that you had already given nine devotees *sannyāsa*, and Acyutānanda and I were also on the list for *sannyāsa*. So on Rādhāṣṭamī, 1970, Acyutānanda and I were given *sannyāsa*.

Then I was made the first temple president in Calcutta. In Calcutta you gave me many instructions. You said we should put on a Ratha-yātrā, always in a very big way. In fact, you said, it should be the biggest in the world. Also, you instructed that your birthplace should be developed and maintained, and that we should never give up preaching in your birthplace city, Calcutta, because it was very special to you. You also told me I had previously been a devotee born in India. I said, "I am very fallen. I don't deserve this," but you raised your voice and said, "Don't doubt the words of the guru," and I understood that I had to accept what you are saying. I had been chanting thirty-two rounds a day, but you told me that I should just chant sixteen rounds and preach. Then you sent me to Māyāpur.

I was the first president in Māyāpur. I was living in a grass hut and you came and blessed me with your association. You said that living like this was sattvic, but that no one would come and live with us. So we have to use steel, cement, and bricks to develop Māyāpur. This is rajasic, you said, but in this way people will come and stay here.

You would come to Māyāpur twice a year, once in the cold months and once at Gaura-pūrṇimā time. Over the years you gave me many instructions. You told me, "I have given you the spiritual world. Now you develop it!" You also said to do *saṅkīrtana* and to distribute 10,000 big books and 100,000 small books a month. You told me to publish books and head up a BBT in eastern India. You also said we should build a city for 25,000 to 50,000 people. You gave some Vedic and town-planning designs, which will help with the building of the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium. You told us to study the Fifth Canto and understand the universe according to the Vedic version.

You also said that we should build tall buildings and that there is no difference between building the buildings and reading the books. You said I should chant my rounds, attend *guru-pūjā*, and build. Sometimes you gave instructions that seemed very hard to carry out, like the instruction to build a long building, which is now known as the Chakra Building, in six weeks. Then you said I needed to immediately start devotee care.

In this way I remained under your direct guidance, and it was very blissful.

Every day I thank that devotee who once told me I should go before you and humble myself, praise you, and ask for some blessings. So when you were with me, every day I would come before you and follow this formula. A few times you said things that were very humbling, which was your mercy on me. Once I said “I am a fool—” and you immediately interjected “Yes!” I said, “I am the most fallen” and you replied, “You are not the most anything.” Another time I said, “I want to serve you life after life,” and you interjected, “But don’t make me come back!” In this way, every day you gave me some unexpected response, and I learned that the relationship with the spiritual master is very personal; it is not mechanical.

You also gave me so many little instructions, which I won’t recount here. I’m just recounting some of the main ones.

Later you made me Co-director of Māyāpur with Bhavānanda Prabhu. You said that as Co-director I should not be in charge of anything but should oversee everyone and see that they do their services. You also said that all the land in Māyāpur should be utilized and that the place should be kept very clean. One day you held me by the arm and told me, “You can be a little lenient in first initiations but you should be very strict when recommending devotees for second initiation.” Later I found that this instruction was for all of us now as well. Once I said, “We have so many devotees in India; they should be somehow engaged in the *saṅkīrtana* movement.” You said we should expand the congregation and bring them to our temples. And that is how we do things to this day. We train them for a few days and then send them back to practice in their own homes. In this regard you instructed that we should follow the model of Hare Kṛṣṇa Nāmahatṭa as given by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. This has proved very useful.

When you said, “Develop Māyāpur,” I replied, “Well, that means there will be many *grhasthas*.” You said, “Yes, the *brahmacāris* will be managed by *grhasthas*. We have to think big; we have to think broad and wide.” On one occasion you described how I should care for your many disciples and engage them in Kṛṣṇa’s service.

One day you called all the *sannyāsīs* and GBCs together and said that you

were sending Ghanaśyāma Dāsa, who later became Bhakti Tirtha Mahārāja, on a very special mission, and you asked all of us to bless him. We said, “Well, when he has your blessings, what will our blessings do?” You said, “You are all devotees, and Kṛṣṇa will also see you blessing him. So you should bless him, because this is a very difficult mission.” So we blessed our dear godbrother for his special mission.

You also said we should build a little road to the Ganges so you could take a daily bath there. This would increase your longevity, you said. We failed to get the road built at that time, since then the Ganges was a long way from our property. But recently the Ganges has come very close, and now we have the road. Every year we take you for a bath in your *mūrti* form. You also said that if you were to leave your body in Māyāpur we should build your *samādhi* there and your *puṣpa-samādhi* in Vṛndāvana, and that if you were to leave your body in Vṛndāvana we should build your *samādhi* there and your *puṣpa-samādhi* in Māyāpur. So we have built your *puṣpa-samādhi* in Māyāpur and your *samādhi* in Vṛndāvana. You also said we should have regular boat service between Calcutta and Māyāpur, with a stop in Pānihāṭi, where we should provide a breakfast of *ciḍā* and *dadhi*, and that we should also have a temple in Pānihāṭi. You also said we should develop the Navadvīpa *parikramā* and Gaura-maṇḍala-bhūmi and unite the Sārasvata family. For the latter purpose you established the Bhakti Vedanta Swami Charity Trust, of which you asked me to be the lifetime chairman. Sometimes you sent me on a special mission to recover disciples from other *mahārājas* or to develop some foreign place even though the person there was not always favorable. It was something very special to work under you directly.

Sometimes you gave me personal services. For instance, in Bombay you asked me to scratch your back because you were feeling itchy. In Māyāpur there was once a snake trying to bite you in your bathroom. You called for me and said “Help me!” I had to somehow figure out how to save you from the snake. There were many services like this.

You said Māyāpur should be ISKCON’s World Spiritual Headquarters, the United Nations of the spiritual world. You wanted us to unite all the different nationalities there and host everybody. You showed personally how to host VIPs, how to host guests in general, and how to distribute *prasādam*. You started the Food for Life program after seeing the hungry kids peeping into the garbage bins to get the remnants of *prasādam*. Seeing this, you started crying. You were so very kind and merciful to all devotees and the people at large, which was very much appreciated.

Sometimes you told us that you were about to leave this world and that

you were very concerned about how the movement would go on after you had departed. You said, “At least try to maintain whatever I have given you.” At that time you had 108 temples. You said, “If you can expand, well and good. Very nice. But at least maintain it.” You knew that the missions of many other great spiritual leaders had split up. The Gauḍīya Maṭha has many different splinter groups; there are about forty different Gauḍīya *maṭhas*. You also told us that it was your guru’s order to establish the GBC and that you wanted to carry out your guru’s order. You also instructed us to print and distribute books, to do Navadvīpa *parikramā*, and to expand the Nāmahaṭṭas—all orders of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

You told us that we should have a GBC and should remain united. You also instructed all your followers that we would show how much we loved you by how well we cooperated after you were gone. You told us that we should all work under the GBC. You said, “Any one of you can fall, but I have faith that the whole GBC—the majority—will be ok.” And somehow the GBC has seen us through all the difficulties over the decades, and we are still mostly united, with over five hundred branches.

You appointed me a GBC and said I should serve the GBC. In the beginning I was assigned the duty of overseeing Bengal and Orissa. Gradually the GBC and you also instructed me to preach in Bangladesh and Nepal and to try to develop centers there. You emphasized that in Māyāpur you wanted to build a spiritual city. In Haridaspur and other such villages, you instructed us, we should make the existing village Kṛṣṇa conscious. In this way you had different plans for different places.

On some occasions you instructed your *sannyāsīs* to travel around the world and preach. You said, “I have accepted this curse from the parents of my devotees, so you should also accept this curse and travel.” So by your mercy I have been able to travel to many parts of the world and preach. You once told me to develop the Orissa preaching by supporting Gour Govinda Mahārāja in Bhuvaneshvara and building a temple in Jagannātha Purī. I tried my best in this regard.

Your Divine Grace gave me so many instructions that sometimes I feel overwhelmed. Of course, there are also many, many instructions that you gave to all your disciples, such as the instruction to chant sixteen rounds and follow the four regulative principles. All these instructions I take on my head. Sometimes I think, “How will I do all these things? How will I follow all these instructions?” In fact, some of your instructions are open-ended—they can never be followed completely. For instance, you said, “I want you to expand Kṛṣṇa consciousness propaganda unlimitedly.” So, that is an unlimited order.

Also, once you said, “Well, I have to make 10,000 disciples—and you should make 50,000 disciples.” In this way we were always encouraged by you.

You said that Māyāpur was the place where all your senior disciples could find some service, where they could use their intelligence and energy to serve Kṛṣṇa. So, now we are trying to engage more and more devotees. Ambarīṣa Prabhu has taken a very big lead; other devotees are also taking part. At this point I am not very well and am not able to do as much as you would like me to do. So I am appealing to my godbrothers and godsisters and my spiritual children, spiritual nephews, spiritual nieces, and spiritual grandchildren that they all work together and somehow help me follow all the instructions you gave me.

Your Divine Grace, my life is meant for your service. It has no other purpose. Sometimes people ask me why I still preach, why I don’t retire. The GBC has asked me to try to regain my health, so I am undergoing some therapy, as much as I can. You did so much for us, gave so much, took so many risks—going across the ocean on the *Jaladuta*, being robbed, falling sick, traveling constantly at great personal comfort. When I first joined, my father said, “If you become a devotee, I will make sure that you serve in the American army and die in Vietnam.” When I asked you what I should do, you said, “Better you join Kṛṣṇa’s army.” So you gave me the name Jayapatāka, meaning “victory flag of Lord Kṛṣṇa.” You often said that name very affectionately. You told me that I should take up the service of staying in India and should become an Indian citizen. I did all this to please you, and by your mercy I am getting a little taste for chanting and for serving. I hope that I can always serve you and Lord Caitanya and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava and that I never have any other service!

All glories to Your Divine Grace!
Your humble servant,

Jayapatāka Swami

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

“Tell us about Śrīla Prabhupāda.” Deep meditation required. No distractions. Why so difficult? “He is my master, birth after birth.”

Have I been untrue to him? Wasting time? Inattentive to his command? Yes! (Be honest.) How much more I could accomplish if *āra nā kariho mane āśā* were a fact. Why not kick everything else out? Weakness, my friend. (You don’t want to).

But is this what we put in an offering? Is this glorification or true confession—which?

Ācāryaṁ māṁ vijānīyāt: We should know that the bona fide spiritual master is non-different from Kṛṣṇa Himself. And this is our problem: We are distracted from Kṛṣṇa Himself. Ravindra-svarūpa Prabhu quotes from the English poet and clergyman John Donne, “I throw myself down in my chamber, and I call in, and invite God, and his Angels thither, and when they are there, I neglect God and his Angels, for the noise of a fly, for the rattling of a coach, for the whining of a door.”

“To be inattentive while chanting.” How sad when chanting without attention is business as usual, when it fits naturally and feels comfortable, when it’s a regular daily function.

“My Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, in Your holy name there is all good fortune for the living entity, and therefore You have many names, such as ‘Kṛṣṇa’ and ‘Govinda,’ by which You expand Yourself. You have invested all Your potencies in those names, and there are no hard and fast rules for remembering them. My dear Lord, although You bestow such mercy upon the fallen conditioned souls by liberally teaching Your holy names, I am so unfortunate that I commit offenses while chanting the holy name, and therefore I do not achieve attachment for chanting.”

Vyavasāyātmikā buddhir ekeha kuru-nandana. Śrīla Prabhupāda told us he encountered profound meaning in a comment by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura: “One should make the order of the spiritual master one’s heart and soul.”

One whose intelligence is splayed, many-branched—here, there, and everywhere—who lets his mind go dabble, who drifts about with a wandering

heart, pursuing what catches his interest and letting the words given by his spiritual master drop into the background and recede into a blur—oh, Kṛṣṇa, is that me?

O Śrīla Prabhupāda! Please engage me, please engage me, please engage me unalloyed in your service!

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

Jayādvaita Swami

Hridayānanda Dāsa Goswami

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn̄ iti nāmīne
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my sincere obeisances to you.

In *kṛṣṇa-līlā* we find that various pure devotees enjoy different relationships with Kṛṣṇa. We observe this principle when Kṛṣṇa descends as Govinda, and also when He comes as Nimāi Paṇḍita to manifest the *saṅkīrtana* movement. There is variety not only of *rasas*, but of “moods.” Thus among the servants of Mahāprabhu, some are bold, others meek, some innovative, others traditional.

As a pure devotee not different from Kṛṣṇa, you accept and reciprocate the sincere devotion of varieties of ISKCON devotees. With great wisdom and foresight, you often insisted that within reasonable boundaries we should respect the individuality of the diverse souls who come to you for shelter.

Everyone knows how you came to the West, how with pure devotion you ingeniously established Kṛṣṇa consciousness in America, and thereupon throughout the world. You did this within a specific historical context. We, your followers, now struggle, faithfully and creatively, to continue your glorious legacy by trying to act with ingenuity and purity to keep Kṛṣṇa consciousness relevant.

Before coming to the West you strove with complete sincerity to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness in India, with results that did not at all satisfy you. Thus you boarded the *Jaladuta* with a magnificent global strategy that you enacted with unique success. Your activities in India prior to coming west demonstrate, as you revealed to Girirāja Swami just before leaving this world, that both purity and intelligent strategy are needed to spread Lord Caitanya’s divine mission.

On the holy day of your appearance, we pray that you bless us with purity and intelligence so that we can powerfully perpetuate your grand movement and serve you as worthy descendants.

*With best wishes,
Your servant,*

Hridayānanda Dāsa Goswami

Girirāj Swami

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

For your Vyāsa-pūjā this year, I wish to speak about your dear friend and staunch devotee Mr. P. L. Sethi. Much of what I shall narrate I have experienced personally; the rest I have heard from Mr. Sethi himself, except the description of his last days, which I heard from his family. For your pleasure, I shall address my words to your followers.

A SPECIAL RECIPIENT OF ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S MERCY

When Śrīla Prabhupāda first came to Bombay with his disciples from America in 1970, Mr. Sethi read a notice about them in the newspaper, which said that Śrīla Prabhupāda had arrived with *sādhus* from foreign countries who chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. Mr. Sethi was part of a group that also chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa; so he wanted to meet Prabhupāda, and he got the address and came to see him.

At their first meeting, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked Mr. Sethi what he did during the day, starting from when he woke up in the morning. Mr. Sethi began, "I get up, brush my teeth, take my bath, have a cup of tea and a piece of toast, read the newspaper, and go to work."

Śrīla Prabhupāda responded, "What is the difference between you and a pig?"

Mr. Sethi thought about it and seemed to agree: there was no difference. So he asked Prabhupāda, "What should I do?"

Prabhupāda replied, "You should invite the devotees to Goregaon (the northern suburb of Bombay where Mr. Sethi lived) early every Sunday morning to do *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, and then you should feed them sumptuous *prasādam*." And this became a regular practice.

Later, when Śrīla Prabhupāda got the Juhu property, Mr. Sethi bought some land behind it and built a house for his family. In India people often give names to their houses and office buildings, and he named his new home Vṛndāvana.

Śrīla Prabhupāda underwent a great struggle to get the Juhu land and then to get the permissions to build on the land. Mr. Sethi was a building contractor, and Śrīla Prabhupāda engaged him in getting permits and doing some of the early construction. At the back of the land were six two-storey apartment

buildings, and before we got permission to build the temple and main project, Mr. Sethi got permission to add one storey on top of each of the buildings at the back. The roofs of those old buildings were flat, with little white ceramic tile chips set in cement, and Śrīla Prabhupāda said that we should keep that flooring and build the walls and roof over it.

When the first additional quarters were ready, Mr. Sethi took Śrīla Prabhupāda on a tour. Śrīla Prabhupāda looked at Mr. Sethi with great affection and said, “Just as you are building these rooms for my disciples here, Kṛṣṇa is building rooms for you in Vaikuṅṭha, the spiritual world.”

But we still did not have permission to build the main project. Finally, Mr. Sethi told Prabhupāda, “Unless we pay them some money, we can’t get the permission.” He wanted to know if Prabhupāda was willing to do that.

Śrīla Prabhupāda asked, “How much?”

Mr. Sethi said, “Five thousand rupees.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda asked, “How do we know that if we pay the money we’ll get the permission?”

Mr. Sethi said, “The municipal commissioner is the final authority, and he seems to be a decent man, and this is how it works in Bombay.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “Let me think about it; I will tell you tomorrow morning.”

After Mr. Sethi left, Śrīla Prabhupāda discussed the matter with me and maybe one or two other managers of the Juhu project. “So, what should we do?” he asked. And he raised another question: “What if we give the money to Sethi and he doesn’t give it to the commissioner?” He quoted a Bengali saying that a goldsmith, while fashioning some gold his mother gave him to make into a ring, is thinking, “Should I use all the gold for the ring or put some in my pocket?” Prabhupāda said that this type of cheating is so much a part of the goldsmith’s business that even if his own mother gives him gold to make an ornament, he will think, “Should I cheat and keep some of the gold for myself?” Prabhupāda said that the construction business—paying bribes and getting permits—is such that someone in it will automatically think, “Should I keep some of the money for myself?”—no matter whose money it is.

So there were many factors to consider—whether Mr. Sethi would give the money, or the full amount, to the commissioner, whether the commissioner, having taken the money, would in fact give the permission, or whether he might take the money and then ask for more and more and more—so many complexities. Finally Śrīla Prabhupāda decided, “We will not do this.”

The next morning we waited anxiously for Mr. Sethi to arrive, being a little apprehensive about how Śrīla Prabhupāda would present his decision

to Mr. Sethi and how Mr. Sethi would take it. Eventually he came and, as usual, sat on the floor before Śrīla Prabhupāda. “So, what do you think?” Prabhupāda asked. “Should we do it?”

Mr. Sethi replied, “Yes, because otherwise we are not getting the permission.”

Prabhupāda immediately said, “All right”—just the opposite of the way the discussion had been going the day before. So Prabhupāda arranged the money, and we got the permission.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as the *ācārya*, was teaching us. He often told us that intelligence means to see the same thing from many points of view and that we should do everything very cautiously and carefully. I do not believe that he actually doubted his dear friend and staunch devotee Mr. Sethi, but he was teaching us to be circumspect and consider every proposal with keen intelligence.

In the course of the struggle, the municipality had demolished the semipermanent temple we had built for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī. At first we actively campaigned to get permission to rebuild it. But eventually we concluded that we didn’t really need a permit to rebuild it because we already had permission and the municipality didn’t actually have valid grounds for demolishing it. Still, the landlady, Mrs. Nair, somehow heard about our intention and went to court to get an injunction to stop us from rebuilding the temple. That was on a Friday, and the judge said he would not give the injunction without hearing us. She said, “Just give a temporary injunction for the weekend, and then you can decide on the permanent injunction.”

But he said, “No, without hearing the other side I will not pass any judgment.”

So we knew we had the weekend to rebuild the temple, because once it was rebuilt, the injunction would be meaningless.

In those days it was difficult to get cement, and a little hard to get bricks. The supply was less than the demand. And the government had imposed “cement control”: to purchase cement legally, one had to procure a government-approved quota. But Mr. Sethi brought cement and bricks from his own construction sites so we could rebuild the temple over the weekend. While the work was going on, Mr. Mhatre, the local municipal counselor, who was in cahoots with Mrs. Nair, came to the site and demanded, “Stop the construction immediately.”

Mr. Sethi replied, “No. Why should we stop?”

Mr. Mhatre threatened, “Well, you can build it up, but I will come in the night with fifty *guṇḍās* (hooligans) and break it down.”

Mr. Sethi turned to his son, who was by his side, and said, “Brij Mohan, bring my revolver and my rifle.” Then Mr. Sethi said to Mhatre, “Don’t bring fifty *gunḍās*. Bring a hundred. Bring two hundred. I have two hundred and fifty cartridges.” He was that staunch. Then he and his son—he with rifle in hand, his son with revolver—stayed up all night, in the pouring rain, to complete and protect the project. And no one came to disturb the work.

On Monday morning we appeared in court and told the judge that the temple had already been rebuilt. And the judge said to Mrs. Nair, “What is built is built. No one can destroy the temple.”

Eventually we got permission to build the main complex. The question then became whether we needed piling. Piles are columns of reinforced concrete driven into the ground to support a building’s foundation. Generally, to determine if you need piles or how strong the piles must be, you hire a soil-testing company to drill into the earth and see how far down you have to go to reach bedrock. And because the Juhu land was near the beach, it was expected that the soil would be sandy, with water underneath, and that we would need piles, which would be quite an expense. Mr. Sethi approached Prabhupāda, who replied, “No, we don’t require piles.” Still, Mr. Sethi had some doubt, and he didn’t want to take any chances, so he hired a soil-testing company.

When the specialized machinery was drilling into the earth and had gone only about four feet deep, it hit bedrock. In fact, when it hit the hard rock, the drill broke. Nobody had expected to hit bedrock so soon. This was one of many, many instances that increased Mr. Sethi’s faith in Śrīla Prabhupāda. He felt that Śrīla Prabhupāda knew everything.

Once, Mr. Sethi approached Śrīla Prabhupāda to propose staging a charity benefit. The idea was that some famous performing artists—singers, dancers, musicians—would present an Indian cultural show, for which we would sell tickets, and the proceeds would go to the temple. Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “Yes, you can do. If you can make money from the performance, it will be most welcome.”

Then Mr. Sethi added, “The only thing, Prabhupāda, is that we will need some devotees to sell tickets.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “Our devotees cannot sell tickets. They are meant for selling books.” He said that if Mr. Sethi and his friends promoted the program and gave the profit to the temple, he would have no objection, but that the devotees could not be directly involved.

Another time, Mr. Sethi had some ideas for other ways the devotees could make money for the project. Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “Your ideas may

be good, but if I tell my disciples, they will think, ‘I have come for *bhajana*, and now he wants me to do the same business again.’” Then Śrīla Prabhupāda told a story. Once, a boy was learning algebra and his mother saw him write $A + B = C$. Seeing the letters A, B, and C, she exclaimed, “Oh, you have grown so much, and still you are doing the same ABC?” She could not understand there was a gulf of difference between this ABC and that ABC, between a child’s learning to write the alphabet—ABC—and a young man’s doing algebra—ABC. Prabhupāda continued, “I can give my disciples so many ideas, but they will think, ‘I have come for *bhajana*, and again I am doing the same business?’ They cannot understand there is a gulf of difference between this business and that business—between working for Kṛṣṇa and working for *māyā*.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda knew our consciousness, the defects in our understanding. But he did not disturb us. He encouraged us to continue in devotional service, and he maintained faith that the process of hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa and serving Lord Kṛṣṇa’s mission would purify us and enlighten us in the proper understanding of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Eventually, we built the temple complex in Juhu, and Saurabha Prabhu arranged beautiful quarters for Śrīla Prabhupāda on the top floor of the west tower, facing the sea. After Śrīla Prabhupāda moved in, he invited Mr. Sethi to see his new accommodations. He told Mr. Sethi, “Just see what beautiful arrangements my disciples have made for me—spacious rooms with beautiful chandeliers and carved-wood furniture and marble floors.” Then Prabhupāda said to Mr. Sethi, “I always wanted you to live with us, but you always felt that the conditions would be too austere for you. You weren’t used to living so simply. So you come and live here in my quarters, and I will stay somewhere else.”

Mr. Sethi protested, “No, no, your disciples have made this for you.”

Prabhupāda said, “I am a *sannyāsī*; I can stay anywhere. You stay here.” That was Prabhupāda’s generosity of spirit and his graciousness toward Mr. Sethi.

The last incident I shall relate came toward the end, when Śrīla Prabhupāda was really quite ill, in 1977. From before Mr. Sethi had met Prabhupāda he had been associated with a group called the Radha Madhava Prema Sudha Sankirtana Mandala. Their *guru* was based in Vṛndāvana, and they chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. In Bombay they were all householders, and every Sunday they would have a twelve-hour *akhaṇḍa-hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*—continuous Hare Kṛṣṇa *kīrtana*—from six in the morning to six in the evening, followed by two hours of Vraja songs.

So, Mr. Sethi had the idea that instead of having the *kīrtana* in a home of

one of their devotees, as they usually did, they could have it at Hare Krishna Land, in Juhu. So we arranged it, before the Deities in the small temple, beside the new complex that was nearing completion, just beneath Śrīla Prabhupāda's new quarters. Although the construction wasn't finished and the lift wasn't working, Śrīla Prabhupāda had insisted on staying there. And ill as he was, he was listening to the *kīrtana*, reclining or lying down.

The devotees in the temple really wanted to see him, but they were too many to come up, Prabhupāda was not able to come down, and anyway it would have been too taxing for him to meet them all. At one stage they were so eager that they came out of the temple and were doing *kīrtana* beneath Śrīla Prabhupāda's balcony. Eventually Mr. Sethi helped Prabhupāda walk to the balcony. Prabhupāda glanced down upon them. They were in ecstasy. He stayed for a little while and then went back in. One highlight came at the end when a lady devotee sang, "*Jaya rādhe jaya rādhe rādhe, jaya rādhe jaya śrī rādhe. Jaya kṛṣṇa...*" Later, Mr. Sethi told us that when Prabhupāda was listening to that song, tears were streaming down his cheeks.

Soon thereafter, Śrīla Prabhupāda left this world, but Mr. Sethi continued his service. He arranged and paid for a beautiful, ornate pure silver *ārati* set for offering *guru-pūjā* to Śrīla Prabhupāda. And every year on Prabhupāda's appearance and disappearance days he would sponsor a grand, opulent feast for everyone who came to the temple. Later, he created sizable fixed deposits in the bank, the interest from which would pay for opulent feasts on Prabhupāda's appearance and disappearance days in perpetuity. And he contributed for the construction of two guest rooms, the rent from which would sponsor Śrīla Prabhupāda's annual appearance and disappearance festivals.

Then, last year, Mr. Sethi became ill. He was eighty-eight, but he had no fear of death. He was completely detached from the body. Devotees constantly surrounded him with *kīrtana*. His spiritual and biological families—everyone—was so attached to him. It is really powerful when the head of a family is such a staunch devotee. Sethiji's wife is also a very good devotee. His sons and daughters and grandchildren—the whole, large family—is Kṛṣṇa conscious. Their affection for him was exceptionally strong, with a familial relationship based on his being husband, father, and grandfather, and a spiritual relationship based on his bringing them to Śrīla Prabhupāda and inspiring them in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Then, on February 12, he began to say, "Prabhupāda is calling me. He is preparing a room for me, and when it is ready he will take me. I am going from where I came, back to my *guruji*." On February 13 he insisted on going to

the temple. And three days later, at 11 p.m., surrounded by devotees lovingly chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa in *kīrtana*, he left his body to rejoin Śrīla Prabhupāda. He was so fixed in service and devotion to Śrīla Prabhupāda that at the very end his mind was fixed on Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Once, Mr. Sethi told Śrīla Prabhupāda that sometimes devotees would ask him why he didn't get initiated. Prabhupāda replied, "You are better than initiated. An initiated disciple can serve Kṛṣṇa, worship the Deity, but you are serving the servants of Kṛṣṇa, and that is higher." And he quoted a verse:

*ārādhānānām sarveṣāṁ viṣṇor ārādhanaṁ param
tasmāt parataraṁ devi tadīyānām samarcanam*

"Of all kinds of worship, the worship of Lord Viṣṇu, or Kṛṣṇa, is the topmost. But above even the worship of Lord Viṣṇu is the rendering of service to Vaiṣṇavas, who are related to Viṣṇu." (*Padma Purāṇa*)

And Prabhupāda added, "Besides, I have much work for you. There may be things I want you to do that would be awkward for an initiated disciple, but as you are now, you can do them conveniently."

Śrīla Prabhupāda was very liberal. He knew the heart—the devotion, the service—of the person, and he accepted Mr. Sethi as more than an initiated disciple. And there is no doubt that Mr. Sethi's attachment to Śrīla Prabhupāda and to Śrīla Prabhupāda's service and the fact that his consciousness was fixed on Śrīla Prabhupāda at the end have carried him to Śrīla Prabhupāda again.

This is the story of one sincere, humble devotee's service to Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Prabhupāda's immense mercy and blessings upon him. And somehow or other, that same immense mercy from Śrīla Prabhupāda is available to all of us who are serving him and his mission even now.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya!*

Mr. Sethi *kī jaya!*

Girirāj Swami

Prahlādānanda Swami

COOPERATE TO SPREAD KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

When a soul sees himself as Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant, he becomes eligible to return to the spiritual world. In this age, service to Lord Kṛṣṇa specifically means service to Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission. While serving, a devotee must cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness and enlighten others that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the worshipable Supreme Personality of Godhead. However, to advance toward perfection, a devotee must also be able to discriminate between pure and materially motivated devotional service, for a soul bewildered by false ego can use even the *saṅkīrtana* movement for material enjoyment.

Freedom from false ego is possible when a devotee agrees to sacrifice his own ideas and selfish interests to cooperatively serve the mission. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that such sacrifice is essential for genuine spiritual advancement.

In the material world, people often temporarily cooperate for sense gratification, but such cooperation cannot endure, because when mundane cooperation no longer serves a materialist's ambitions and desires, it ends and dissension begins. Only cooperation between souls working on the spiritual platform endures. And this spiritual platform is achieved by persons who work under spiritual authorities and who use all their assets to please Lord Kṛṣṇa. Such devotees know that all things, even their material bodies, belong to Lord Kṛṣṇa and must therefore serve His interests.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa is satisfied by our efforts to please Him, He awards us the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which dissolves the prison of false ego. The Supreme Lord is most pleased when His servants cooperate to serve Him. The loving exchanges between His devotees inspire the Lord to empower them with His internal potencies, which reveal the true nature of the Lord and His pure devotees.

As Lord Kṛṣṇa told the Pracetās:

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: “My dear sons of the King, I am very much pleased by the friendly relationships among you. All of you are engaged in one occupation—devotional service. I am so pleased with your mutual friendship that I wish you all good fortune. Now you may ask a benediction of Me.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.30.8)

In the *Upadeśāmṛta*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī advises an aspiring devotee to respect other devotees, at least within his mind. Even the service of the least advanced devotee must be respected. As parents enjoy the stumbling of their child as he attempts to walk, so the Lord appreciates the immature attempts of a soul to serve Him. However, while acknowledging the devotional service of others, a devotee must also recognize his own spiritual strength, as well as his susceptibility to undesirable association. A devotee must avoid association that interferes even slightly with his spiritual development.

Each soul has a unique personality and set of desires, so there will always be differences of opinion. However, a devotee’s individuality can be respected and devotees can work in harmony if Kṛṣṇa consciousness remains in the center. Conflicts between less advanced devotees usually arise when devotees hesitate to sacrifice their selfish interest for a higher cause.

A mature devotee tolerates disagreements with other devotees and, as far as possible, tries to compromise in order to further Lord Caitanya’s mission. If such cooperation is sometimes impossible, a devotee continues respecting others within his mind and continues serving his guru and the previous *ācāryas*. Advanced devotees strive to create an atmosphere of harmony and respect among those engaged in Lord Caitanya’s mission.

Your aspiring servant,

Prahlādānanda Swami

Trivikrama Swami

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

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

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

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

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I am so very grateful that you agreed to accept me as a disciple. My father died when I was thirteen, a difficult age for a boy to lose his father. I blamed God to some degree and rebelled against authority. Eventually I ended up in juvenile court and was released only on the condition that I report to my probation officer every month for over a year.

At college I became agnostic, leaning toward atheism. I was a free thinker who decided that religion was a scam and that the priests were hypocrites. I had some attraction to impersonalism and yoga and remember reading some edition of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and thinking, “Why is Kṛṣṇa getting in the way?”

I was a little serious about my so-called spiritual practice and was really impressed when I met your followers and disciples for the first time, thinking “These people are sincere and serious.” But I can honestly say that I would have never become a servant of Kṛṣṇa if I had not had an opportunity to meet and serve you.

I first meet you in your room upstairs in the back of 26 Second Avenue. I was introduced by your disciple Bhūrījāna Prabhu. My first impression was that you were so vulnerable, sitting there alone without any secretary or servant at your door, and that too in a rather bad neighborhood. You immediately spoke to me, saying, “Thank you very much.” I had done nothing worthy of thanks, but you were so warm and hospitable, reaching out with encouraging words.

Later, after initiation, you sent me to London. After a few months you arrived there yourself, in September 1969, and by my great good fortune I had the opportunity of giving you your regular massage. By the time you left

London to return to Boston in December of that year, I had become firmly convinced that you were a worshipable person.

That conviction has not diminished as the years have past, and I see practically that by my keeping this strong faith in your person and your instructions, my life has become more and more joyful as my bad habits have been reduced.

From the bottom of my heart I am very grateful to you for taking on your shoulders this extraordinary task of spreading Lord Caitanya's mission throughout the world. My prayer is that you continue to shower your mercy on me by allowing me to be of some small assistance to you in your sacred mission.

Your humble and insignificant servant,

Trivikrama Swami

Bhaktivaibhava Swami

I am offering this song as my humble obeisances to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who saved this world in its darkest hour.

A world full of sorrow,
A world full of pain,
Nothing for nothing,
Nothing to gain.

Oneness and voidness,
The soul in despair,
No direction home,
Illusion's last snare.

Warfare for power,
So selfish, unkind.
They'd promised the earth,
Nothin' but lyin'.

The dawn of a New Age,
"Enlightened" and "wise"—
Same old wine
In another disguise.

Cheated by cheaters,
Stripped naked and blind,
Thrown in the gutter,
Left nothing behind.

We were hopelessly doomed
If you'd never come.
You dispelled the darkness
Like the rising sun.

Songs of freedom
Washed to the sea.
Pleading and weeping—
Mankind's history.

Father and guardian,
Like sheltering seaways,
Worshiped by all,
Your Divine Grace.

Seeking salvation,
A venture of faith.
Suspended question:
Is suffering God's grace?

The servant of Śrīla Prabhupāda,

A.C. Bhaktivaibhava Swami

Dānavīr Goswami

With all humility, I offer my most humble repeated obeisances to the divine lotus feet of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda's self-effulgent disciple who is my beloved spiritual master, Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahansa Parivṛājākācārya Aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-ācārya of ISKCON.

My spiritual master is *karuṇa*—compassionate to all the fallen souls. Who else would have come to Culver City (Los Angeles) to drag a wretched fool such as myself off the beach and give him a permanent place among the Vaikuṅṭha devotees? His compassion is also demonstrated by his dissemination of hundreds of millions of books full of transcendental knowledge meant to save all fallen souls. He opened and maintains hundreds of centers, which are spiritual hospitals for the suffering patients of this world.

My spiritual master is a source of great pleasure. To be in his divine presence was an indescribably blissful experience. One of my godbrothers, Tribhuvanātha Prabhu, put it nicely when a devotee said to him that being with Śrīla Prabhupāda was like being in the spiritual world. Tribhuvanātha Prabhu replied, "Śrīla Prabhupāda *is* the spiritual world." But that pleasure did not stop upon His Divine Grace's departure from our sight when he returned to Goloka. It continues for everyone fortunate enough to take his association through his *vāñī*, or instructions.

My spiritual master delivers the end of knowledge (*vedānta*), beginning with the etymological meaning of the word (*veda* and *anta*). He teaches the difference between matter and spirit and the controller of both. He enumerates the material elements that bind the living entity, and he gives the means to extricate oneself from material entanglement—*bhakti-yoga*. He delineates the different stages of devotional service, culminating in *kṛṣṇa-prema*, and provides us with protective guidelines for avoiding the pitfalls on the path.

My spiritual master teaches science (*vijñāna*). He humbly denies that he is a scientist and instead claims that his only qualification is that he has faith in the words of Kṛṣṇa, Vyāsadeva, and his spiritual master. But isn't Kṛṣṇa the greatest scientist? And isn't Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī a walking encyclopedia and renowned astronomer? My *gurudeva* learned science from them and passed on the same knowledge with his own added realizations. For example, on the strength of the *Bhagavad-gītā's* assertion *na jāyate mriyate vā*, "Neither it is created; neither it dies," His Divine Grace concluded that anyone proposing to create life from chemicals is a fool because the soul is not created, *na jāyate*. He also expressed doubt about the American moon

landing on the strength of the Vedic version, which states that the moon is a heavenly planet requiring great piety to attain.

My spiritual master is expert and humorous (*vidagdha*). Once in Melbourne he was speaking to Dr. Copeland, Professor of Modern Indian History, explaining to him the system of *paramparā* (disciplic succession). Śrīla Prabhupāda stressed that the real guru must present the same message that was passed down from the predecessor teachers, without adulteration. To illustrate his point and distinguish between real and false teachers, he said that he did not tell people, “Give me thirty-five dollars. I give you mantra, and within six months you become God.” The professor acknowledged the honesty and good humor as well. On another occasion, a devotee’s mother was complaining that Śrīla Prabhupāda did not teach his disciples mundane subjects. She argued that his movement should not just teach Sanskrit but should also teach Latin. In reply His Divine Grace commented to her, “Yes. It will be better. If you also join, then we’ll have full understanding.” The mother laughed and said, “You have a sense of humor.”

My spiritual master is a chivalrous hero (*vīra*). Who else leaves his home at age seventy to start a movement in a foreign country, with no money and no acquaintances on the other end? Once arriving he boldly told the young people of New York that they should renounce their prized drugs and illicit sex and instead worship Kṛṣṇa.

My spiritual master is my best friend (*suhṛt*). He doesn’t cheat me but always tells the truth. He continues to forgive my innumerable mistakes made minute by minute, and although my heart is as dirty as coal, he keeps trying to forge it into a diamond by the fire of his kindness.

I can never repay my debt to him, but at least I pledge to remain faithful to his mission and, for whatever it’s worth, engage myself in preaching his message in line with his last letter to me. He wrote:

Go on preaching with vigorous enthusiasm and increase your program for bringing new men to live in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. You yourself must be ideal in following the rules and regulations, rising early, and restricting eating and sleeping. The less a person is concerned with material enjoyment such as eating, sex and sleeping, the more he is spiritually advanced. If the “devotee” himself lives like a hog or dog, how can he preach?

Śrīla Prabhupāda kī jaya!

Dānavīr Goswami

Prabhaviṣṇu Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

During the past few years, and especially in the past year, it has been pleasing to see that the GBC has involved more and more senior devotees in the process of strategic planning for the future development of ISKCON.

Your Divine Grace planted the seeds of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in many, many countries. You established ISKCON and the BBT to help you water and nurture those seeds. As a result, many sincere souls were attracted to become your followers and disciples and assist you in further spreading Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement far and wide, especially by distributing your transcendental books and opening temples.

Now most of your disciples are approaching old age, and indeed some of those great souls have already departed. Just as you often remarked that you would not remain long on this planet, in the same way all your disciples will also eventually have to depart. You established the GBC to help you manage ISKCON and to take on the role of leadership of the society after your departure. Another important task of the GBC is to plan for the future, so that ISKCON will continue to function smoothly from generation to generation.

It is therefore very appropriate that a number of progressive and visionary senior devotees, some of whom are GBC members and some not, have been encouraging and pressing the GBC to give more and more attention to strategic planning for ISKCON's future. I must admit that I am not much of a visionary but rather just plod along trying to execute the vision and instructions of Your Divine Grace and the GBC. Nevertheless, I recognize the importance of the GBC's strategic planning initiative and wish it all success. I am quite sure that Your Divine Grace approves of and is pleased by this initiative. I sincerely pray that Your Divine Grace will bless this initiative and all the devotees involved in it, so that your ISKCON will continue to improve and expand more and more, as you so ardently desire.

I pray that I may continue to be of some small assistance to Your Divine Grace, the GBC, the devotees engaged in this initiative, and all the wonderful devotees of ISKCON.

Your insignificant servant,

Prabhaviṣṇu Swami

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne
namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracārīṇe
nirvīṣeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tārīṇe*

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S MYSTICAL POTENCIES

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

You can capture the hearts of those who come in contact with you, and not let them go.

You can maintain your devotees in all respects—simply by glancing at them with your merciful eyes—and grown-up men will say, “That is all we needed.”

You can correct us simply by lifting your brows—and we understand the message.

You can pierce through the thickest layers of attachments and illusions just by one sentence, such as “What do you do for eternity?” And the fortress of Māyā comes crumbling down.

You can extract from us all our time, energy, talents, and thoughts just by requesting us gently: “Please help me spread this movement.” And we are prepared to sacrifice our lives.

You can empower even the most ordinary person, just by being satisfied with his efforts to please you. And off he goes and performs miracles.

You can so easily give the highest levels of Kṛṣṇa consciousness by blessing and encouraging us: “Do as I have done.” And spiritual practitioners of various paths look at your followers with admiration.

You can speak the profoundest philosophy in a way that satisfies both simple people and great thinkers. And all praise your realizations.

You can utter the name of Kṛṣṇa in such a way that you deliver Kṛṣṇa. And we are simply ecstatic.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have so many other mystical potencies, such as your touchstonelike quality or the fact that you never actually die, etc., etc.

Today, Śrīla Prabhupāda, please, I beg you humbly, capture the wild mustang of my mind, maintain my spiritual vision, correct me as you see necessary. Take away my attachments and illusions, extract my every bit of energy . . . and give me Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am not a talented writer. All I wish to say is—I love

and trust you a hundred percent. I know that real love is shown in the fire of separation—but you are so kind that you have made that fire cool, if one simply remembers you.

May these simple words please you on your glorious appearance day, which brought the sun of your divine presence into my desperate life.

Your humble servant,

Śācīnandana Swami

Smita Kṛṣṇa Swami

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

On this auspicious anniversary of your appearance in this world, we are celebrating your Vyāsa-pūjā in what could be regarded as a remote corner of the world. Here the devotees are chanting and dancing and trying to serve in their different capacities. So for me, just now, it is not a remote corner of the world.

But you made your appearance in another part of the world, not far from Ekacakra and Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma. Your appearance carried the significance of those places. As a representative of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, you carried the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu all over the world. As a true *jagad-guru* you preached the message of uncompromised pure devotion to the lotus feet Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāma. You preached with a loving heart. That love captured us, as did the truth of your preaching. You taught us that we are not this body and that the material world is a place of misery, of repeated birth and death. You also showed us the way out of this dark place, the way to the spiritual world. You showed us how to get there and gave us a glimpse of what it is like there.

Gradually your legacy is spreading and taking root all over the world. It is my good fortune to be part of that movement, of your movement. I may be a small part in a remote corner, but hopefully a small part that counts in a place that matters.

I beg to remain your servant eternally.

Your disciple and aspiring servant,

Smita Kṛṣṇa Swami

Subhaga Swami

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

On this most auspicious appearance day we try to remember your glories, your life, and your instructions which are our guide to mould our life in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, as well as achieve perfection and go back to Godhead. Recently I had the opportunity to travel around the world and see what you have done. I can never dream of it. But you are my dearest father. You are the external manifestation of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Lord Nityānanda. Our goal is to go back to Godhead and associate with the Lord eternally, and towards achieving that goal I have seen what a wonderful arrangement you have made in this material world which is like a desert—you made an oasis, you visited many distant and dangerous places where there is anxiety and tension. Throughout the world you made small, small Vaikuṅṭhas, spiritual worlds where people can come and have a taste of life free from anxiety, full of bliss—experience unlimited bliss by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and associating with the wonderful devotees.

I had a long worldwide tour. I left India for South-East Asia, visiting Singapore, Malaysia and then Indonesia, especially Bali and different islands for preaching tours. In Bali, lots of people are coming to the Kṛṣṇa consciousness gatherings. They were enthusiastic—devotees who are all meek, humble and obedient.

After recuperating from a brain operation and taking permission from the doctor, I went to Australia to preach in different centers like Perth, Sydney, Govinda Valley, Brisbane, Melbourne and Canberra. It had been a long time—nearly ten years since I went to Australia for a preaching tour. A lot of new things are becoming manifest especially in Perth and Sydney. Preaching to those devotees was a very nice experience, especially in Perth which attracts a big crowd, with many enthusiastic devotees. On Sunday, a large number of devotees gathered in the huge temple hall. It is quite positive. And particularly in Brisbane's New Govardhan Farm, Ajita Prabhu is doing very well, distributing delicious *prasāda* through the *Govinda's* restaurant in the Gold Coast area.

ISKCON preaching is still going on in Fiji. Two girls, Guru-smaraṇa Devī Dāsī and Gīta-kīrti Devī Dāsī did something wonderful and exemplary: they have worked very, very hard, sacrificing their house, salary, collecting lots of money to build a huge temple. They invited me to come after 3-4 months for inauguration, and I was surprised to see what they are doing, I was amazed,

and I think others too can learn from them. From there I went to Hawaii where you used to stay for one month and translate *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The devotees are very nice and the presidents of the two temples, Vatsala Prabhu and Rāmānanda Prabhu, amazed me with their humility and hospitality. We have got so many jewels in our society, cultivated by you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I also saw Raghunātha, an old Vṛndāvana *gurukula* devotee who greeted me with a big smile.

While visiting mainland America, we learned that Hari-vilāsa Prabhu had constructed a big Vedic Cultural Center in Seattle which attracts a huge number of Indians to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In Spanish Fork, Cāru Prabhu and his good wife worked hard and made a magnificent, palatial temple overlooking a mountain. It reminds one of Vṛndāvana and the Kusuma-sarovara palace. It is exemplary. They hold festivals to attract local people especially the colorful Holi *utsava*. From there, we went to Sedona, a mystical mountainous area near the Grand Canyon where we have a small center started by Daśaratha Prabhu. Thereafter, we went to Phoenix and to Los Angeles. In Los Angeles we saw Deities established by you, Śrī Śrī Rukmiṇī-Dvārakādhiśa, New Dwarka Temple. We saw His Holiness Pahlādānanda Mahārāja, Bāsu Ghoṣa Prabhu and some other senior devotees there. We attended the Jagannātha Snāna-yātrā, attended by so many joyful devotees, congregational and life members. From there we went to Laguna Beach where you established very elegant Pañca-tattva Deities who are still there and are worshiped by the devotees.

We visited two centers in New York. The Bhakti Center is run by a devotee from Germany, Yajña-puruṣa Prabhu. He is doing wonderful preaching with young boys and following your instructions strictly by going on *saṅkīrtana*, street chanting. I wanted to join them, but I was unable to. I liked very much that they are following your instructions and I enjoyed their association in the temple by giving class for a couple of days. They invited me to come again and I look forward to going there again. I also visited the other temple where Rāmabhadra Prabhu is. From there, we went to Atlantic City on the East Coast where they held a Ratha-yātrā and I had the opportunity to meet His Holiness Jayādvaita Mahārāja and other godbrothers. It was a wonderful Ratha-yātrā festival. It is a place of sense gratification on the beach, but devotees are purifying the people by bringing Lord Jagannātha. Having Lord Jagannātha's auspicious visit and by His *darśana* people are getting purified. I thought maybe I can do a little service although I am good for nothing in book distribution, so I started distributing books and I enjoyed distributing to the tourists and the local people very much.

From there, we went to Towaco, New Jersey. We attended a few

house programs at New Jersey with many local devotees and congregational members.

From New Jersey we went to New Vrindavan near Pittsburg. You had a vision of building temples on the various hills like the Gosvāmīs did. We saw His Holiness Varṣāṇā Swami. From there we went to Atlanta and saw very beautiful Deities of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, Śrī Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā Devī, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madana-Mohana. Here devotees are running the temple nicely. Next was New Orleans, where we saw many devotees from Māyāpur. We also went to the nearby New Talavan farm community. The temple president Yogīndra-vandana Prabhu is trying to bring life to that ashram with big Jagannātha Deities. Dvibhuja Prabhu is making and promoting herbal medicines on the farm. Then we went to Dallas where we saw many devotees and wonderful Kalachandji. This is where you established a *gurukula* and said: “This will be the future of ISKCON.” So from there, I went to Houston, where a big new temple in Indian architectural style is coming up. Then we went to Miami, there we found some of your old disciples, they are trying to follow Kṛṣṇa consciousness, encouraging devotees with their mercy. We met Viśāla Prabhu who distributes magazines and books even in Vṛndāvana, and saw Oṃkāra Prabhu and other senior devotees there.

From there, we went to South America, Trinidad, and also visited Guyana where your disciple, our GBC Vīrabāhu Prabhu invited me. I found four temples and visited two of them and saw that your granddisciples are very joyful. They invited me to come again so I look forward to returning there and other places too. From there we went to Panama. Panama temple may be small but devotees’ hearts are very big. They always welcome the devotees and treat them very nicely.

We came back to Alachua via Orlando for the appearance celebration of Śrī Balarāma. It was wonderful, so many devotees were there. I had your blessings to associate with your senior disciples like Acyutānanda and Puṣkara Prabhus who are very nice Vaiṣṇavas—very hospitable and following your instructions. In Orlando I found my senior godbrother His Holiness Trivikrama Mahārāja. From there we went to Zurich, Switzerland, and had the association of His Holiness Kavicandra Mahārāja and Rohiṇī-suta Prabhu. The temple is run very nicely. Devotees are wonderful, and I had their association by preaching to them. There are two temples—one at Zurich and another new temple at Langenthal. From there we went to Dubai, which is named Damodar Desh by His Holiness Jayapatākā Swami Mahārāja and the wonderful devotees.

On Janmāṣṭamī, nearly 25,000 people gathered for the *paṇḍāl* program at the Krishna Balaram Farm, Mauritius. I visited three or four temples there, and

everywhere there was a large gathering of devotees. By your mercy, through your teachings, by the association of the senior devotees, I felt fortunate. Through them I associate with you also and remember your teachings and I hope it goes on increasing.

From there, I came back to Italy, Medolago, where our godbrother Madhusevita Prabhu has a very important role as a GBC in the temple. The temple is now built so tastefully and nicely decorated. Devotees are everywhere, wonderfully preaching, and especially the *saṅkīrtana* devotees are endeavoring with new vigor and enthusiasm. We attended the Ratha-yātrā and the festival of Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī. In Milano, where we did street *saṅkīrtana*, people are very receptive, they encourage and like the devotees. These are all your glories, Prabhupāda, and we are simply trying to become your sincere servants to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness. From there, we visited other centers such as Villa Vrindavan and Bologna. We also tried to do *saṅkīrtana* there.

From Italy, we went to a few other countries like Slovenia, Hungary, and Croatia. Ljubljana, Karlovac and Zagreb remind me of my early days when we tried to follow whatever you said: we used to get up early in the morning, take bath, go to chant and dance on the streets, distributing books and *prasāda*. Devotees are wonderful and people like to see devotees' joyful and bright faces, their chanting and dancing. From there, I went to Hungary where Śivarāma Mahārāja, our godbrother, has made a wonderful, beautifully decorated temple which reminds one of Vṛndāvana. Mahārāja also gave me nice facilities. I was fortunate to have the association of many of my godbrothers who are doing wonderful services in different parts of the world, like Girirāja Mahārāja, Devāmṛta Mahārāja, Keśava Bhārati Mahārāja, Nirañjana Mahārāja and of course Śivarāma Mahārāja. He is making a village of Kṛṣṇa consciousness called New Vraja Dham, and people from the United Nations as well as Indian government officials come there, along with students from European universities to learn simple living and high thinking, how to preserve fruits and vegetables, how to run a *gośālā*.

In Spain, there is a nice temple in Malaga and they celebrate the Ratha-yātrā festival. The Madrid temple and New Vraj Mandal Dham Farm in Spain are nice. The devotees are wonderful, there is a beautiful *gośālā*, with wonderful cows which remind everybody to follow your instructions of *kṛṣi go-rakṣya*—cultivation of land and cow protection—to the best of their capacity. So from there we also visited Rotterdam where ISKCON has a centre with many congregational members. We had programs in their houses, and the devotees invited us to come again. From there, we went to Amsterdam, where one of our old godbrothers, Dhanañjaya Prabhu, is running the temple.

We had a Sunday program in Den Haag—a small center with many devotees, this is by your mercy. From there, we went to Radhadesh which is like a *château*, very big and hundreds of years old. We have an ideal college for our devotees and many teachers, so that they confer degrees in *bhakti*. We visited Cologne, Germany, and then Iran. Devotees are very hospitable in Iran although it is very difficult to preach there because of governmental restrictions. But nevertheless, for Kṛṣṇa's sake devotees take great risks to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am very fallen. I am not in a position to glorify you properly, but our *mahājana* Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura says:

adhama janāra bandhu, lokanātha lokera jīvana

I am very fallen. I cannot estimate your glories. But at least I can say, *ebe yaśa ghuṣuk tribhuvana*. Your glories know no bounds. Let them spread around the three worlds unlimitedly.

*Thank you very much.
Your fallen servant,*

Subhaga Swami

Guṇagrāhī Dāsa Goswami

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Our deep feelings of gratitude always form the basis of our offerings to Your Divine Grace on this glorious day of your appearance. Such feelings came to me in a unique and wonderful way this year. Just as I was preparing to compose my homage, an old friend from high school called to say that he had emailed me a beautiful poem he had come upon and to assure me I would love reading it. Although my time was short and I really needed to begin writing my offering, my curiosity and love for poetry finally got the best of me. So I decided to take a few minutes and give the poem a read. As it turned out, the impression it had on me was overwhelming, touching my heart to the very core. Reminding me of you, it was just the inspiration I needed for writing this offering. I submit the poem to you now, hoping that it will please you:

“THE TOUCH OF THE MASTER’S HAND”

’Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer
Thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste much time on the old violin,
But he held it up with a smile.
“What am I bidden, good folks,” he cried,
“Who’ll start the bidding for me?”
“One dollar, one dollar. Do I hear two?
Two dollars, and who’ll make it three?”
“Three dollars, once; three dollars, twice;
Going for three . . . ” But no,
From the room, far back, a grey-haired man
Came forward and picked up the bow;
Then wiping the dust from the old violin,
And tightening up the strings,
He played a melody pure and sweet,
As sweet as an angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,
 With a voice that was quiet and low,
 Said, "Now what's the bid for the old violin?"
 And he held it up with the bow.
 "One thousand, one thousand. Do I hear two?
 Two thousand. Who'll make it three?
 Three thousand once, three thousand twice,
 Going and gone," said he.
 The people cheered, but some of them cried,
 "We do not quite understand.
 What changed its worth?" Swift came the reply:
 "The touch of the Master's hand."
 And many a man with life out of tune,
 And battered and scarred with sin,
 Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd,
 Much like the old violin.
 A "mess of pottage," a glass of wine,
 A game—and he travels on.
 He is "going" once, and "going" twice,
 He's "going" and almost "gone."
 But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd
 Never can quite understand
 The worth of a soul and the change that is wrought
 By the touch of the Master's hand.*

How perfectly this poem describes the deep transformation your love and kindness have brought to us doomed and forgotten souls.

How perfectly you served as our Master by seeking us out, picking us up, cleaning us off, polishing us up, and making us dance as your puppets in the mission of Lord Caitanya.

How profusely we must thank you for the miracle you performed.

Everything we have ever done, are doing, and will do as your servants is a result of your divine intervention in lives otherwise doomed to failure and suffering.

When I see emptiness in the godless souls whom I have known for years, and when I feel the loneliness and despair that continue to grow in their hearts as their days come to an end, I marvel at my great fortune and give thanks to you again and again and again. Somehow you have chosen to pluck this undeserving soul out of the ocean of misery and give me your eternal shelter.

I pray that my appreciation for you grows with every day and that I never tire of making it known that I have truly been blessed by the Touch of My Master's Hand.

Your most grateful servant,

Guṇagrāhi Dāsa Goswami

*Myra Brooks Welch, "The Touch of the Master's Hand"

Kavicandra Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my obeisances. All glories to you.

Daily I try to glorify you and develop gratitude toward you, yet every year when the time comes for writing your Vyāsa-pūjā offering, I cannot get started. I am like a crow trying to follow a swan.

You became especially dear to your guru with the beautiful poem you wrote for his 1936 Vyāsa-pūjā. An excerpt:

Message of service

Thou hast brought,
A healthful life
As Caitanya wrought.
Unknown to all,
It's full of brace.
That's your gift,
Your Divine Grace.
Absolute is sentient
Thou hast proved.
Impersonal calamity
Thou hast removed.
This gives us a life,
Anew and fresh.
Worship thy feet,
Your Divine Grace.

Your unique ability to express the highest spiritual truths in such simple language is a special gift for us dull-brained fallen souls of the Age of Kali. Your books reach out to everyone. The simplicity of your use of language satisfies everyone, from university professors to half-educated fools like me.

And your humility is a special *śakti*, melting the hearts of anyone who contacts you.

Our presenting this matter in adequate language, especially a foreign language, will certainly fail, and there will be so many literary discrepancies despite our honest attempt to present it in the proper way. But we are sure that with all our faults in this connection the seriousness of the subject matter will be taken into consideration, and the leaders of society will still

accept this due to its being an honest attempt to glorify the Almighty God.
(*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.11, purport)

I will report just a few of the fields in which your followers are progressing under your divine guidance.

The most wonderful thing is that, by the intense devotion of your Ambarīṣa Dāsa, construction of the *adbhuta-mandira* in Śrīdhām Māyāpur is going on wonderfully. Whenever I see it I feel that you are very happy about this.

Last year saw a great increase in the distribution of your books. And so many books are being published in so many languages.

I was present when you spoke the following:

So kindly help me. This is my request. Print as many books in as many languages and distribute throughout the whole world. Then Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will automatically increase.

(Arrival address, Los Angeles, 20 June 1975)

So many of your disciples and granddisciples are working to fulfill this order. I have to especially note His Holiness Gopāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami and our Minister of Book Distribution, His Grace Vijaya Prabhu.

There are so many Jagannātha Ratha-yātrās all over the planet. We just had our first one in Phuket, Thailand. We thank you for inspiring us to put on this all-attractive festival.

I can only pray that I will be able to always remain in the association of your followers and that I will be able to accept their kind attempts to engage me in your service.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Your aspiring servant,

Kavicandra Swami

Bir Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

You taught us that there are two types of service to the spiritual master: *vapuḥ-sevā* (service to the form of the spiritual master) and *vāñī-sevā* (service to the words of the spiritual master).

You instructed us that our love for you would be demonstrated by our cooperating with each other. Cooperation requires common interests and a common goal. Our common interest should be to please you, and our common goal should be to expand and maintain your society, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

When we speak of expanding and maintaining your society, we are not simply speaking in numerical terms, i.e., numbers of devotees, temples, etc. We must be cognizant of quality—that is, quality of devotion and the dedication of the members of the society.

Quality of devotion, dedication, and unity of purpose can be achieved only by *vāñī-sevā*. Therefore it is essential for the members of ISKCON to become absorbed in your words by regularly reading your books.

When I joined your society in 1971, the devotees were enthusiastic to read your books continually. Indeed, we could even say that they were hungry for your books, devouring the transcendental words therein. We would regularly engage in sharing whatever we had read with the other devotees. There was always excitement in the air due to this. The mood was one of spiritual exploration, with you as our guide.

As I travel in the course of my service to you, I encourage and exhort the devotees to dive into the transcendental ocean you have given us in the form of your books. Modern media may vie for our attention, like the siren's song, or we may be inclined in other ways, but we should utilize our intelligence to refocus our attention on your words.

I pray that the devotees realize the treasure in your books, and that you give me the intelligence to increase the devotees' enthusiasm for taking shelter of your words. I am convinced that this will ensure your pleasure and our success.

I remain your eternal servant, praying to always remain at your lotus feet.

Bir Krishna Dāsa Goswami

Gaṇapati Dāsa Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

This year I had the fortune to read *Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava*, authored by your disciple Bhakti Vikāsa Swami. From its study, enhanced with reflection upon your life and instructions, I was graced with some important realizations. Overall, I have managed to more fully appreciate your Guru Mahārāja's influence on your preaching content and style. Specifically, I would like to place the following before you for your confirmation (please view relevant quotations below):

1. Driven by a mood of selfless compassion¹ and highlighted by a display of extreme generosity, both Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura and Your Divine Self were willing to use all available resources and techniques (*yukta-vairāgya*) to proffer the message of Godhead to the world.² At the same time, you both took care that that message was never diluted or compromised in the slightest degree.³ In this way, you displayed

1 "Let our bodies, which are like those of aged oxen, be offered into the *saṅkīrtana-yajña* of Lord Caitanya and His associates." (Last address)

"I wish that every selfless tenderhearted member of the Gauḍīya Maṭha be prepared to shed two hundred gallons of blood for the nourishment of the spiritual body of every individual in human society." (*Gauḍīya*)

2 *Āsakti-rahita sambandha sahita/viṣaya-samūha sakali mād̥hava*: "All sense objects which are used without personal attachment and in relation to Kṛṣṇa are nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa."

Śrī-hari sevaya yāhā anukūla/viṣaya baliyā tyāge haya bhūla "It is a mistake to reject anything suitable for serving Kṛṣṇa, considering it an object of sense gratification." (*Vaiṣṇava Ke?*)

3 "Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura was not for sectarian coexistence, conciliation, or syncretism. His sole means for bridging the abyss between others and himself was to exhort them to come to his side. He spoke against mushy tolerance of nonsensical ideas in the name of ecumenism, which he anyway took as a nebulous and impossible dream, unless people were prepared to forswear miscellaneous rubrics of cheating religion and simply surrender to Kṛṣṇa...

"Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī dubbed as 'pseudo-latitudearianism' the impersonalistic attempt to obfuscate or make light of meaningful differences, such as those between genuine and watered-down dharma, and considered it to be based on what he termed *cit-jaḍa-samanvaya-vāda* (trying to conflate material with spiritual), which he compared with the endeavor to inosculate gold and stone." (SBV, vol.1, p.139)

"The loyal servant of the Absolute Truth is required to be the active opponent of all violent enemies of truth. It is his imperative duty to protest against the violence of nontheists in uncompromising terms and take all consequences of such protest. . . . One who does not perform these imperative duties commits a grave offense against the truth." (*Harmonist*)

absolutely no leniency toward the distortion of truth while employing sometimes shocking innovations to spread the truth.⁴

2. The preacher is first and foremost a servant of truth—Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Person—represented in the form of Śrī Guru. It is because of his steadfast submission to this service that he becomes a benefactor and well-wisher of other entities. If he independently considers himself to be “the friend and well-wisher of all living entities,” he is subtly usurping the position that Lord Kṛṣṇa reserves for Himself in the *Bhagavad-gītā*.⁵ We are warned, “First *Mādhava-seva*, then *mānava-seva*.”

4 “I decided all these things thousands of births ago. We have to do anything and everything for serving Mahāprabhu (including supplying meat to the Bengali governor and providing cigarettes for a German scholar).”

“Don’t scrimp or go in a poor or lowly manner. Keep a high standard. Spend for preaching and make an impression.”

5 “Everyone is eager for adoration by others, not for the absolute truth. Those who make a show of being preachers do not disturb mankind, but rather maintain everyone’s present mentality while busily protecting their own existence. Therefore there is no propagation of the truth, since one’s popularity is not served by speaking or hearing the truth.” (*Gauḍīya*)

“Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī appreciated daring disciples who took risks in preaching and did not hedge or compromise. He referred to conciliators as ‘good-for-nothings,’ or in Bengali, *ṣaṅḍer gobar* (bull’s dung), a disparaging term meaning ‘useless person.’ He cautioned his disciples that ‘a flatterer can neither be a guru nor a preacher,’ and told them, ‘Don’t speak to please the *janatā* (people in general), but to please Janārdana (Kṛṣṇa). Declare that those who do not perform *hari-bhajana* are foolish and butchers of their own souls. The public may not like our message, yet it is incumbent upon us to state the truth. It is our responsibility to strongly refute ideologies opposed to Vaiṣṇava dharma. Our precious *ācāryas* did so to a great degree, and our only duty is to follow in their footsteps.” (SBV, vol.1, p.141)

“The *sādhū* stands there to kill those (sensuous) desires (of men) by the merciful stroke of the keen edge of the sacrificial knife in the form of unpleasant language. If the *sādhū* turns into my flatterer, then he does me harm; he becomes my enemy. If he flatters us, we will be led to the road which brings worldly enjoyment but no factual well-being.” (*Harmonist*)

“I don’t make any compromise with these rascals. No words. No, no. I never made that. Even if I don’t get any disciples, I’ll be satisfied. But I can’t make any compromise like these rascals. I cannot make. *Ekaś candras tamo hanti na ca tāra sahasraśaḥ*. If I create one moon, that is sufficient. I don’t want many stars. That was my Guru Mahārāja’s principle, and that is my principle. What is the use of having number of fools and rascals? If one man understands rightly, he can deliver the whole world.” (SP Walk, Bombay, 1974)

3. Although it is a great loss that someone, due to immature presentation of Gauḍīya *siddhānta*, leaves our association disgusted, it is even a greater loss that a sincere seeker misses the opportunity of hearing the truth due to our unwillingness (because of laziness, or in order to maintain a popular image) to disseminate the transcendental message.⁶

I pray to maintain my position of being enlivened and corrected by Your Divine Grace as you see fit.

Your fallen servant,

Gaṇapati dāsa Swami

“They are now feeling the pressure of the opposite party. So fight is fight. When there is fight, my Guru Mahārāja used to say, ‘Some of our soldiers will die. It doesn’t matter.’ You don’t expect that not a single soldier of your party will not die. No, some of them will die. Still fight must go on. Fight cannot be stopped. So fight like brave soldiers, Kṛṣṇa will help you. Don’t make any compromise. No truce with these demons. Fight must be.” (SP Talk, Bhuvanesvara, 1977)

6 “He explained that *jīva-hirṣā* (violence to or envy of *jīvas*) included not only the conventional definition of killing, disturbing, or causing trouble to all categories of *jīva*, but more importantly consisted of apathy or miserliness toward preaching *śuddha-bhakti*, or in encouraging *Māyāvādis*, *karmīs*, or *anyābhilāṣīs*, or speaking in a manner sympathetic to and accommodating of their outlook.” (SBV, vol.1, p.148)

“Millions of materially motivated speakers will go to hell, but someday someone will realize the independent truth spoken forthrightly and be saved. It may take hundreds of lives or millions of years before someone will be able to comprehend this confidential reality. It is not possible to make even one individual do so without spending hundreds of gallons of blood.” (*Śrīla Prabhupādera Upadeśāmṛta*)

“He would often declare, ‘Even at the expense of all these properties, temples, and Maṭhas, if I could assist even one soul in becoming a pure devotee, my mission would be fulfilled.’

“Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī avowed that even if the whole world were against him, or if not a single individual were to stay with him, or if those who made a pretense of surrendering to him were to leave, still, under the protection of his gurudeva’s lotus feet, he would fearlessly and unceasingly preach the unadulterated truth until the last moment he remained in this world; and if some day that truth were to enter the ear of even one fortunate soul, then through that lone person the entire universe would attain the topmost benefit.” (SBV, vol.1, p.153)

Janānanda Goswami

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

I offer my humble obeisances to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is the most dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa on this earth because he has taken complete shelter at the Lord's lotus feet.

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

I offer my humble obeisances to you, O spiritual master, servant of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanya and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I have just spent three weeks in Christchurch, New Zealand. The city was hit by a devastating earthquake just before I arrived. I have come here, Śrīla Prabhupāda, hopefully at your behest, to be with your devotees, who have lost their temple and the manifested form of your and their beloved Śrī Śrī Nitāi-Gauracandra. Amazingly enough, no devotees were seriously injured. Your *mūrti* form also remained unscathed in the midst of falling plaster, wood, and glass.

Everything you speak about becomes so alive when I see the situation here. Many ask why the temple and Deities have been destroyed. There may be many ways of addressing that question, but I would like to share what you said that very morning of the quake in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class, right here in Christchurch. Karuṇikā Mātāji was reading a very profound purport—to text 5 of the Sixth Canto's nineteenth chapter—explaining the Lord's pleasure at being dependent on his devotees:

Sometimes He (Kṛṣṇa) tells His devotee in a dream that His temple and His garden are now very old and that He cannot enjoy them nicely. Thus He requests the devotee to repair them. Sometimes He is buried in the earth, and as if unable to come out Himself, He requests His devotee to rescue Him. Sometimes He requests His devotee to preach His glories the world over, although He is quite competent to perform this task.

It seems that the Lord has answered the question Himself through you. And that is always the case. How much do I have to learn before I realize this? A few days before the quake, thirteen-year-old Varṣāṇā, granddaughter of the head *pūjārī*, had a dream. Here is some of it, in her own words:

A large group of devotees were having a sit-down *kīrtana* in the temple room. It was very sweet and melodious.

All of a sudden Lord Caitanya gave a small wave to the devotees with His right hand. All the devotees continued the *kīrtana* but were looking at each other in amazement at what they had just seen! Then the devotees jumped up and started a roaring, fantastic *kīrtana*. There was lots of dancing and chanting, and tears filled the devotees' eyes when they saw that both Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda started dancing where they were standing! The Lords had left the altar and come down to the marble floor where the devotees were dancing and chanting and were enthusing the devotees to keep going.

After the *kīrtana* had finished, the Lords told some of the devotees to go on *harināma*. Though They didn't exactly speak, the devotees just somehow knew. I was one of the *harināma* people who were told to spread the holy name. We went through the conservatory, out the sliding door, and into the car park.

The message again seems clear and obvious: the primary pleasure of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi is to see the devotees spreading the holy names on *nagara-saṅkīrtana*.

The very old temple and garden mentioned in your above-quoted purport could certainly be taken literally, but the words could also indicate your larger Society in the form of communities, farms, self-sufficiency, simple living and high thinking, and unity in diversity, what to speak of the unlimited other manifestations of the burgeoning International Society for Krishna Consciousness. I have just come from the hospital, where I visited a critically sick mother of a devotee. The motto of the ward is "unity with diversity." Is this not one of our greatest challenges, as per your own indication to our GBC? "With all GBC and senior men present, we should discuss how to make unity in diversity." (letter to Kīrtanānanda Swami, 18 October 1973)

I see so many devotees with so much talent and initiative in all areas. What is preventing all this power from being unleashed? Is it our lack of purity or boldness? Is it our lack of faith in your instructions or lack of dependence on you? Is it false prestige, envy, or some other enemy? Maybe it is merely time

separating, as you once said. Perhaps next year, as many predict, there will be a real earth-shaker. Is that what is required before we realize this world as it is?

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I have so many dreams, as no doubt many others have. I hope I can be an instrument in developing them, at least to some extent. I dream of a community based upon simple living and high thinking and self-sufficiency. I dream of centers with devotees going out chanting the holy names from morning till night. I dream of devotees maturely cooperating, playing their natural parts. I dream of *kīrtana* with friends and enemies dancing together in ecstasy. I dream of a community where devotees can reveal their minds to each other without bigotry or fear of being judged.

I dream of a community of devotees truly caring for each and every one of its members, and not just theorizing about it. I dream of a society which is not managed from the temple but which expands way beyond the walls of the *mandira*, into every sphere of life in this world. I dream of a society with mature brahminical leadership guiding and inspiring all classes of people to make offerings to Kṛṣṇa. I dream of a society wherein there is more and more opportunity to hear and chant about Kṛṣṇa in every spot. Where there are temples everywhere, restaurants in every suburb, Kṛṣṇa conscious businesses. I dream of “the house for the whole world to live in” which you have built.

Is this all a dream? Or will it come to reality? But the truth is, I myself am fraught with faults, and if anyone has the disease of being self-centered and a poor co-operator, it is I. Only when your great desire for us to co-operate is fulfilled will we see this movement progress. For sure, without that none of these dreams or any other dreams will become realities. I searched “dream” in the VedaBase, and here are the first five statements of yours which I come across.

Actually it is my dream to have such a perfect community established fully in Krishna Consciousness so that the people of your country may have a right example what is the natural way of life or pure spiritual living. (Letter to Stan, 17 November 1970)

Prabhupāda: So this was my dream, that a place should be there where we can get all nice foods, best foods, of milk. Kṛṣṇa is fulfilling our desire. Everything’s there. Simply these rascals they do not know how to live or to eat. Everything there. Intelligence is there, everything is there. Simply for want of training they have become rogues. Make them human beings, your countrymen. (Conversation in airport and car, Toronto, 21 June 1976)

Prabhupāda: Yes. Now arrange for big festival. There is a program, Manipur. I want to start in that small state *varṇāśrama* idea. That is my dream. Small state it can be done, *brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya* . . . (Room Conversation, Māyāpur, 14 February 1977)

Prabhupāda: No. Give and take. (break) You are fulfilling my dream, New Vṛndāvana. I dreamt all these things. Wonderful things have been done. (Room Conversation, Vṛndāvana, 6 October 1977)

By Krishna’s Grace, everything is gradually coming to the fulfillment of my dream. The Sankirtana party is walking in the streets and is getting good response, from the public. They are selling Back To Godhead nicely, and getting good sympathy from the public by considerable collections. We are not after collecting money, but when people offer something out of love and sympathy for our mission, it becomes a great asset. I am sure if you all my beloved disciples combined together try to preach Krishna Consciousness in this spirit, Krishna will give the necessary strength. (Letter to Satsvarūpa Dasa, 28 September 1968)

I dream of being a simple, menial servant at your lotus feet, to act at your beck and call in whatever capacity pleases you. I dream of the day I will actually realize the truth of you and what you have given us. I dream of the day I will take Kṛṣṇa consciousness seriously and take full shelter of your lotus feet. I dream of being a “pure devotee,” of being a suitable medium for you to work through to spread the holy names.

I may be a dreamer, but unfortunately I am not sincere in my service to you. I know I like to take credit. I know I have little love for you. I am at best a shadow devotee. I have no taste for selfless service and see myself having a duplicitous attitude. Śrīla Prabhupāda, such a rotten person as myself is only here by your causeless mercy. But at least this gives me heart: if I can be here, maintained by your causeless mercy alone, then everyone is eligible to be here. I get an inkling of the meaning of a house for the whole world to live in.

Will these thoughts remain dreams or mere words to espouse once a year, or will they become reality? Will I wake up? Please kick me, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and give me the intelligence to accept that the kick is coming from you and is your mercy.

My relationship with you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is always one of service, be it short of the mark or on the mark, and I hope it always will be. I do not feel as close to your *vapuḥ* as many do. Thank you for allowing me to remain in

the association of your *vāṇī*. Please, please keep me there always, and may I be an instrument of yours to help whomever I may meet come closer to your *vāṇī*. I feel completely incapable on my own.

I fall at your lotus feet, crying and crying and begging and begging for your mercy. If my dreams are pleasing to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, then I pray they may become realities, no matter what the price. May the earth quake, the buildings shake, and the body break, but I pray I will never leave your lotus feet.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your servant,

Janānanda Gosvami

Lokanātha Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

This year marks the 40th anniversary of my first meeting with you. Although years have passed, my memories of that moment are vivid. It is through this lens that I assemble my thoughts on your Vyāsa-pūjā.

I can still see myself in 1971, a mere youth of twenty-two years, having come to Bombay a year before. I had left the rustic village of my birth, with its rolling hills, sprawling grape fields, buffaloes, and cows, to attend college in a bustling city. As I walked through the busy streets one morning, I came across some freshly posted, striking advertisements for the Hare Krishna pandal program. There were giant eye-catching posters on the walls, and colorful banners and buntings were strung across the streets. The posters announced an upcoming eleven-day event: “Bhāgavata Dharma Discourses—A Hare Krishna Festival—March 25 to April 4, 1971.”

The fact that American and European sādhus would be featured at the festival was given prominence. This created a different ambience for the people of Bombay, for whom this phenomenon was sensational. I shared their exhilaration and excitement, since the conjunction of “American” with “sādhu” was barely imaginable. We had always taken it for granted that sādhus came from Haridwar, Vārāṇasī, Vṛndāvana, Purī, or some other holy place in India, not from overseas, and certainly not from America or Europe!

I learned that Your Divine Grace had arrived in Bombay on the 24th of February and had then shared with your followers in town your plans to hold a huge Hare Kṛṣṇa festival. This, you thought, would be a perfect way to link American ingenuity with Indian spirituality. Śyāmasundara Dāsa had organized the massive publicity campaign, which resembled that for a large-scale public event in America. Two days before the festival, a huge billboard displaying the words “Hare Krishna” in giant letters was set up at the busiest intersection in the city. A colossal helium-filled balloon attached to a long rope soared high over the Cross Maidan site, where the festival was to be held. It hovered over the city. There was a streamer attached to the balloon, saying “Hare Krishna Festival.” This was real American ingenuity, announcing the festival for several miles around and successfully creating an anticipatory mood for the event. Like the rest of the people in Bombay, I was intrigued. Something inexplicable was drawing me to the event, from within and without. Driven by this compelling feeling, I found myself attending the entire festival from the first night to the last.

My first experience of you, my dear Prabhupāda, was through your pictures, which the devotees had posted all around Bombay. Your portrait was ubiquitous: on the banners that hung from trucks and buses, and on posters stuck on billboards on practically every Bombay street corner. The crowds were so large at the pandal that I was unable to meet you or even get close enough to see you clearly. But I did get a close look at your portrait.

On the stage, within a stunning, golden-domed altar, stood the Deities of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, enshrined by exquisite floral decor. In the center was a large red *vyāsāsana*, on which you sat. This was covered by a decorated canopy. The stage was also adorned with a display of your books. The elevated and spacious pandal, constructed to hold more than twenty thousand people, was lined with fluorescent bulbs, and the stage glowed with colorful flashing fairy lights to create a spiritual paradise.

At the entrance I glanced at the book table, on which *Back to Godhead* magazines and many books were set up for sale. The books on display were of excellent quality, having been printed in Japan at the Dai Nippon Press. The display attracted tremendous attention from the visitors, including me, for whom this was the first experience with such a collection of literary work. Alongside the book table was a long serving counter where hundreds, sometimes thousands, of people would queue up to receive their free *halavā prasādam* from leaf cups.

On stage the Western devotees performed *kīrtana*. I was deeply moved by their alluring performance. I watched them dance, their shaven heads swaying, totally absorbed in the moment, their bodies glistening with perspiration from their energetic movements in time with the melodic chanting. They were in their own world, seemingly unaware of the presence of the thousands who watched them. I loved them spontaneously. It was not just their attire, which resembled that worn by sādhus. I found them genuine, and the *kīrtana* they were performing was not a shallow performance but an expression of their real inner emotions.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you lectured every evening to the Bombay gentlemen and their well-groomed wives. You addressed the audience with conviction:

Because *Bhagavad-gītā* was not properly presented, although for the last two hundred or more years *Bhagavad-gītā* is widely read all over the world, yet there is not a single *bhakta*. But since *Bhagavad-gītā* is being presented as it is, within four years there are hundreds of thousands of *kṛṣṇa-bhaktas*.

Madhudviṣa Prabhu recalls that when you preached to the crowds you would

persuasively tell them, “I am just one Indian and you are millions of Indians. If we all join together, just see how much work we can do.”

On the evening of March 29th an initiation ceremony was held. The crowd responded with much merriment when you awarded each devotee his or her new name. There was further excitement when a *yajña* was performed to consecrate the marriage ceremony of Vegavān Dāsa and Padmāvati Dāsī, from Sweden and Australia respectively. You jovially exclaimed that this was the real United Nations. This statement met with much applause from the audience. Recently Madhudviṣa reminisced on this moment:

There was one devotee there, Himavati—she was as American as the rest of us, but her parents were from Russia, so Prabhupāda would say, “Here is our Russian lady,” and she would stand up.

It was not unusual for you to call upon your different disciples to address the audience.

On the final evening of the festival, the devotees carried the Deities of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in a palanquin to the Girgaun Chowpatty seaside. I walked for many miles behind the beautifully decorated palanquin, mesmerized by the events of the past days. When we arrived at Chowpatty, you addressed the thousands in attendance. When you talked about the Vaikuṅṭhalokas I was amazed, since this was the first time I had ever heard of Vaikuṅṭha, the spiritual sky. You implored us all to go back to Vaikuṅṭha, back to Godhead. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you spoke about the spiritual world with such certainty and fervor that I immediately understood you were not simply quoting scripture in a trivial way. I realized that you personally knew the spiritual world and that you had come from that divine abode to facilitate our journey back to that sacred world. The next day, the Indian Express reported: “Fitting Finale to Hare Kṛṣṇa Festival.”

At that time I couldn’t imagine I would end up joining these Hare Kṛṣṇa sādhus. All that I understood was that I was very attracted to them. Their singing and dancing had immense appeal. Actually, I liked everything about these charismatic sādhus. I could not speak with any of them, so I simply watched and listened. I knew English, but I was not sufficiently fluent and had difficulty communicating with foreigners. Apparently there was a notice stating that anyone who wished to see Śrīla Prabhupāda for *darśana* could do so, but unfortunately I did not see that notice.

I had a burning ambition to dedicate my life to serving humanity, but I was clueless about where to begin, especially since I did not have any resources. You mercifully saved me from the dilemma by guiding me onto the right path at that 1971 pandal. During one of your lectures you quoted a verse from

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.31.14):

*yathā taror mūla-niṣecanena
tṛpyanti tat-skandha-bhujopasākhāḥ
prāṇopahārāc ca yathendriyāṇāṁ
tathaiva sarvārhaṇam acyutejyā*

“As pouring water on the root of a tree energizes the trunk, branches, twigs and everything else, and as supplying food to the stomach enlivens the senses and limbs of the body, simply worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead through devotional service automatically satisfies all living entities, who are parts of that Supreme Personality.”

Hearing that poignant verse changed my life forever. I understood at that moment that there was no turning back, and I made up my mind to dedicate my life to serving the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

I walked away filled with deep and profound impressions and carried the *Back to Godhead* Magazines, two small books, and a *japa-mālā* with me. Although I was drawn to the *Kṛṣṇa* book, I could not afford to buy it.

By your mercy, for the past forty years I have been committed to chanting the holy name and reading your books. With heart and soul I have taken up the mission you gave me, viz., to practice and propagate Kṛṣṇa consciousness. On this blessed day I thank you for the gift of revolutionizing my consciousness. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving me real, eternal life. I am ceaselessly grateful to you and pray for your continued mercy upon me.

Your servant,

Lokanātha Swami

R.G. Bhakti Prapanna Parvata Mahārāja

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my obeisances unto the dust of your divine lotuslike feet, in this auspicious celebration of your appearance day, Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā *tithi*.

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

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

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāñī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Śrīla Prabhupāda, it is only by your mercy that I am still trying for the divine *guru-sevā*, *vaiṣṇava-sevā*, Śrī Nityānanda *sevā* and Śrī Caitanya *sevā* and Śrī Kṛṣṇa *sevā*. There is one desire to please you in any way that we can. We would like to describe the activities of Your Divine Grace in Mexico City, 1972, thirty-nine years ago.

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA IMPACTS MEXICO

THE KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS MOVEMENT COMES TO MEXICO CITY IN ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S OWN WORDS

With the help of his disciples, Śrīla Prabhupāda opened temples in different parts of the world. But up until then, the great Spanish speaking population of Latin America had remained untouched. Knowing this, Candrāvali Devī Dāsī who lived in the San Francisco temple wrote to Śrīla Prabhupāda a letter expressing her desire to go to Mexico and start a temple there. Śrīla Prabhupāda answered her in a letter:

“Regarding your opening a center in Mexico, I think that if some other *brahmacāriṇīs* are available to go along with you that there will be no objection to this idea. However, where shall these *brahmacāriṇīs* come from?”

With a lack of qualified Spanish speaking female devotees to help Candrāvali

Devī Dāsī in such a mission, Śrīla Prabhupāda considered that the moment was not adequate. It was against practical Kṛṣṇa conscious norms that a single female go preaching, unaccompanied, to distant places:

“For the time being, I think you may concentrate upon improving the temple already established in San Francisco.” (Letter 28.11.68)

Later on, Candrāvalī Devī Dāsī wrote to Śrīla Prabhupāda to tell him about her marriage. His Divine Grace was very pleased and gave her his blessings so that her desire to preach in Mexico could come to life:

“I am so glad to learn that you are going to be married with Citsukhānanda on Sunday, 11th January, at the Radha-Krishna temple. I like this marriage ceremony because it has given practical proof of my ideas that boys and girls of this country better be married and engaged in preaching work.”

“Similarly, when you are married, as it was discussed in Los Angeles, you also go somewhere, probably in Mexico as you desire, and organize a center there and start an edition of BTG in Spanish language.” (Letter 9.01.70)

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s strategy was working. For cultural reasons, Western boys and girls were accustomed to live side by side from an early age, especially in the United States, and he knew that to try to change these customs would not work. So by uniting them in marriage, Śrīla Prabhupāda did not break the deeply rooted social custom, but sanctified their union in holy Kṛṣṇa conscious matrimony, and its effectiveness was already being seen.

“So this is a very good news. I was, since a long time thinking of your marriage. Now Kṛṣṇa has given you this opportunity. Utilize it properly and be happy.” (Letter 9.01.70)

Citsukhānanda Dāsa: A friend of Candrāvalī Devī Dāsī helped her translate the introduction of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* into Spanish, and she then presented it to Śrīla Prabhupāda who appreciated her endeavor.

The intelligent way in which Śrīla Prabhupāda was conducting his preaching in the West empowered him to satisfy the desires of the previous *ācāryas* and to fulfill Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s prophecy: that in every town and village the chanting of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa would be heard. And he did this by taking the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* to all continents, countries,

cities, towns, and villages, mainly through enthusiastic married couples.

The very next year the new couple decided to please Śrīla Prabhupāda, and made arrangements for moving to Mexico City. At that same time, one of the GBC secretaries wrote to Śrīla Prabhupāda requesting Citsukhānanda's help. Śrīla Prabhupāda answered him with the following:

“So far as Citsukhānanda going to replace Brahmānanda Mahārāja... I have just received a letter from him dated March 3rd 1971 saying that he is in L.A. making final arrangements for opening Mexico City branch.” (Letter 03.24.71)

With this answer Śrīla Prabhupāda eliminated any other possibility of service for Citsukhānanda. And he further encouraged him to continue his plans by answering his letter with the following:

“I am so glad to hear that you are now in L.A. discussing final plans for opening one center in Mexico City. That is very encouraging news, I am anxious that we establish centers in major cities all over the globe and Mexico City is certainly an important landmark. Both you and your wife Candrāvalī can speak Spanish language nicely, so you are certainly qualified for such a mission.” (Letter 3.24.71)

His Divine Grace once mentioned that his guru maharaja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, had sent a *sannyāsī* to preach in Europe but that he had been unsuccessful in the attempt. But Śrīla Prabhupāda, acting as the *ācārya* of the *sampradāya*, was sending married couples to preach with great success. In his time, his guru mahārāja acting as *ācārya* of the *sampradāya*, introduced the order of *sannyāsa* and awarded it to his qualified disciples, who then spread the *saṅkīrtana* movement throughout India with great success. He also sponsored several of his disciples for preaching in Europe. So with complete faith in his spiritual master's words and in the chanting of the holy names Śrīla Prabhupāda introduced this formula into the Western countries: regardless of sex or *āśrama* position a devotee can preach all over the world if he or she has firm faith in the master and in the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. At the end of this last letter to Citsukhānanda Dāsa, Śrīla Prabhupāda stressed the importance of the *Back to Godhead* magazine, which he himself started publishing many years back during his married life.

“I am also glad to note that you have begun working on BTG Spanish edition. Actually we want that BTG be printed in every major language and distributed

all over the world so there is no language barrier in taking to our movement.”

Citsukhānanda Dāsa: Before I went to Mexico I was in the Los Angeles temple. There was a Mexican devotee from Guadalajara, Pippalāi, who helped me to translate and print. With his assistance and a friend’s printing shop we printed the first magazine in Spanish: *Regreso a la Divinidad* which was the Spanish version of the original *Back to Godhead* magazine. It was in black ink and yellow paper, 32 pages, and the front cover had Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa coming back from the forest with the cows. So once this was ready we set off to Mexico City in our van, loaded with magazines and incense.

Finally in a very satisfied mood Śrīla Prabhupāda gives them his blessings for success in the mission they were embarking on.

“So go there, husband and wife, and make our Mexico City branch a grand success, and Kṛṣṇa will certainly bestow upon you all blessings.” (Letter 03.25.71)

Inspired by Śrīla Prabhupāda’s words Citsukhānanda Dāsa acquired a Volkswagen van, books, incense, and other types of paraphernalia. Besides this, two other Spanish speaking devotees joined the mission. And when everything was ready they left Los Angeles for Mexico in their van. The trip took several days and when they finally arrived, they rented rooms in a hotel. They were soon able to settle in a nice section of the city, and they then started to preach. Citsukhānanda Dāsa informed Śrīla Prabhupāda about their trip and the beginning of their preaching activities in Mexico City. Śrīla Prabhupāda answered him:

“I am so glad to hear that you have gone to Mexico City with Jan and Bhūta-
hṛt Prabhus and have rented a nice house in the central part of the city. From your description, I can tell that there is great field for spreading this *saṅkīrtana* movement there and if you are sincere and determined in your efforts then surely Kṛṣṇa will give you all facility. So go on and do things nicely and work very hard to make our newly formed Mexico City branch a great success.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda concluded his letter by giving him further instructions and asking him to work hard so that things would turn out well.

“Keep in contact with me occasionally by mail and as soon as you have established yourself nicely there, then as soon as I find an opportunity I shall visit Mexico City.” (Letter 7.08.71)

Following Śrīla Prabhupāda’s instructions with renewed enthusiasm they vigorously continued to preach. In this positive mood they published the first edition of *Back to Godhead* in Mexico. The magazine consisted of eight pages explaining the basic principles of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. They would distribute it when going to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa through the streets. This drew the attention of local people who started to offer their help to these pioneer devotees in pushing the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. After a period of intense preaching, Citsukhānanda Dāsa was able to rent an old mansion. The house had been used as an embassy until then, and was located only three blocks away from the country’s presidential residence.

Citsukhānanda Dāsa immediately informed Śrīla Prabhupāda that he had secured this mansion for lease and had registered the society for Kṛṣṇa consciousness with the authorities. He also let him know about the numerous societies of swamis and yogis that were in fashion throughout the city.

Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “I am so much pleased that you got a nice place. I shall try to go to your center at my first opportunity. I quite follow the situation described by you, and all these yogis are mostly bluffers. They have no substance to give. You can openly declare this fact. Try to distribute our books very widely and preach also. These bogus yogis and swamis will vanish. It is very good that you have registered the society. It is very important, actually we are not religious institution. We are presenting a cultural program, making men of good character. Therefore it is cultural institution.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda also wrote, “One thing is that all translations should be checked by you and Candrāvalī because those who are not our students, if they write some wrong conclusion, the whole thing will be murdered.” (Letter 12.10.71)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s prophecy was taking place because of the hard work and sincere efforts of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his international band of enthusiastic disciples. Up until now no one in India could imagine what was going on here; what was happening was that people from different ways of life were taking the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and in this way becoming *kṛṣṇa-bhaktas* in the full sense of the word. They were accepting the activities of

bhakti-yoga and this was awakening their religious past, which is natural for the Mexican people:

“I am very much pleased to hear that Mexico City centre is developing very nicely under your expert supervision and I also note that you say that Latin America is very much ready for Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

Because of this Śrīla Prabhupāda was preparing to visit Mexico for the first time, making it the first country in Latin America that he went to. Thus, through his guidance and transcendental presence he would definitively establish the movement for Kṛṣṇa consciousness in Mexico City for the Spanish population. No one before him had ever tried to implement such daring missionary work, but it was surely happening thanks to Śrīla Prabhupāda’s great preaching vision.

“So if you like I can come after leaving Hawaii, before coming to Los Angeles, where I shall end my touring. So we are going to Honolulu from Tokyo on May 6th 1972, and I think we shall remain about two to three weeks in Hawaii, and then we can come to Mexico City. Is that all right? You may correspond with my secretary, Śyāmasundara, in this regard, and make all arrangements with him. I think we can stay about one week or ten days before that we must return to Los Angeles.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s idea of going to Mexico City was not only to establish the movement there, but also to create a solid base for future preaching in South America. He expressed this in the following letter:

“I am sending one of our new *sannyāsins* Hanumān dāsa Goswami, to South America. He is here with me now, but he shall leave by ship very soon, so if you have got any Spanish-speaking devotees there who can assist him in preaching throughout South America, you can tell them to write him here at the above address, and they can make arrangements to meet for performing this great task of pioneer preachers on South American continent.” (Letter 15.04.72)

As someone in the Vaiṣṇava community correctly noted:

*gurv-ājñāṁ śirasi-dharyāṁ śaktyāveśa-svarūpiṇe
hare kṛṣṇeti mantreṇa pāścātya-prācyā-tāriṇe*

“Taking the order of his guru on his head, he became empowered by Nityānanda Prabhu to act as a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*, he distributed the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the Eastern and Western worlds, delivering and uplifting all fallen souls.”

By his expansive preaching Śrīla Prabhupāda was proving to be a person empowered by Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu. With natural evidence he acted as the auto effulgent ācārya of the Brahma-Gauḍīya *sampradāya* in modern times. He satisfied the desires of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by taking the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* to all continents in the globe, and by establishing the *sankīrtana* movement beyond all imaginable aspirations of the Vaiṣṇava community.

In a letter dated March 5, 1972, Śrīla Prabhupāda advised Citsukhānanda Dāsa, “The Mexican public is very sympathetic, so produce voluminously Spanish language literature. You can establish correspondence with Karandhara to produce many books and magazines in Spanish.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived in Los Angeles in May of 1972. He and his traveling party remained there for a few days. They had no trouble obtaining visas, and a date was set for their visit. Daniel Partida, a close friend of the movement in Mexico, paid for their airline tickets. So in this way everything was conveniently arranged for their departure.

(To be continued)

Tridaṇḍī Swami

R.G. Bhakti Prapanna Parvata Mahārāja

Bhakti Caitanya Swami

My dear lord and master Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Yesterday was Rāma-navamī, and we were reflecting on parallels between your mission and that of Lord Rāmacandra. Of course, He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and you are His pure devotee, but despite that difference there is so much oneness between the two of you in terms of your moods.

Lord Rāma made such an effort to rescue Mother Sītā, showing how deep His transcendental affection for Her was. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you say in your purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.10.54:

When mother Sītā was kidnapped by Rāvaṇa and the Rākṣasas, Lord Rāmacandra, as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, could have married hundreds and thousands of Sītās, but to teach us how faithful He was to His wife, He fought with Rāvaṇa and finally killed him. The Lord punished Rāvaṇa and rescued His wife to instruct men to have only one wife. Lord Rāmacandra accepted only one wife and manifested sublime character, thus setting an example for householders. A householder should live according to the ideal of Lord Rāmacandra, who showed how to be a perfect person.

This example is not limited just to householders. Mother Sītā is a pure devotee of Lord Rāma, and not simply His wife. He endeavored so hard to rescue Her despite so many difficulties, and you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, worked so hard to rescue us despite a vast range of challenges.

You were living happily in Śrī Vṛndāvana *dhāma*, at the lotus feet of Rādhā-Dāmodara, but still, knowing the mission of your spiritual master and Lord Caitanya, you made a great effort to save us from our entanglement in material existence. You didn't need to do that for yourself, but rather it was an expression of your selfless dedication to higher authority and your compassion for the fallen souls.

One of the six symptoms of surrender given by Lord Caitanya in His teachings to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is *ātma-nikṣepa*, which translates as "full self-surrender." You translated this term elsewhere as "having no interest separate from that of the Lord." Understanding the merciful mood of the Lord, you worked so hard to deliver us from *māyā*, putting aside any idea of personal comfort and pleasure.

Actually, you gave your life for us, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and now we must

try to give our lives to your mission. We cannot repay you for your kindness, but at least we can give whatever we have for your mission, and this will be the perfection of our lives.

Your humble servant,

Bhakti Caitanya Swami

Bhaktimārga 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*

HOLY PRAISES

Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Engrossed we were in toasts to boasts
Of Māyā, the most of big-time ghosts.
In us you saw the obvious flaw:
We had this awe for the flesh and the raw.
We had this thirst for the very worst.
We were cursed (weak) like a bubble to burst.
To hell we would go, our life was so low.
You then came to show the best course is NO!
But YES to what's true, be fresh and be new.
It's *bhakti* we do for the One who is blue.
Succeeding to endure Māyā's overture,
With devotion mature on the track of the pure,
We do once a year lend an open ear
To words we hear that conquer our fear.
Beyond balmy blazes and dreamy dazes,
We hear golden phrases of your holy praises.
We hear the most beautiful words at your Vyāsa-pūjā.

Bhaktimārga Swami

Candramauli Swami

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

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

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

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

For more than four decades, devotees of Kṛṣṇa and many others in different categories of life have with great pleasure and enthusiasm listed and extolled your glorious deeds. Since Kṛṣṇa is unlimited in all categories, so are His glories, and because you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are fully connected with Him in pure loving devotion, you perfectly exhibit His qualities in a most powerful way.

Probably the greatest of all your glorious deeds is your transforming the hearts and lives of so many people from all backgrounds and mentalities of materialistic life. From prisoners up to recognized political leaders and entertainers, you knew how to reach everyone.

In our humble attempt to follow in your footsteps, we are finding it extremely difficult to change the hearts and minds of others so they will accept Kṛṣṇa and His devotional service; obviously we lack both the purity and the necessary intelligence to be truly effective.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the perfect mystic, since you are fully connected to Kṛṣṇa, the master of all mystic powers, and He, residing in the hearts of all, can inspire anyone and everyone to accept Him. But the Supreme Lord does that only when He is fully pleased with our effort to act on your behalf as a pure, transparent instrument of His mercy coming through you.

Lord Caitanya was so pleased by Vāsudeva Datta's compassion for all conditioned souls that He liberated the entire universe.

Our humble prayer is to become a more sincere and surrendered servant so other souls may be delivered from material suffering by your mercy.

Grateful for this service,

Candramauli Swami

Pārtha Sārathi Dāsa Goswami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

The date is 7 July 1973, and you have just completed a twelve-hour journey from Calcutta to England, arriving at ISKCON's newly acquired Bhaktivedanta Manor. (I vividly remember that occasion because I had just moved into the London temple a couple of months before.)

A small group of your faithful disciples gather around you, eager to hear your arrival address. First you express your appreciation:

....given the facility of assembling in this nice house (Bhaktivedanta Manor), this good boy George Harrison, we must give him all glories. We must be thankful to him that he has given us the facility, and Kṛṣṇa will bless him more and more. (Arrival address, London, 7 July 1973)

Immediately after thanking George Harrison, you speak about what is really on your mind, Rādhā-Mādhava:

...Rādhā-Mādhava, our simple worshipable Supreme Personality of Godhead, Rādhā-Mādhava, He is always enjoying in company with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Rādhā-Mādhava. He does not go outside Vṛndāvana. Kṛṣṇa, original Kṛṣṇa, He does not go even a step out of Vṛndāvana, leaving aside the *gopīs*.

When you use words like “simple” and “enjoying in company with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī,” they are descriptions of *mādhurya-bhāva* without any type of *aiśvarya* or *jñāna*. You also add the words “worshipable” and “Supreme Personality of Godhead,” which bring the statement to a more practical level, considering the qualification of your audience. By your use of words you show how to balance the concepts of *rasa* and *tattva*. Since you are the perfect *ācārya* for this age, your presentation is also perfect. If neophyte devotees are not fixed in the *tattva*, the concept that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, they will think He is an ordinary boy having so many romantic affairs. Because of this danger, you have warned your followers:

The word *rahaḥ-sthāne*, “in a secluded place,” is very significant. Talks about Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes—especially His pastimes in Vṛndāvana and His dealings with the *gopīs*—are all very confidential. They are not subject matter for public discussion because those who have no understanding of the transcendental

nature of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes always commit great offenses, thinking Kṛṣṇa to be an ordinary human being and the *gopīs* ordinary girls. Following the principle of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who never discussed the dealings between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* publicly, devotees in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement are enjoined not to discuss the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana in public. (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 8.56, purport)

Later in your arrival address you again refer to Rādhā and Mādhava: "Gopīs, they are village girls, not educated, not *brāhmaṇa*, not Vedāntist. But Kṛṣṇa is within their palms, within their hands." This *rasika* statement shows your mature realization of *mādhurya-rasa*. Although you have written a warning about discussing such topics, still occasionally you made such confidential statements.

Factually, you are giving the whole world the highest possible gift, which is entry into Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. In practice you are doing this by first stressing following the morning program strictly, preaching, *guru-niṣṭhā* (absolute faith in the spiritual master), and the various *aṅgas* (limbs) of *vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti*. By carefully following your instructions, any sincere devotee can gradually be elevated to the higher aspects of *bhakti*, or spontaneous devotional service, referred to as *rāgānuga-sādhana-bhakti*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are fully confident that just as "Kṛṣṇa is within their (the *gopīs*) palms," Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are also within your palms. I humbly pray on this auspicious day of your appearance that this fallen soul and all your loyal followers will one day become qualified for you to deliver to us Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and *gopīs*.

Your insignificant servant,

Pārtha Sārathi Dāsa Goswami

Rādhānāth Swami

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

While masses of people struggle for relief from endless sufferings and aimlessly seek pleasure to compensate their empty hearts, we find sweet shelter in your wisdom and love.

The past year was marked with striking events that shook the earth. A massive tsunami devastated Japan, and soon thereafter unprecedented tornadoes ripped through the southern states of the USA. Riots, demonstrations, and killings sabotaged the Middle East as governments crumbled. A ten-year manhunt culminated as the savage terrorist Osama Bin Laden was shot dead and dumped into the sea, while his cohorts vowed revenge. Prominent nations were thrashed by the plummeting economy, while the United States increasingly resembled the third world. Meanwhile, the world helplessly looked on as Pakistan continued to expand its nuclear arsenal, and we watched our beloved Vṛndāvana being torn apart by senseless greed.

Surrounded by hopelessness, confusion, and despair, we are reminded of the simple truth that you imparted: “Godhead is light. Ignorance is darkness. Where there is Godhead there can be no darkness.” Kṛṣṇa’s grace is everlasting and limitless, while in comparison the entire creation is but an evaporating cloud in the spiritual sky. On the path of devotion there will always be infinite hope and joy. Your life is a testimony to this blessed truth.

This year also marks an event that endears our hearts to you. Forty years ago you demonstrated the power of your relentless compassion. In the summer of 1971 you quietly entered Moscow at a time when the crushing oppression of communism was at its summit. The government restricted your actions and monitored your every move. But they could no more check your compassion than they could quell a tsunami—in this case a tsunami rising up from the fathomless ocean of Kṛṣṇa’s grace.

In those few days in Russia, sitting in a dingy little hotel room with only your secretary and one stranger as your audience, you launched a spiritual revolution that shook nations and affected millions of lives.

These incredible acts of love were your mission. Only six years prior to your miracle in Russia, at seventy years old, alone and penniless, you quietly

stepped off a cargo ship in New York. It appeared that the only support you had was a simple wooden cane, scratched and dented by your years of struggle in Kṛṣṇa's service. That small-framed, unassuming saint was about to reveal to the world, through hundreds of centers and tens of millions of books, the most intimate nature of God's love.

I pray that we may strive to express our gratitude to you by following in your holy footsteps and focusing on the essential truths you came to give the world. In these turbulent times, when humanity is desperate for real solutions and starving for God's grace, I pray that we may rise above the entangling distractions and petty disputes that will inevitably come and be united to dedicate ourselves as instruments of Your Divine Grace.

My beloved Guru Mahārāja, this lowly servant's heart belongs to you.

With endless gratitude,

Rādhānāth Swami

Śivarāma Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet, lotus feet that carried you all over the world so that your divine words and countenance could liberate those who heard from you and saw you.

Dear master! Allow me to briefly glorify the benefit accrued to those who have had your *darśana*, the vision of your transcendental form, which also includes having heard from you. In Kṛṣṇa’s words, such fortunate souls are freed from material entanglement, qualified to develop love for the Lord, to see Him, and to return back to Godhead. Such is the power of seeing you!

Śukadeva Gosvāmī describes how the sons of Kuvera—Nalakūvara and Maṇigrīva—were confined by Nārada’s curse to the form of trees on the bank of the Yamunā in Gokula. On the Dīpāvalī day, Mother Yaśodā tied her child to a mortar. He then crawled between the trees and the mortar got stuck. Kṛṣṇa tugged on it and toppled the trees, freeing the two demigods. After the celestials offered the Lord prayers, Kṛṣṇa replied:

*sādhūnām sama-cittānām sutarām mat-kṛtātmanām
darśanān no bhaved bandhaḥ puṁso 'kṣṇoḥ savitur yathā*

“When one is face to face with the sun, there is no longer darkness for one’s eyes. Similarly, when one is face to face with a *sādhū*, a devotee, who is fully determined and surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one will no longer be subject to material bondage.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.10.41)

Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura cites another reading of this verse, which says that “until” one is face to face with a *sādhū*, liberation remains out of one’s reach and material bondage must continue.

In your own commentary, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you say that by seeing a *sādhū* like Nārada—or in my estimation a *sādhū* like you—one is delivered from material bondage. But for those who commit *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*—or in the opinion of Cakravartī Ṭhākura, *nāma-aparādha* in general—liberation will take some time. Whereas for the offenseless it is very quick. Being offensive is likened to blindness. Even if the sun rises, a blind man cannot see it until his eyesight is restored.

After they were freed from their imprisonment, and after they saw Kṛṣṇa, the two sons of Kuvera returned to their abode with the gift of love of God.

Similarly, devotees who have had your *darśana* will also be freed from

imprisonment in their material bodies and attain love for Kṛṣṇa, along with the transcendental benefits that accrue from *prema*.

My conclusion is that since I had the great fortune of seeing you and hearing from you, it can only be due to the results of my offenses that I am still confined in this treelike body and deprived of Kṛṣṇa's *darśana* and of love for Him.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda! I have full faith that by continuing to stand upon the divine soil of your ISKCON, beside the ever-flowing river of *nāma-saṅkīrtan*, from where I can see in the distance the Deity forms of the Lord, the effects of my offenses will one day be nullified. And because I was fortunate enough to have seen you, who are fully surrendered to Him, Kṛṣṇa will surely free me from this material confinement.

Thank you! Thank you for inconveniencing yourself by traveling all over the world so that I could be among those who saw you and heard from you. Forgive me! Forgive me for not taking full advantage of what I saw and heard. Bless Me! Please bless me that Kṛṣṇa's mortar will soon touch me and transform me into what you laboured so hard to make me—a pure devotee.

Your servant,

Śivarāma Swami

Varṣāṇā Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you.

I often reflect on your Vyāsa-pūjā offering of 1961. Delivered in Vṛndāvana, it was more like an explosion than a eulogy. You implored your godbrothers to unite and preach, to truly serve the message of Śrīla Gurudeva. In the absence of such sevā, even the most opulent festivals of fruits and flowers fall short of the standard of genuine worship.

Your hope and aspiration was not realized on that day, as your words were considered merely poetic expressions of personal opinion. No one realized they would fan the fire of your beloved master's mission until it was a blaze whose reach would span "from the seas across the earth penetrating the universal shell." The lack of enthusiasm and participation of others did not sway your determination. Your spiritual commitment beckoned the assistance of universal energies. In time the influence of those potencies was irresistible, spreading like the wind, bearing messengers to all corners of the globe.

With your words resounding within my heart, admonishing our tendency to replace sacrificial service with flowery offerings, I had resolved to make my Vyāsa-pūjā homage this year more of a tangible expression of your glories. I pray that that resolve has not been defeated but rather integrated and embellished through a lesson imparted by, of all people, a flower.

Today the air is still and I find myself in a region wanting of devotees. To manage the pain of their absence, I take shelter in a prayer garden named Gethsemane. Clouds linger in the sky here, flowers are poised like paintings; everything is motionless.

Then I see a humble and glorious flower in motion. Though a native of North America, he is known in the vernacular as gaura, "the flower that dances in the wind." Yet here he moves even in the absence of a faint breeze. I approach, eager to see what lessons he has to impart.

My initial attraction to this delicate blossom awakened in the same way as my affection for you: through hearing. Before our first meeting, your qualities were relayed to me by others, and your instructions and voice inspired me through books and recorded classes. Hearing about gaura's habit of perpetually dancing, I felt drawn to him. I knew he was the guardian of an important message about my unfolding relationship with you, now in the realm of separation.

In this world, nature provides us with indications of the spiritual world. The reflection and the reality are forever entwined. The ability to decipher

the messages requires the guidance and insight of the spiritual master. With a patient eye one can perceive the instructions of the guru confirmed in nature, and when we witness such demonstrations our faith is fortified.

In Western theology, wind is synonymous with spirit. Spirit is nondifferent from the Sacramental Word, which speaks to us through sound and is spread, carried, and delivered by the wind. Currents of air thus offer the tactile experience of the subtle element of sound. Sound carries the potential for all other sensations, elements, and movement, just as a seed contains the codified program for an entire tree within its shell. The original sound is the song of Kṛṣṇa's flute, containing the essence of love, which inspires the *jīvas* to respond by chanting Kṛṣṇa's name. As the name enters the ears and illuminates the inner chambers of the soul, the heart must express its joy through dance. So what does the absence of such a wind indicate? It speaks of separation.

Love in separation is a profoundly deep and subtle concept which, prior to your appearance, had been confined in the limited editions of rare books which were actually destined to broadcast this public treasure. That fate remained unfulfilled until you brought it to fruition. With those rare books no longer restricted to being produced by the efforts of a few tiring hands, you engaged the untiring *bṛhad-mṛdaṅga* in propagating Kṛṣṇa's name, glories, and *sevā* through every town and village.

Now in the absence of your physical form, what does service in separation have to teach us? My newfound friend conveys his message not by words but through the movement which has earned him a reputation unique amongst the flora of this world. When the breeze is distinct the delicate gaura flowers sway gently like little butterflies struggling to become free of their tethers. But today is not such a day. The air has not moved. The sun is setting now, and the trees cast long shadows across the garden where I pray to you. Everything has become silent. Even the birds have stopped singing, yet the gaura flower continues to stir. Is this due to some faint updrafts from the already set sun? Or is he floating on a current so gentle that no one else can detect it? His movement continues, inspired by an invisible potency imperceptible to external senses.

Yet his message is clear: when received submissively, the breath of life—the instructions of Śrī Guru—makes mortals imperishable. Being thus infused, the soul finds that only dance will suffice to express such intimate feelings which are beyond the realm of words. Breath has two phases, exhalation and inhalation, spurring involution and evolution, expanding its manifestation and returning to latency. The fullness of the message is deciphered by integration of external with internal, presence with absence, temporary manifestation

with eternal source. The great paradox of Lord Gaurāṅga's message is that a fuller presence of Kṛṣṇa is to be found in His absence. Lord Caitanya explored this dynamic in the relationship of Kṛṣṇa to the Brijabāsis. It has application in the guru-disciple relationship as well. When the outer manifestation of Śrī Guru's mortal form departs from the vision of this temporal world, a disciple's connection to his mission will be stifled lest one realize that "He reasons ill who tells that Vaiṣṇavas die,/ When thou art living still in sound./ The Vaiṣṇavas die to live and, living, try/ to spread the holy name around!"

The gaura flower, knowing that sound is ever present, reminds us of this reality even when we cannot detect it. He assures us that subtle sound, like the instructions of Śrī Guru, still permeate the ether even when outward symptoms are unmanifest.

I take this newcomer to be a representative of you, for you are surely addressing my soul through him. In the pain of your physical absence, he gives tremendous assurance of our continued connection with you. Thus, to the shower of flowers offered to your lotus feet this year, I add the petals of gaura while praying that Vyāsa-pūjā not devolve into a static ritual of superficial formalities. Bless us that the unfolding dynamics of your appearance in our lives be aligned and confirmed by the dancing of our hearts.

Continuing to dance, even in separation from the wind, gaura articulates through his living example the unseen spirit which invokes the mercy and empowerment of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. That spirit is felt in the immortal words of yours that sparked your mission in the West, words that continue to resound in the hearts of those who sincerely yearn to follow in your footsteps: "O Lord, I am just like a puppet in your hands. So if you have brought me here to dance, then make me dance, make me dance, O Lord, make me dance as You like."

Your servant,

Varṣāṇā Swami

Bhakti Rāghava Swami

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

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

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

“By the mercy of the guru, even a dumb man can become the greatest orator, and even a lame man can cross mountains. I offer my obeisances to Śrī Guru, the savior of the fallen.”

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this, your 115th appearance anniversary.

I am writing this homage on Śrī Rāma-navamī, and since early morning I have been hearing musical bands parading the streets of Chirala, commemorating the historical event of Lord Rāmacandra’s divine appearance in this material world some two million years ago. In the last week or so I have been conducting a tour of Andhra Pradesh and have come across so many temples of Lord Rāma and Hanumānjī. Although these personalities appeared such a long time back, they are still fondly remembered and worshiped by those sincere devotees who long to see the Vedic way of life once again become established.

Although we are followers of Lord Kṛṣṇa, you have taught us the importance of Lord Rāmacandra, especially in his exemplary role and behavior as an ideal husband and ideal king. In today’s society, we are sadly lacking such good leaders, and therefore the whole situation has become extremely chaotic and degraded. When I reflect on the vast mission you have left us, in particular the aspect of establishing a *daiva-varṇāśrama* society, I begin to understand how *kṣatriyas* are so much needed to help restore society to its sane position. But where are such *kṣatriyas* today?

Although you played the role of an ideal spiritual leader overseeing the development of a worldwide society of Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees, you also demonstrated many of the qualities of a *kṣatriya* by boldly and fearlessly

preaching the message of Lord Caitanya, by strongly protecting the assets of your fledging ISKCON society, and by taking all risks for spreading the *saṅkīrtana* mission of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You traveled untiringly across the globe some fourteen times within eleven years just to bring Kṛṣṇa consciousness to as many people as possible. Is it possible that some of your followers must take up the role of such needed *kṣatriyas* to help bring about the needed changes in society?

You wonderfully displayed the qualities of a pure Vaiṣṇava, which are nicely described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.21):

*titikṣavaḥ kāruṇikāḥ suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām
ajāta-śatravaḥ śāntāḥ sādhaḥ sādhu-bhūṣaṇāḥ*

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

You have left us a legacy which is difficult to grasp and fathom, a task which is not easy to accomplish, that of bringing about a total overhaul in society and reverting to the standard and sane way of living.

Every day when I perform my *pūjā* to my *śālagrāma-śilā*, I hear a lecture by Your Divine Grace. It has become a daily routine. I always look forward to hearing your classes, for they are full of wit and wisdom. You were always so spontaneous in your dealings with your disciples, so simple in your explanations, and so natural in expressing your sentiments. You showed no artificiality or formality in dealing with whomever you met. Because of such spontaneous dealings, all based on your purity of heart and without any trace of duplicity, you conquered the hearts of so many conditioned souls, myself included. I see that you continue to win over thousands upon thousands of conditioned souls even today through your teachings. In this way you remain fully present in your *vāñī*, and the whole world is benefited by your divine presence.

My humble request is that you kindly keep me engaged in your service life after life. Every single day I hear your soothing voice and take your divine *darśana*. I need your kind blessings to continue serving. Please help reveal the different aspects of your mission to more and more devotees, for there is an urgent need to spread your mission all over the world.

Kindly forgive my many shortcomings and mistakes. Kindly allow me to keep the good association of your sincere followers. Kindly shower your mercy so that I may assist you in some meager way to help spread the mission of Lord

Caitanya Mahāprabhu and that of your Guru Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

I pray that I may always remain engaged in your devotional service regardless of what obstacles may come my way. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Without you this life would be totally meaningless.

Your servant,

Bhakti Rāghava Swami

Dhanurdhara Swami

My humble obeisances at the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Sherlock Holmes said that from a drop of water he could tell if it was from Niagara Falls; in the same way, the individual homages from the followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda are the drop of his remembrance that reveal the ocean of his glories. Here is mine:

It was the opening ceremony of Yogamaya, a new upscale yoga studio in Chelsea, a studio where I was also asked to lead a monthly *sat-saṅga*. The headline of the program was *kīrtana*, not just any *kīrtana*, but *prema-kīrtana*, *kīrtana* done with devotion. Gauravani, Ananta, Acyuta, Viswambhara, Jahnavi, and others chanted. The studio was jammed with a typical midtown Manhattan crowd of professionals. Lawyers, hedge-fund managers, architects, doctors, yogis, and students danced and danced with unabated enthusiasm. I sensed something notable was happening in Śrī Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* movement. I wasn't alone in my feeling. When it was finished, Kaustubha turned to me and with earnestness said something that struck me:

“Who, but Śrīla Prabhupāda could have done this!”

Here was the drop that revealed the ocean of his glory:

There are many prominent yoga and spiritual groups in America founded by powerful yogis and teachers from India. Who but Śrīla Prabhupāda has transferred his legacy so powerfully to a new generation? New Yorkers of this type have seen everything, but this was something special, a talent, energy, and purity of purpose that indeed was unique. Although exuding confidence, these *kīrtaniyas* were humble and though projecting accessibility, their lives and presentation was molded by tradition. A legacy was being carried on.

Who but Śrīla Prabhupāda has done this?

Praying to remain humbly in the service of Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Dhanurdhara Swami

Devāmrita Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Your mercy penetrates to the lowest strata of Kali-yuga.

As a five-year old, standing before my church congregation, parents beaming proudly, I recited a Bible verse by rote: “For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Next came the church barbecue.

At eight years I lamented I was not born on earth during the time of a magnificent religious founder—Jesus, Moses, Mohammed, someone, anyone. Early teen confusion buried this sentiment.

Later, as a university student, brain-drained by the finest speculators academia could provide, I would bus from New Haven to New York City, to the East Village. Particularly, I roamed the Second Avenue area at night, desperate to find something that could save my life.

I even did the unthinkable, determined to resolve my mysterious Second Avenue fixation. Slipping away from my classmates during a day trip to the East Village, I walked into the New York University admissions office and asked to transfer there. Taken aback, the admissions officer pulled me up short: “You want to transfer from Yale! Young man, have you discussed this with your parents? We’ll certainly take you, but we can’t match the money you’re getting.” That ended that, but not my strange obsession with the Second Avenue locale.

Your Divine Grace finally saw fit to salvage me after the New York temple moved to Henry Street, in Brooklyn. I was shocked to learn of your Second Avenue beginnings during the very time of my wanderings there.

Four decades have passed, and a greater amazement has gradually dawned: the earth has been invaded by Vaikuṅṭha denizens.

You are the emissary from the spiritual world that humanity and I have longed for.

About your predecessor, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, you summarized, “What can I say? He was a Vaikuṅṭha man.” His fine biography by your disciple Bhakti Vikāsa Swami drives this reality into our depths. When we read therein what your Guru Mahārāja said about his predecessors, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābāji and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the Vaikuṅṭha conspiracy becomes even clearer.

Thank you for coming to this mad world, with your books.

For Kṛṣṇa so cherished His separated parts and parcels that He sent

from His special entourage *nitya-siddha* devotees, that whosoever serves their mission should not degrade into the animal species but attain eternal devotional service.

Trying to be a genuine disciple,

Devāmrita Swami

Rāmāi Swami

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn̄ iti nāmīne
namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

For my Guru, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the most inspiring person I have ever known.

Prabhupāda promised to allay all fear.
To those who lent a willing ear
He came like Rāma, strong and brave,
A guardian soul to help and save.
Many who told him of their grief
Saw him as savior, a powerful chief.
Suffering they had borne for so long;
Now the chance to right the wrong.
Prabhupāda warned of Kali's might.
There would be a tremendous fight.
The spiritual world was there to gain
When Kali's effects were thwarted and slain.
Do not be afraid of the task and size;
They're nothing at all in Kṛṣṇa's eyes.
Prabhupāda could help to caste them away,
Even if for years they did lay.
Facing the challenge, our glorious saint,
Pure from all spot of earthly taint,
Forward he went with delighted mind.
Evils of the world he surely consigned.
The world was given a priceless boon
More glorious than the brilliant moon,
Received this mercy from his hand,
Son of Kṛṣṇa, noblest in the land.
From everywhere, in form and frame
Before Prabhupāda they hurriedly came.
They stood and spoke in reverent guise
To him with exulting cries:
"O merciful master, please just see
How lowly, fallen, and lost are we."

With joyful heart and eager hand,
 Prabhupāda embraced this wondrous band.
 Thus with words of welcome he cried,
 "To my will please abide!"
 Everyone hastened to follow his way;
 With Prabhupāda they wanted to stay.
 Marching forward, swift of pace,
 They all looked to his sweet smiling face.
 "Please stay awake and slumber not.
 We have to be pure, right on the spot."
 Throughout the world the weapon was named:
 "Spread *harināma* and you will truly be famed."
 That holy name has many great charms;
 It can restrain the most deadly of arms.
 Attracted by the words or the book,
 People came to hear and to look.
 Celestial devotees in their bright attire
 Shone like coals of a burning fire.
 As devotees advanced right into the fray,
 Kali's cohorts went far away.
 Strength from Prabhupāda, they were empowered.
 Kali himself kept low and cowered.
 Prabhupāda, we are praying to assist,
 To cut through this dusky mist.
 We are still here, left to stand.
 Please instruct us: we obey your command.
 To follow you is the goal of our life.
 Full of nectar and not of strife.
 Be present in our minds, with great speed
 Please aid us in our hour of need.
 Listen, all, and my tongue shall tell
 In what great person great virtues dwell.
 It is Prabhupāda, with such rare grace,
 Liberator of the human race.
 Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya!*

Śrīla Prabhupāda's *lowly servant*,

Rāmāi Swami

Bhakti Sundar Goswami

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please allow me to take shelter at your lotus feet, which are the abode of pure *bhakti*.

You once said that if one single person in ISKCON becomes self-realized—i.e., becomes a pure devotee—you would consider your mission a success. So every time a devotee becomes self-realized, that is a success for you. We know it's not easy, but if we have the conviction and determination to do or die to please you, then we will get all help from Kṛṣṇa. Since pure devotional service begins after liberation from material entanglement, it's our utmost duty to you to reach that *brahma-bhūta* stage and remain there for good. We, the soul, shall take control of the lower self all the time by engaging our body and mind constantly in *bhakti*. Then we can aspire for higher realization in our relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

When you were a child, your father would ask the visiting sādhus to bless you so that you would become a servant of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. By broadcasting Her glories and Her supremely wonderful love for Kṛṣṇa, which Śrī Gaura revealed to the world, you are the most merciful servant of Rādhārāṇī.

When performing the *lilā* of your illness in Vṛndāvana, you expressed your desire to go to Govardhana. Your desire apparently wasn't fulfilled due to the devotees' worries about your health, but in my humble understanding you may not have been speaking only about going there physically, but you also wanted to go there in your eternal *svarūpa*. Once your Guru Mahārāja, speaking about his eternal service, said that he felt unqualified to reside at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, the place of residence of his gurus, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrīla Gaura Kīśora Dāsa Bābājī. He said that he would stay at Govardhana and go to Rādhā-kuṇḍa just to assist them in their service to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. So you desired to go to Govardhana not only to perform *parikramā* but also, in my opinion, to assist your Guru Mahārāja in his eternal service to the divine couple.

I pray that one day by your mercy I will be able to aspire to assist you in your eternal *līlā* by taking shelter as a speck of dust at Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

Your lowly and undeserving servant,

Bhakti Sundar Goswami

Bhakti Vikāsa Swami

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Śrīla Prabhupāda, only a fool would consider you anything less than a topmost perfect *paramahansa*, an ambassador from the spiritual world, a personal representative of Kṛṣṇa. For one blessed with the eyes to see, everything about you evidences your extraordinary love for Kṛṣṇa. As is profusely and lovingly described in this Vyāsa-pūjā book, you are abundantly decorated with all the symptoms of a pure devotee.

Yet you defy the pathetic, disgusting stereotype of a saintly person who wears a dreamy smile and is perpetually “nice.” Your unfathomable love for Kṛṣṇa is manifest not simply by talking of love, compassion, and other such exalted virtues, but more realistically in your down-to-earth, service-oriented example—which defies the listlessness of so-called *premi-bhaktas*, whose reputations rest on their narrating of *gopī-lilās*, bathing in Rādhā-kunḍa, and other such esoterica. You demonstrated in practice how a devotee who loves Kṛṣṇa strives against all opposition to establish His glories in this world. You did not care for reputation; you simply wanted to serve the order of your guru. Anyone who reads your books can readily understand that you are not at all sentimental, vague, or wishy-washy. You are a natural, unaffected saint, not an actor dancing according to the expectations of mindless people. Indeed, your profound compassion for the rebellious *jīvas* often manifested as extraordinarily forceful attacks upon their foolishness and rascaldom.

Among the many transcendental characteristics that distinguish you as the *jagad-guru* (Kṛṣṇa’s selected emissary to this world), in my mind one towers above all: your unmitigated, uncompromisable commitment to defeat the enemies of your beloved Kṛṣṇa. You especially targeted the *nirviśeṣa-vādīs*, who attempt to belittle Kṛṣṇa by denying that He is categorically superior, in every respect, to all other living beings (*nirviśeṣa* literally means “not special”), who claim latent or already attained parity with Kṛṣṇa, and whose mystic-sounding ambiguities are extolled as realized spirituality by persons so overwhelmingly insincere as to be attracted to such charlatans.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, that you left Vṛndāvana to contest Māyāvāda amid the nastiness of America is a more convincing testimony to your love for Kṛṣṇa than had you stayed in Vṛndāvana. Your *praṇāma-mantra*, composed by yourself,

describes what you considered to be the essence of your mission: service to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī (*sārasvate deve*) on this plane (*bhū-tale*) by preaching the message of Caitanya Mahāprabhu (*gaura-vāṇī*) and thus saving (*tāriṇe*) the Western countries (*pāścātya-deśa*) from impersonalism and voidism (*nirviśeṣa-śūnyavāda*). Such extraordinary activities could be performed only by a devotee who is exceptionally dear to Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha*).

In accord with your mission, and pertinent to the arena and ethos of your service, you emphasized and exemplified more the need to fight for Kṛṣṇa than to discuss His *rāsa-līlā*. For me, one particular anecdote (narrated by Hayagrīva Dāsa in *The Hare Krishna Explosion*) encapsulates your intense devotion to Kṛṣṇa as manifested in *vīra-rasa*.

In 1966, during one of your classes at 26 Second Avenue, after you had criticized Dr. Radhakrishnan's comment that it is not to the personal Kṛṣṇa that we must surrender but to "the unborn, beginningless, eternal who speaks through Kṛṣṇa," you added, "This Māyāvādī philosophy is worse than atheism." Thereupon Keith, the Mott Street denim-clad "guru" (later initiated as Kīrtanānanda Dāsa), launched a long spiel in defense of Dr. Radhakrishnan and Māyāvāda. He rambled on about the "Self and the One Mind," quoting Śāṅkara and Huang Po, Buddha and Christ, Spinoza and St. Paul, while you, "Swamiji," sat on the dais, your complexion turning red. After Keith finally wound down, you asked him:

"So, you have understood what we have been saying—that Kṛṣṇa is God?"

"Yes," Keith says.

"And that worship is due God?"

"Yes," Keith says.

Suddenly Swamiji, red and furious, stands up. "Then why do you want to take it away from Kṛṣṇa?" he roars, shaking the small storefront. "It's Kṛṣṇa! It's Kṛṣṇa!" He slams his hand down on the lectern. "It's no unborn within Kṛṣṇa! It's Kṛṣṇa!" We all sit stunned, as if a lion had pounced on the dais. "Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is directly telling Arjuna, 'To Me. Worship Me.' And Dr. Radhakrishnan says that it is not to the person Kṛṣṇa but to some void. Just see what a nonsense rascal! Do you want to worship some unborn void instead of Kṛṣṇa? Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Truth. His body, mind, and self are absolute. And He says, 'Think of Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me.' And even Śāṅkara says, bhaja govindaṁ, bhaja govindaṁ, bhaja govindam: 'Worship Govinda, worship Govinda, worship Govinda. Your nonsense will not save you at death!' And yet this rascal wants to take it away from Kṛṣṇa. Do you

want to follow such a rascal? Kṛṣṇa says, ‘Worship Me.’ Do you not understand? Then why are you saying it is not to Kṛṣṇa? Why? Why not to Kṛṣṇa?”

(Next morning) “We are declaring war,” Swamiji says. “War on *māyā*.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, by declaring war in the storefront, you risked losing your fledgling flock, the only followers (if at that stage they could be considered followers) that you had after several months in America. But you could not brook *Māyāvāda*. And for that reason Kṛṣṇa was to bless you most extraordinarily.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please enlist me in your army, without an option to retire. I beg for the benediction to be eternally engaged in your mission. May I be prepared to go anywhere throughout the universe—tolerating the difficulties of heat, cold, hunger, thirst, unpopularity, persecution, or whatever the material energy may throw at me—always happy to follow your orders, knowing that by doing so, Kṛṣṇa will be pleased, and that hence there is nothing better for me to do. Of course, words like these are easy to state yet difficult to fulfill. If I could actually pray in that way from within my heart and be unhesitatingly ready to do anything and everything to serve you under all circumstances, then I might qualify as your genuine servant.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, my words are insufficient to praise you or to in any way approximate a sufficient portrayal of your innumerable divine qualities. Even if I were millions of times more pure and intelligent, I could not sufficiently extol you, for your glories are immeasurable. Nonetheless, I offer this with love—which also is a gift that you nurtured within us. So kindly accept it. Please uplift me and bestow upon me the qualification to finally be accepted as your eternal servant.

The foolish

Bhakti Vikāsa Swami

Guru Prasād Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Please accept my humble obeisances in the cooling shade of your lotus feet, the shelter for surrendered souls. All glories to you, who are the *āśraya* for all sincere souls seeking Kṛṣṇa's pure service.

As this year's offering, I want to discuss how you embody the quality of *kṛṣṇaika-śaraṇa*, exclusive surrender to Kṛṣṇa. According to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, among the twenty-six qualities found in pure Vaiṣṇavas, surrendering exclusively to Kṛṣṇa is considered the *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa*, the essential quality. Indeed, *surrender* is the word we hear from your lotus lips more than any other.

Today is Rāma-navamī. We see how surrender is woven throughout the whole epic. Daśaratha surrenders to his promise, Rāma surrenders to his duty, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa surrender to Rāma, and finally Rāma surrenders to his obligation as king, giving it precedence over even family.

Yet there is another dimension to surrender, one that you demonstrated: a constant obedience to Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

At your first meeting with your Guru Mahārāja he ordered you to preach—to teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the world—and you surrendered to his order, never deviating from that solemn commitment. The setting in which that order was given was such that most of us would have taken it as a theoretical appeal from a wise saint. But you took it as your life and soul, *vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ*. Your degree of surrender goes beyond that found anywhere else. A *mahā-bhāgavata's* surrender reaches the point of beseeching and begging others to abandon their false hopes and attachments and serve Kṛṣṇa with no repayment other than His satisfaction, which is always your exclusive motivation.

That particular motive is characteristic of residents of Vṛndāvana like you. It is the apex of understanding of a fully surrendered soul: to cherish Kṛṣṇa's happiness as one's only desire. You have shown us that degree of unparalleled desire, which you wrote about in the Preface to *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*:

Lord Caitanya also taught that the mode of worshiping the Lord in the highest perfectional stage is the method practiced by the damsels of Vraja. These damsels (*gopīs*, or cowherd girls) simply loved Kṛṣṇa without any motive for material or spiritual gain.

One disciple said that he wanted to follow you, but he asked how far your instructions demand submission. You responded:

Prabhupāda: If you still cannot understand what is my instruction, then how can I help you? New students may say like that. You are intelligent, educated, old student. If you say . . . (long silence) Our movement is that beginning of spiritual life is to surrender. If there is no surrendering, then it is no advance. *Sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*. This is the beginning. If that thing is lacking, there is no beginning even, what to speak of advancement. (Room Conversation with Bhūrijana Dāsa and disciples, 1 July 1974, Melbourne)

Surrender is what you taught and demonstrated throughout your life. Can I ever capture one particle of that loving devotion? I beg you to prod me on, even though I resist. My only hope is your surrender, for in my case only that superlative extent of mercy and compassion can awaken in me an ever-so-small desire to serve Kṛṣṇa's devotees. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your most undeserving servant,

Guru Prasād Swami

Bhakti Chāru Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet on this most auspicious day of your divine appearance.

I do not know how everyone felt at the time of your appearance on this planet. Naturally it must have brought immense joy to everyone's heart. At that time all the stars and planets must have adjusted themselves in such a way that everything became extremely auspicious, and demigods must have showered flowers from heaven. However, while reflecting on that occasion I tend to remember the day of your disappearance and lament my irreparable loss. I was blessed with such inconceivable good fortune to have your association, but I carelessly squandered it.

So many days and nights I spent with you, trying to serve you, but instead of serving I simply created disturbances for you. Those days I had such a wonderful opportunity to ask you so many relevant questions, but my stupid mind was so obsessed with its search for sense gratification that it did not allow me to recognize that rare opportunity. So many times you gave me so many profound instructions, but at those times I did not bother to press the recording button of the tape recorder lying just next to you, to immortalize those instructions. So many times you spoke about such important topics, such as *varṇāśrama*, initiation in ISKCON after your disappearance, and our relationship with the Gauḍiya Maṭha, but due to my immaturity I could not quite grasp them and they just went flying over my head. Today I lament missing all those golden opportunities and wish I could get them back once again.

When the heart is afflicted with such feelings of despair, I try to console myself by remembering your assurance that you would always be with us just as your spiritual master was always with you. You were never separated from him, even for a moment. Theoretically I understand that possibility, but due to my countless offenses and heaps of impurities I fail to experience that. From your words and actions, the secret behind such a relationship has become obvious: Love.

I do not know whether I will ever be able to develop that kind of love and attachment for Your Divine Grace and be blessed with your constant presence in my heart. But then I remember your assurance that you would always be with us through your ISKCON. Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, allow me to realize that fact. Please let me become convinced without a shadow of doubt that you did not leave us, that through your ISKCON you are always present with

us. Please let me realize that just as Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifested Himself in this age as His holy name and as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu manifested Himself in His *saṅkīrtana* movement, you have manifested yourself in your ISKCON.

You have been sent by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to fulfill His prediction that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement would spread all over the world, to every town and village. During your physical presence you spread it all over the world, but now, through ISKCON, you will take it to every town and village and literally fulfill that prediction.

If the goal of my life is to serve you, then let me continue to serve, with all sincerity, this very special manifestation of yours. Serving your personal form was easy and ecstatic; now the time has come to show my love for you by serving your ISKCON, no matter how difficult it may be.

You gave us three instructions that enable us to successfully serve that very special form of yours:

1. "No matter what happens, don't leave ISKCON."
2. "Your love for me will be shown by how you cooperate with each other (to further the mission of ISKCON)," and
3. "Always consider the GBC the ultimate managing authority of ISKCON (and follow that authority.)"

Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, guide me in my spiritual journey and never allow me to deviate from this wonderful goal. I have come to you to learn how to love. Please allow me to love you in this very special way and achieve the ultimate perfection of my existence.

Your insignificant servant eternally,

Bhakti Chāru Swami

Vedavyāsapriya Swami

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn̄ iti nāmīne
namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirvīṣeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

I offer my false ego at your lotus feet so you may kick me so hard that it may fall far away and drop, smashed. On this Rāma-navamī day, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* class on 1.3.22, which was given by my godbrother B.V. Narasimha Mahārāja, I received a big jolt when he read your purport. There you state that no one can change the order of the Lord, who has manifested reality by His internal potency. Not even Rāvaṇa could finish his staircase to heaven, by which he hoped to allow anyone to go there without proper qualifications.

I always knew that preaching requires some calculated risk. However, such risk must be calculated under the full protection of the principles set down by guru, sādhu, and *śāstra*, so that the Lord's order will not be violated. But seeing failure all around caused by uncalculated risk, also called deviation or transgressing the order of the Lord, I have become very much alarmed. Many examples have started appearing before me, like demons, who are envious of the Lord and His devotees, who violate His order, and who are smashed. The nondevotee *jñānīs* think themselves liberated, but even if they rise up to the *brahmajyoti*, they ignominiously fall from there because of violating the orders of the Lord and maintaining a dirty intelligence, which prevents them from taking shelter of His lotus feet. The Māyāvādīs are always smashed by their own perverted intelligence, which convinces them to try to become God, an effort which itself constitutes a violation of the Lord's order. So what to speak of the Ritvik-vādīs, who manufacture grotesque meanings out of the clearly expressed desires of Your Divine Grace? Similarly, a lowly devotee like me, who has so far failed to please you, also feels a chill in my false ego telling me I must be violating the order of the Lord. Therefore, on this holy appearance day of Your Divine Grace, I humbly pray to you, the representative of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, that you please smash my false ego and lift me up.

Your servant,

Vedavyāsapriya Swami

TRIBUTES
BY
DISCIPLES

Gurudāsa Dāsa

Prabhupāda, you sat across from me in golden effulgence.

Come here, you motioned, sweeping your lotus hand downward.

We were on a train heading for Bombay.

You had just finished your lunch brought to us from the second-class compartment by Yamunā and Kauśalyā.

They were like schoolgirls in your presence.

They brought a plate for me as well.

I was waiting on you while you ate but you motioned for me to join you, the ultimate affirmation of being in the same family.

However the highlight of lunch with you was when you threw *prasāda* you had bitten across the compartment on to my plate.

First a half of a *pakorā*, then a piece of apple you had eaten like the parrots Śuka and Śārī of Vṛndāvana, making it sweeter. Then a piece of *karelā* from your *śuktā*. *Mahā-mahā-mahā-prasāda*. I was ecstatic inside but controlled myself quietly for you, Prabhupāda.

We were in a first-class train, the arid landscape whizzed by. We just passed Kurukṣetra.

You mentioned to me that if we water the desert, gardens and farms will come.

There was luggage from some men who left it on the top two berths, leaving us little room. They left to join friends. We had the compartment to ourselves but you had a whole seat berth, and I was sitting between our luggage. I had hold of your small bag which you carried containing the important papers of our movement. You indicated you wanted to take rest as was your custom after eating. Usually twenty minutes to a half hour was all you required before you were up and serving.

I laid out a clean white cloth on the seat and covered you tenderly with a thin blanket.

You were lying on your back preparing to rest when you peeked over at me and saw me sitting between the bag and baggages upright.

Come here, you motioned, inviting me towards your berth. We had done so much together already. We offered food, songs and service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa together. We embarked on world *saṅkīrtana* harmoniously. We sat side by side with rock stars, kings, and homeless beggars.

We walked seven steps side by side, rode in air ships, rickshaws, cars and trains. We wrote letters to prime ministers together, we ate together, and laughed and cried in unity, and even held hands in a dark basement in London,

but I never slept by your side. I sat on the floor by your bed when you were sick, and you came in and bandaged my hurt foot, but I never rested in the same bed.

What to do?

Did you want me to sit with your head on my lap, or did you want me to put your lotus feet on my lap as you slept, or did you want me to sleep next to you?

Caitya-guru entered my heart and I moved around the luggage like a rubik's cube and made enough room for me to rest on the berth I was sitting on, with a small suitcase as my pillow. You looked over coolly and casually and nodded in happiness and drifted off to sleep.

Every day and many moments therein are resonated by your words.

Not a day goes by where I don't feel your help and instructions within.

Now many years have passed. Vaiṣṇavas have given birth to new Vaiṣṇavas, started schools for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and individually and sometimes collectively have attempted to perpetuate Prabhupāda's original ideals, and behavior.

Because you pushed on we can go to any part of the world, and hear the holy names, respect some *prasāda*, and find like-minded devotees ready to serve, making the world a better place. *Hare Krishna Hare Rama* are household names as was prophesied.

I do not take this for granted, for I saw you start it all in the West, when there were few books, a few devotees, some prayers, no *mṛdaṅgas*, one set of *karatālas*, one *dhotī*, no movement yet, and a lot of tender spoon-feeding and watering of our budding devotional creepers.

Whenever Prabhupāda and I were with people who were older, he always showed respect to them.

Many times Prabhupāda told me how it is important to take care of the elders, in appreciation for the protection, experience and advice that the older mentors have showered on the younger folks.

Yet there are many Vaiṣṇava elders who have given years of their dwindling life and are still giving, only to be left to fend on their own on retirement incomes with no pension or remembrances for past deeds.

Prabhupāda wanted the farms to be utilized as an alternative to rampant unemployment and homelessness. He wanted to employ these folks on the farms following our principles, and in turn, have shelter, income and the "tangible" way of life—peaceful and happy in Kṛṣṇa consciousness that Prabhupāda envisioned. We have not done it.

Like in the past, some devotees liked power, and had their way of doing

things and continued fighting with one another.

More separations and sub sects have manifested, leading to unnecessary law suits, and arguments. Just think how those funds could be utilized for good works.

We must transcend our selfishness and false egos, and see the similarities in each other, not the differences. We can overcome the need to be greedy self-centered and unjust, and give ourselves over in service and love for others and Kṛṣṇa. *Dāsa anudāsa*.

In celebration, we can work together, for we are the few people who offer food to Kṛṣṇa, sing the same prayers and *bhajan*s. We chant the same chants, read Prabhupāda's original books.

Why fight when we could unite?

Devotees are being attacked right now in various parts of the world.

A united Vaiṣṇava community could help change the outcome of events.

We can help one another in our devotional service.

Whenever I get a message or phone call from a devotee, I think of you, Prabhupāda.

Because if you did not come here to teach us, we would not have met.

The comfort, shelter, and plea of the holy names daily chanted is due to you as well.

We can be well-wishers to all Vaiṣṇavas and everyone else, and be an alternative and example towards the goal of world peace.

We can start in our own selves, and households, temples or ashrams, and truly love and serve each other, as Prabhupāda wanted, a united front.

Prabhupāda pushed on his guru's mission alone, in ill health and attacks of *māyā*.

So we too must push on and act harmoniously in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

That is how we can truly be torch bearers of Prabhupāda's wishes, and please him.

Prabhupāda told me, "If we act together, everyone is glorified, and if we fail no-one is blamed."

We must serve in unity; and we can all go back to Godhead together.

Thank you, Prabhupāda, so very much!

Gurudāsa Dāsa

Mālātī Dāsī

To Your Beloved Divine Grace:

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīnī
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vānī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

I place my fallen head and heart at your ever-fresh lotus feet, again and again.

The amazing saga of Lord Rāmacandra’s exile to the forest and subsequent victorious return to Ayodhyā is reminiscent of your own selfless acceptance of your Guru Mahārāja’s divinely inspired order for you to preach the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s *saṅkīrtana* movement in the West.

In your own manner, with absolute humility, you divested yourself of all personal consideration after winding up family affairs and business. Wearing the simple cloth of renunciation, you resided in the holy village of Śrī Vṛndāvanadhāma, completing the first stunning volumes of transcendental literature that would later bring you recognition as a world-renowned authority on Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism, and *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* in particular. The setting was idyllic at that time, free from the encumbrances of modern life, especially pollution and noise. But a peaceful life in Vṛndāvana was not your intended goal, and so you soon left aside all simplicity and comfort and found yourself on a small cargo ship, crossing the sea on your way toward the uncivilized forest of the Western world.

Upon arrival, you could sense that demonic Rākṣasas predominated the entire scene. Mlecchas and Yavanas almost seemed elevated by comparison. Few took note of your arrival. On March 6th, 1966, you noted in your Jaladuta Diary:

According to Mayapur Panjika, today is Adhivas day of Gour Purnima. Devotees at Vrindaban and Nabadwipa are enjoying the celebration. I am here alone without any devotee companion. But I have come here to serve the Lord and not for personal happiness. I am prepared to live in hell even if I am able to serve the Lord. Sri Chaitanya Mahāprabhu wanted that His mission should be propagated all over the world, and that is my objective. I do not mind the inconvenience personally felt.

Dressed as so-called learned ladies and gentlemen, respected for their foolish words and material accomplishments, speaking against the very existence of God, the “fools and rascals” in positions of power were given much

prominence. Yet as Rāma had subdued mighty demons with a mere twang of His bow, you were able to subdue these sacrilegious agents of Kali with the mighty weapon of the *saṅkīrtana-yajña*. From the point you established the *saṅkīrtana-yajña*, miracles began to become manifest: these same barbarians became your followers—your students and disciples—coming to bow down to the Lord and to your lotus feet.

The treacherous forest began to exhibit beacons of light, signaling hope in the form of humble storefront hermitages. In a daring exploit, you sent a band of young followers across one of the same oceans that you yourself had crossed, into yet another forest of Kali-yuga madness, where, through your grace, the *saṅkīrtana* movement gained a further foothold.

Then, in a victorious gesture of divine compassion, you returned to your homeland, accompanied by your newly formed World *Saṅkīrtana* Party, your version of Rāma’s monkey army, whom you lovingly referred to as your “dancing white elephants,” and began to reawaken Lord Caitanya’s glories in the land of *Bhārata*.

You were feted as a returning hero, greeted by famous dignitaries as well as sweet-hearted, simple *kṛṣṇa-bhaktas*, all of whom recognized your purity and astounding success. Garlands, footbaths, tributes, and other recognitions were natural occurrences as you traversed the country, bringing joy and happiness to all. Whatever the storm, you were able to weather it and subdue it, while we, your sold-out dogs, followed along behind you, our amazing master, with love and wonder at our incredible good fortune.

On this occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā, I pray that I may remain a pleasing member of your World *Saṅkīrtana* Party here for eternity.

An insignificant soul,

Mālatī Dāsī

Govinda Dāsi

For my beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda on Vyāsa-pūjā day:

In 1967, I met my guru, Śrīla Prabhupāda. He was then known as “Swamiji,” and I was but a young twenty-one-year-old girl, a college student at the University of Texas in Austin. But I had recently fled the University, along with my husband, in search of the true teacher who could guide me to the path of truth. I got lucky. I was very, very fortunate to meet “Swamiji” just after he arrived in San Francisco in January of 1967.

Already I was performing a self-styled program of yoga meditation daily. At least eight hours a day were spent meditating in a forested park in San Francisco, focused upon the teaching in my yoga book: “When the *celā* is ready, the guru will appear.” So, consciously or unconsciously, by Kṛṣṇa’s divine arrangement, I was trying to purify myself and make myself ready for my guru to appear. It was all I wanted. When I left college, I left everything behind—loving parents, financial security, career opportunities—everything. I have never regretted this. Meeting my beloved *gurudeva*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, was (and is) the greatest blessing in my life. It is everything.

So many years have passed since then. But now, over forty years later, my heart remains tied to him in an eternal bond of love. The storms of life come and go, as is the way of life in this world, but he is always there watching over me, guiding me, and protecting me. I am his much loved daughter, and Śrīla Prabhupāda is my beloved father, guide, guru, and eternal preceptor. He loves me even when I fall short of his expectations. And he guides me and gives me wisdom in all situations.

There is no greater gift in this universe, than the relationship between guru and disciple. There is no purer love than the love between guru and disciple—for he is the one who takes our hand and leads us into the realm of spirit, and delivers us to the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

There is no end to the debt we owe for this great gift of mercy. It is indeed grace. The grace of God and guru can never be explained or understood—or deserved. It is simply that, causeless mercy; divine grace.

We must always remain honest and straightforward with our guru. He can see through everything anyway. It is a sad misfortune when disciples go astray, and become ensnared by the temptations of power, fame, wealth, and prestige—as those snares are there as tests on the path of *bhakti*. When this happens, the guru has to make a special effort to correct his disciples, for their own spiritual welfare. We should always remember this and not put our *gurudeva* to such botheration. We should instead ask for his help and

guidance; his concern is there for us eternally.

Once, in late 1968, while serving Śrīla Prabhupāda in Los Angeles, he asked me a very profound question, one I have never forgotten. (My husband and I were Prabhupāda’s servant and secretary from late 1967 till early 1969, and were with him almost continuously during that time.) So at that time I was working daily transcribing the early chapters of *Nectar of Devotion* and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*; it was just before leaving for Hawaii to open a temple. On one particularly difficult day, I was troubled, not very blissful, perhaps because of my immanent departure. I went into his room to bring something to him, and mentioned, “Oh, I am really in *māyā* today...”

Śrīla Prabhupāda gazed at me with one of those long penetrating looks, the kind that you know he’s reading your mind, and checking the temperature of your soul—the kind of look that shakes you to the core of your being. Then he said, very lovingly, “You say you are in *māyā* now—in the presence of your spiritual master. What will happen when I am no longer present?”

He foresaw that things would be very difficult after his departure. He foresaw everything. And I believe he continues to oversee everything. Nothing is running amok; it only seems that way. He is designing and re-designing our devotional lives, teaching us what we need to know, and correcting us when necessary. This is his right, his jurisdiction.

In the years since his departure from this visible world, his disappearance from my mortal vision has not diminished his influence upon my life. Rather, I have increasingly experienced his loving presence, his guidance, and even sometimes his specific intervention. He is ever present, watching over me, as well as his many other disciples, and, I believe, anyone who turns to him for help and guidance. It is the unfortunate disability of the Western mind that generally makes us unable to experience the presence of divine beings in our midst. Yet I believe he is available to anyone who calls out to him, chants the holy names, and sincerely prays for his guidance. This has been proven to me time and time again.

Through his original (unedited) writings, his spoken discourses, his personal letters and conversations, he continues to grace the lives of many many seekers, and this will go on for generations to come.

As disciples, our most important duty is to present him and his teachings clearly, not our own ideas, so as not to “muddy the waters.” He stands crystal clear in his spiritual dimension and is a beacon of hope and love for all *jīvas* in this Kali Age of chaos. Let us offer our hearts in gratitude to this divine personality whom we have come to know as “Śrīla Prabhupāda.”

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda! And millions of heartfelt thanks for

taking the trouble to come to these dark countries of Māyā-deśa, and having the patience to deal with the lost and confused *jīvas* of these realms.

Our hearts belong to you eternally!

Govinda Dāsī
(Hauula, Hawaii)

Balāi Devī Dāsī

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my most humble, respectful obeisances at your divine lotus feet. You are *patita-pāvana*, the deliverer of all the fallen souls, and you bestowed unlimited mercy upon this fallen soul by finding me and bringing me to your lotus feet.

Thank you for everything, Śrīla Prabhupāda. You have given so many instructions in your books, your lectures, and your letters, to teach us how to see Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa everywhere. In a letter you wrote to Kṛṣṇa Devī (1/26/68), you said, “Your husband Śrīmān Subala Dāsa is living with me very peacefully, and he is carving Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, from hard wood. So this life of material existence is just like hard wood and if we can carve Kṛṣṇa out of it, that is the success of our life.” I hope to be able to remember your words at every moment and to serve you at every moment.

I take shelter of your words in the purport to *Bhagavad-gītā* 3.31, “In the beginning of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one may not fully discharge the injunctions of the Lord, but because one is not resentful of this principle and works sincerely without consideration of defeat and hopelessness, he will surely be promoted to the stage of pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

By your mercy, many new devotees are coming to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I watch them learning how to dance and chant and worship the Deities. Thank you for everything, Śrīla Prabhupāda. You are surely our ever well-wisher.

Your servant,

Balāi Devī Dāsī

Candrāvalī Dāsī

I arrived early about 6:30 p.m. at 518 Frederic Street, the storefront Krishna temple.

Removing my shoes, I set them next to the wall near the doorway. I wanted to sit in front of that raised platform where I knew A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami would be seated. I could see him close-up from there. More people were entering, quickly filling the temple room. Mālatī and Śyāmasundara entered, standing nearby. Then, chimes, bells rang out. Someone blew a conch-shell loud and long, three times.

Then, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami entered. Those seated on the floor scooted-over, creating a pathway to the platform, which he easily walked, and mounted the one step before sitting. He looked nice, like royalty, and took up a brass cymbal in each hand. They clanged on hitting together, creating a 1-2-sizzle beat, *1-2-sizzle*. To this beat, eyes closed, he began ... moving into the *mahā-mantra* chant, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Those responsive of the audience repeated the chant. An elder, he held his age well. All his wrinkles seemed all to be in “good-right” places. He looked as if he had said not much else than “Hare Kṛṣṇa” his entire life.

“That’s not possible! He can’t be real!” I announced to myself. “Check lighting! What is making him glow? Make-up?” Closer, I nudge.

... Suddenly, his eyes open; he is looking straight into my eyes ... seeing ... ME ... clear ... through and through. This was BEYOND, beyond ‘goodness, kindness.’ My soul had been met with his eyes. What a vision! Then, he closed those eyes.

Joyful, I surrender.

I am servant of the servant to the servant, of the servant to the servant of the Supreme Personality of Godhead via the gracious honor of my spiritual master.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for LIFE.

Candrāvalī Dāsī

Madhusūdana Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept this humble offering at your lotus feet.

*vaiṣṇava ṭhākura, tomāra kukkura
boliyā jānaha more*

My dear Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura, kindly accept me as your dog. As the dog, by the indication of the master, does everything very obediently, I have to learn this lesson from the dog; how to become faithful to you. I'm embarrassed that I have still not learned this lesson well. I believe you said something like, "The soul is embarrassed due to non-manifestation." But you also quote the verse, "By the mercy of the spiritual master even a blind man can see the stars in the sky, a lame man can climb a mountain, and a mute man can become a great speaker." So, I am trying to hold tightly to your lotus feet and expecting your mercy whenever you feel I have earned it.

I am forever honored to have had the fortune of doing some service during the early years of your ISKCON movement, however meager. After all, service to you, or your ISKCON society, immediately opens the door to the house of *bhakti*. I pray to be able to do some service for you again someday.

This year, I have been reflecting on the principle of feeling and acting like "servant of the servant of the servant." I prepared to give up the facade of being the master, and accepting the joy of being everyone's servant. I reflect back to the early days when you emphasized that the meaning of "*prabhu*" is to consider all others as master and not just said as lip service. As much as you repeated that principle, and we all accepted it, the contamination of mastership was still there. Hence, there were many serious difficulties, interpersonally, within the movement. Thank Kṛṣṇa everyone is gradually advancing (maybe some more than others); and I see many reasons to be very hopeful for the success of the amazing culture and philosophy that you so kindly sacrificed your life-blood to bring us.

I am sure that all of us aging disciples of yours are now appreciating more and more the herculean act that you performed at such an advanced age. I'm seven years younger than you were when you first came to the U.S. and all I want to do is sit comfortably and chant *japa*, read, and sit for a nice *bhajana* (not that that's bad!). But you actually left the simplicity of life in Vṛndāvana to save the suffering conditioned souls of the world with whatever energy you had. Just READING the chronology of your travels during the

time of spreading the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu exhausted me! It is astounding that someone could travel so much and not just stay sane but preach, chant, council, translate, keep up with correspondence, smile, be everyone's well-wisher, and yet not exploit the wealth acquired for obtaining personal comfort.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for all that you have done for us. And I thank all of your disciples (and grand disciples) for the much better service to you than I could have done. I am waiting here outside your door hoping to be able to serve you again. Please don't kick me away.

Your humble servant,

Madhusūdana Dāsa

Kāñcanabālā Devī Dāśī

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

It is only by your mercy I am being allowed to take refuge in your loving service. No matter how insignificant it is you so kindly let me hang on throughout the years. I am constantly reminded, as I may internally or externally stray, that you who are my ever-loving father, always pull me close again and again. How merciful is that!

You are my driving force as I grope in the darkness of my tiny realizations. You steer me with endless patience, encouragement, and love. Though, my awareness is so slight, my good fortune is beyond all bounds; to be given this opportunity to offer a humble tribute to you while being here in the holy *dhāma* Vṛndāvana.

If only I could be so aware! Every minute and in between every minute... I remember in 1975, the grand opening of the Krishna Balaram Mandir. A whole group of us from Brooklyn Temple on Henry St. who did *sañkīrtana* party book distribution and worked on ISKCON Press were able to go to India. It was my first time and I was 24 years old. You did *ārati* for Their Lordships Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma. It was a sight beyond words to describe and the temple was packed. I was way in the back and desiring to get closer. So I maneuvered, trying to inch my way through the crowds. I reached the middle; the crowd was so tight swaying back and forth; something I never experienced before, and a welling of fear of being crushed alive entered my mind. At that point, in confused bewilderment, I endeavored to release myself from the tight squeeze of so many bodies crammed together, trying to find a way towards the back of the temple. All of a sudden, out of nowhere, literally beyond my control, I got pushed all the way up to the front of the altar right to where Your Divine Grace was doing the *ārati*! All the fear, confusion, and anxiety were completely dissipated. It was a magical, miracle moment of time that can't ever be forgotten.

Here in the holy *dhāma* so many years later (and everywhere else in the world) you still are always present. Before departing, you emphasized our real love for you is shown by cooperation with love and trust amongst the devotees. And now, as our godbrothers and godsisters are leaving this material world (and us remaining will follow also) it behooves us to really appreciate one another in service to you, and Kṛṣṇa. This is our spiritual family you have given us: godbrothers, godsisters, nephews, nieces, aunts and uncles.

One devotee nicely described how “the beginning devotees were like Śrīla Prabhupāda’s front soldiers in the army against *māyā*.” As our family has grown, I see what nice quality devotees have come, and although not having been around when Śrīla Prabhupāda was in this world (*vapuḥ*), are taking shelter of his teachings (*vāñī*) and service, carrying on his mission. That is truly an inspiration, how we can all nurture one another in devotional service.

A number of years ago, at a Śrīla Prabhupāda festival, I remember being in the temple with all the devotees speaking about their memories with Śrīla Prabhupāda. At one point, no one was going up to talk. I was sitting towards the back, shy, not wanting to speak and thinking, “Oh, everyone has heard what I have said before; they wouldn’t want to hear it again.” So there was a silence. All of a sudden, this young *bhakta* spoke up fervently begging everyone, “Please, please, speak about Śrīla Prabhupāda’s pastimes which we all need to hear so much. You may think no one will be interested but it means so much to us and everyone to hear the nectar of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s association.” The urgency and sincerity of this devotee moved me to tears and I’m sure others also. Because right after his plea, one by one we all so happily, unreservedly went up to the microphone sharing the glories of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his divine association. Such is the potency of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mercy on all of us!

I am praying to always remember you and never forget you. You who are so dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa taking shelter of His lotus feet.

I remain,

Your daughter,

Kāñcanabālā Devī Dāśī

Patita Pāvana Dāsa Adhikārī

ALL GLORY TO ŚRĪ GURU AND GAURĀṄGA

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Let my desire to serve you eternally be my only hope and prayer. Śrī Guru is the one constant and only shelter in the life of a true disciple. All else is fleeting. Therefore there is no way I can ever repay you. For your pleasure, since no others are pleased by such things as you are, I offer the succeeding verses from our *Śrī Caitanya-līlāmṛta: Lord Caitanya's Life in Poetry* as continued from last year's volume of *Śrīla Prabhupāda Tributes (2010)*.

Most fallen, wretched servant,

Patita Pāvana Dāsa Adhikārī

Śrī Caitanya's Life In Poetry (Part Two)

THE PASSING OF JAGANNĀTHA MIŚRA

Happily the years passed by till suddenly one day
Jagannātha succumbed to time and fate and passed away.

Through words imbued with tenderness, Nimāi soothed His mother's heart,
Which ached in pain of separation from her husband torn apart.

Consoled with utmost sympathy, all grief she cast aside,
By Nimāi's tactful speaking was His mother pacified.

And Śacī Mother loyal stayed as faithful unto Him,
If e'er the Lad became upset, she understood His whim.

When needs arose, He'd asked her to depend on Kṛṣṇa's grace,
And well she'd listen when she saw the sweet smile on His face.

When once there was a scarcity of food, she was consoled
For Nimāi walked into the house, His arms piled high with gold.

Uncanny are the ways of Kṛṣṇa, holy are His deeds,

And he who tries to see His glories back to Godhead speeds.
THE YOUNG BRAHMACĀRĪ

A model *brahmacārī*, Nimāi never took *prasād*,
Unless He first had given His obeisance unto God.

When just a youth, the Lord established Nabadvīpa's best *ṭol*,
The cream of scholars thus gave heed to Nimāi Paṇḍit's call.

He taught them in the household of a great devotee friend,
And sought to put an end to the memorizing trend.

The Lord insisted that each student wear the sacred clay
That decorates the Vaiṣṇava brow each second of the day.

No student was allowed in class whose face was *tilak*-free.
The Lord compared such barren brows to rankest butchery.

The Lord repeated thrice each day Gāyatrī mantra chants,
With reverence He looked on women, ne'er a lusty glance.

He had no time for idle gossip, *bhakti* filled His speech.
He passed His hours absorbed in *śāstra*, speaking just to teach.

He'd saunter 'bout the town and challenge His contemporaries,
Acquiring reputation for His Sanskrit commentaries.

No other *paṇḍit* dared to challenge His polemic skill,
While elders offered boons to this debater versatile.

Polemic skills established, His debates were ne'er disproved,
Until disproving them Himself by no opponent moved.

THE BLESSINGS OF ŚRĪVĀS PAṆḌIT

Exhorting Nimāi, Śrīvās Paṇḍit said to Him one day,
"Scholasticism without *bhakti* leads one far away.

“Do not mistake that mundane lore should be the end of learning.
Pure love for Kṛṣṇa is our goal, say the saints of true discerning.”

“Mere rascals are those wranglers cultivating mundane lore.
Until they know of *kṛṣṇa-prema*, they’re doomed forevermore.”

Said Nimāi, taking on His head these boons submissively,
“Your blessings will cause *kṛṣṇa-prema* to awake in Me!”

THE LORD MEETS ĪŚVARA PURĪ

One day the Lord received a great Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsī* guest.
His name was Īśvara Purī, and the Lord to Him expressed

Appreciation for the volume written by the saint.
Replied the saint, “If You have read it, then mention any taint.”

Pure are all works inspired by Kṛṣṇa, Mahāprabhu replied.
Later Nimāi took this saint as His guru and His guide.

Whenever Nimāi walked through town, the merchants offered gifts.
His words of benediction gave each eager trader bliss.

THE LORD AND THE ASTROLOGER

Consulting an astrologer, the Lord asked of the birth
That He’d “accepted” in His past sojourn upon the Earth.

Surprised, the gazer of the stars saw many holy forms,
He found he was observing incarnations by the swarms.

Nṛsimhadev, Varāha, Kṛṣṇa from the groves of Vraja,
Lords Matsya, Kūrma, Hayagrīva, and Ayodhyā’s *rājā*.

Bewildered by the baffling power of Nimāi’s wondrous forces,
He could not know our Hero was the Sovereign Source of sources.

He asked the Lord, “Be pleased to see me on another day.”
The Lord Divine and Source Sublime just smiled and went His way.

THE LORD VISITS ŚRĪDHAR

The Lord proceeded on His way to visit Śrīdhara's shack,
Where hermit Śrīdhara chanted names of Kṛṣṇa by the *lakh*.

By day he vended greens and leaves, at night he muttered chants
Of Kṛṣṇa's names for which his neighbors had no tolerance.

The Lord delighted in creating quarrels to amuse,
How innocent were Śrīdhara's answers, Nimāi's bliss enthused.

For Śrīdhara did not know, this *paṇḍita* trying to start disputes
Was Kṛṣṇa, who had come to see his saintly attributes.

Said He, "How is it that you're poor, O Śrīdhara, for you praise Nārāyaṇa?
Yet rich are those exalting Śiva of the Mountains Himālayan!"

"Possessed of highest pedigree, adorned with jewels and gold,
Of boundless fortune are the ones who've demigods extolled."

"O *paṇḍita*!" answered Śrīdhara, "Time spares none its sharpened scythe.
The dog, the pauper, and the king at time of death must writhe."

"That man who strives to satisfy desires sensual
And never learns to love the Lord is but an animal."

"While men who are addicted to their carnal appetites
And never seek out life's true goal are polished parasites."

"The *karmī* runs agog for sex-life, eating, and the lot,
He never gets one tenth of what the pure Vaiṣṇava's got."

"The Vaiṣṇavas pose themselves as poor, no luxuries displayed,
But facing them with folded hands are three serving maids,"

"Salvation, Wealth, and Learning are three maiden deities
Who seek to serve the Vaiṣṇava, while he seeks the Lord to please."

The Lord rebuked him saying, "No, you have a hidden share
Of wealth that you are hoarding with no desire at all to spare..."

"A small sum for a *brāhmaṇa* who has come to you.
You'd better give Me now some greens, this *brāhmaṇa*'s simple due."

Impoverished Śrīdhara lived each day in truth, an honest man,
Yet stubborn Nimāi forced him to surrender to His plan.

For Śrīdhara could not keep Caitanya's reprimands at bay,
He gave the Lord His share of greens and radishes each day.

Once satisfied, the Lord inquired, "What do you think of Me?"
Śrīdhara responded, "You've expanded from the Lord Hari!"

"My dear friend Śrīdhar," He replied, "Your understanding fell.
I am the Lord of Gaṅgāmayī, whom you worship well!"

These words appeared to pious Śrīdhara as a great offense.
He gave a warning to the Lord for His mock impudence.

He said, "O Nimāi, now respect these waters' sacred flow.
As men increase in age, they should increase the things they know."

Through Yogamāyā Nimāi'd kept outside of Śrīdhar's view
No *jīva* ever sees the Lord unless He wants them to.

The Lord may come and walk among us, but one thing is certain,
He veils Himself from mortals behind Yogamāyā's curtain.

Caitanya teaches one great lesson from this incident:
Sacrificing sense desire's a feature prominent

And common in the lofty lot of lovers of the Lord;
And *bhaktas* such as Śrīdhara are by Kṛṣṇa much adored.

One day our Hero offered Śrīdhara earthly opulence.
Refusing, Śrīdhar spurned as rubbish worthless ornaments.

So pleased with Śrīdhara, who displayed renunciation huge,
Mahāprabhu revealed His six-armed form, Lord Śrī Ṣaḍbhujā.

And two of these six arms were gleaming with a golden hue,
They held a hermit's waterpot and the staff bamboo.

A bow and arrow clenched within the fists of greenish arms
Were Rāma's, who used them to cause the troops of Rāvaṇa harm.

Two poised and bluish arms possessed a silver flute.
These were the arms of Kṛṣṇa, the Unequaled Absolute.

Is there a mortal man whose fortune Śrīdhara's parallels?
In Lord Caitanya's causeless shelter this devotee ever dwells!

THE WEDDING OF NIMĀI PAṆḌIT

When just fifteen, the Lord was wed to Lakṣmīpriyā Devī,
And relatives rejoiced at Nimāi's wedding ceremony.

A model wife, and always cheerful, Lakṣmī served her Lord,
Contented was the household Master, by His wife adored.

And always sure to clean the house entrusted to her care,
She'd cook for guests her Husband asked to visit with Him there.

An ideal devotee husband, He relied on Kṛṣṇa's will
To bring essential foodstuffs and to keep the treasury filled.

He showed by His example how that when a guest's received,
If there's no food within the house, there's nothing to be grieved.

There was water for the visitor, straw served as a seat,
Each guest was welcomed tactfully with salutations sweet.

A FATEFUL JOURNEY

A married man, the Lord decided to acquire some funds.
His actions taught that an honest wage is never to be shunned.

Despite the fact that He was still within the flower of youth,
Disciples by the thousands now flocked to Him for truth.

Towards the East our Hero went to teach Truth Absolute,
And there He was approached by one disciple resolute.

Named Tapan Miśra, who'd been called to Nimāi in a dream
In which he'd been directed by a superhuman being.

The otherworldly spirit said, "O Tapan, I proclaim,
The Lord Himself will come to teach you, and Nimāi is His name."

And Tapan asked the Lord most humbly for enlightenment,
He wished to know the means and end for his own betterment.

Said Nimāi Paṇḍit blessing him, "You are most fortunate,
For you've developed deep desire to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa, yet..."

"There's just one means to gain His grace in wicked Kali's Age,
You must surrender to God's name, in chanting to engage."

"The one who chants attains transcendence, and the one who hears
Is benefited by its nectar ent'ring in his ears."

"The goal of Vedic study's learned when Kṛṣṇa, God, is pleased.
By chanting you will speed back home with eagerness and ease."

"Please always chant adoringly Śrī Kṛṣṇa's holy name,
His potency is felt in full if never He's defamed."

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

Arundhati Devī Dāsī

To the lotus feet of my beloved guru on your appearance day.

So sweet is the memory of your years on this earth
Remembering your infinite kindness to free us from repeated birth
In spite of our attachment to temporary joys and sorrow,
Loss and gain and always hoping for a better tomorrow,
And Māyā keeping us enthralled in a life ultimately hollow.
Prabhupāda, you journeyed far to alleviate our pain
Rained upon us your message of what we could attain
Associated with us, your whole being animated with infectious joy
By your divine connection to Govinda, the beautiful cowherd boy.
Having the good fortune to meet you decades ago
Under your feet taking shelter and thus coming to know
Precious teachings of the *Gītā* and chanting of *harināma*
Answering our questions, you bestowed the healing balm,
Descended with utmost compassion from the highest realm above
And showered upon us unalloyed devotion, mercy, and love
Kṛṣṇa-loka, the realm of *sac-cid-ānand*
Inspiring us to dive deep within and beyond.
Jagad-guru, I admit that I am often running astray
And yet still I pray to serve you in some small or great way
Your love and mercy is inconceivable, I cannot comprehend,
Always may my heart stay open to your grace which has no beginning
and no end.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Years ago I offered you a simple poem in the form of an anagram like this. It was in Māyāpur, 1976 at a *darśana*. You enjoyed it, so I thought I'd offer you another one.

In this last year, I have released a *kīrtana* CD recording called *Radha-Krishna Journey of Love*. I am a tiny speck on this planet. Still I pray I may please you and be of service through spreading the joy of *kīrtana*. May I be open to receive your grace and use my energy in this humble attempt to serve Lord Caitanya's mission. And if you have some other plan for me, then may I receive your guidance.

I pray also that my son Aniruddha may be of service to you and find his path of grace.

Again, all glories to your divine appearance.

Aspiring to serve your lotus feet,

Arundhatī Devī Dāsī

Jayaśrī Devī Dāśī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, our father and friend,

Thank you for taking the time and energy to come to us who were unqualified and undeserving of the gift you were giving. You came in such a sweet and angelic way that was so attractive and so inoffensive that you became like the spiritual pied-piper and charmed us into dedicating our lives and souls to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and to you.

We will never be able to thank you enough for your sacrifice and compassion on us but we will continue to try to do so by following your instructions and the direction you gave us.

By now it has become very apparent who you are and what your mission is and we are feeling so fortunate that you, being empowered with divine grace, have been able to bless this planet and all of the living entities on it including us with your divine mercy. You gave us the path “Back to Home, Back to Godhead” and for that we are eternally grateful.

We hope that our offerings in this life have given us the benediction to have that same opportunity again in the next.

Thank you, we love you and miss you. You certainly are our “Ever Well-Wisher.”

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare

Your daughter and servant,

Jayaśrī Devī Dāśī
(New Vrindavan)

Kauśalyā Devī Dāsī

I offer this tribute to my beloved *gurudeva*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, on the anniversary of his appearance day, 2011.

All devotees know how powerful Śrīla Prabhupāda was... but not as many know how kind, affectionate and funny he was, so that is what I would like to share.

I was most fortunate to be selected to come to India when Śrīla Prabhupāda went back in October 1970. There are so many stories from those early days in India! One particularly sweet memory happened when we were in Surat in December 1970. We were staying at the home of Bhagubhai Jariwala. We would often sit with Śrīla Prabhupāda in his room when he was receiving visitors. I don't remember how it came up but during a quiet moment I told Śrīla Prabhupāda I had memorized *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*. He was very pleased. Often the pious people of that remarkable city would invite us outside of town for engagements in the villages. At one of these events Prabhupāda motioned for me to come to him. As I approached he said, "Kauśalyā, sing *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*." I was surprised that he remembered! At first, I was very nervous... "*Oṃ pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idam...*" As I sang the verses I watched Prabhupāda and became more confident. He was beaming with pride and his smile was as effulgent as the sun. When I finished, he called me to him and as I started to pay my obeisances, he pulled me closer and patted me on the back and rubbed my head. It was a really special moment I will never forget!

The India-Pakistan war of December 1971 was happening during our Delhi *pañḍāl* program. Blackouts were mandatory at night and this did not make Śrīla Prabhupāda very happy—he remarked he was unable to get any writing done because he could not turn on the lights. So we came up with the idea to put black paper on the windows of his room. When he returned I switched on the lights—he was delighted. He said, "Now that is first-class intelligence," and then with a twinkle in his eye he explained what he meant...

"First-class intelligence is when you see a problem and without being asked, you do what is needed. Second-class intelligence is I ask you to take care of a problem and you do so nicely. Third-class intelligence is I ask you to take care of a problem, you run out of the room and in a moment come back and say, 'What is it I'm supposed to do?'" The devotees exploded with laughter. He would often teach with humor.

Shortly after the Delhi *pañḍāl*, I was sent with Śrīmatī to Jaipur. She had come to India to purchase Deities for several of the North American temples. So, off we went, arriving in the evening. We checked into the hotel and

the next morning went to the Govindajī temple for *maṅgala-ārati*. We sang *bhajanās* after the service and a crowd gathered around to listen. Who were these American girls? How did they know so much about Kṛṣṇa? We told them about Śrīla Prabhupāda. We met the *pūjārī* of the temple and he invited us to stay as guests with his family. We were very grateful but said we already had a hotel. He gave us his number in case we changed our minds.

After a sublime and magical morning we returned to our room. As we were freshening up, there was a knock at the door. It was the police! Śrīmatī had left her passport in Delhi and when we checked in with only one passport the hotelier had contacted the police. Because of the war, they thought we might be American spies! We told them we knew the *pūjārī* of the Govindajī temple and that he would vouch for us. After speaking with him they released us in his custody... We were to stay at his home until Śrīmatī could get her passport to Jaipur, so, we made the most of it.

Every morning we would sing *bhajanās* after *maṅgala-ārati* and the crowds grew and grew. I spoke about Śrīla Prabhupāda to all the wonderful devotees and encouraged them to bring him to Jaipur. Soon, by the grace of Govindajī, everything was arranged. Several pious gentlemen agreed to put the money up for the *paṇḍāl* program and I convinced the *pūjārī* to allow Śrīla Prabhupāda to stay at the guesthouse on the grounds near the temple.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was very pleased with the festival. The *paṇḍāl* was set up behind the Govindajī temple and it seemed as though everyone in Jaipur attended. We had purchased the Deities for New York. Inspired by Govindajī, we found a Kṛṣṇa who was black marble and Rādhā was white marble, and Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted Them installed as part of the program. Also, as part of the program, Tamāl Kṛṣṇa took *sannyāsa*.

Even with all that was going on Śrīla Prabhupāda was very relaxed and happy. I would visit him every day at the guesthouse. One day, the sky was filled with vibrantly colored kites. I told Śrīla Prabhupāda about them and said how beautiful they were. He remarked, "Oh yes, it is kite flying season," and then began to reminisce. He said, "When I was a boy I used to fly kites with my sister, but she was always better than me and her kite would fly higher. So, one day, I climbed on the roof so my kite would go higher but she called out 'Govinda, Govinda' and her kite flew higher than mine. You see, even in our childhood we were always remembering Kṛṣṇa."

And this is one of the many things Śrīla Prabhupāda has taught me... to always remember Krishna, even in the simplest of acts, like flying a kite or drinking water or feeling the warmth of the sun or being bathed in the light of the moon.

Thank you for all the gifts you've bestowed upon me, you will influence my life and my heart forever...

Jaya Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Kauśalyā Devī Dāśī

Laxmimoni Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnī itī nāmīne
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vānī-pracāriṇe
nirvīṣeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

When you were physically here with us I didn't realize the vast vision you had and mission you were undertaking.

I was very young and it was exciting to be part of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. People were coming, things were growing rapidly. The philosophy seemed simple and straightforward, the process clear and easy. Pure devotional service appeared to be within reach and I was willing and able to go for it.

Now 40+ years have passed, my senses have become dull, my body weak, but more and more I am awestruck as I deeply realize your vision and determination; the difficulties and sacrifices you made, and encouraged us to make; your determination and compassion.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I feel too tiny and inept to assist you in your mission yet I know that I have to do it and I want to do it. Your ISKCON must be a vibrant and united organization.

I am still excited to see people take up the process you gave, read your books and begin a new life's direction, headed toward Kṛṣṇa. I know that for them to sacrifice everything they must feel the trust and respect I felt. They must become inspired by your followers and I have a role to play in building their faith.

You took the mission of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura on your head and I must take yours on mine because you gave your blood, worked so hard, cared so much, inspired so many that if your work does not go forward it will be a great catastrophe—both personally and for the world.

You conquered hearts by your simple, straightforward *niṣṭhā*. You were expert in handling all people and all situations. You could judge time, place and circumstance in seconds and make the perfect decision. We could follow you with confidence. Now many come together for days and weeks to discuss and discuss what is to be done and even then it is difficult for trust to grow. We must build that love and trust so we can move forward with strength and determination. I must build that trust and move forward with strength and determination and assist others, when possible, to do the same.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you gave us a philosophy which allows us to understand life and death, to see the three modes of nature at work in the world and on ourselves. You gave us a glimpse into the spiritual world. You told us we could be with Kṛṣṇa and His companions laughing and feeling intense love and belonging. You gave us a structure by which to serve Kṛṣṇa, and give and get association to protect us from *māyā* so we could grow and taste that divine love. You created a family with thousands of brothers and sisters to inspire each other to take on the world and make it conscious of Kṛṣṇa.

Now we must work together to find the strength and resources to continue the charge.

I am finally beginning to understand that these books contain the Reality, the absolute truth that are the beacon in our lives as death and disease become more prevalent within our ranks. I am a spiritual being and can be empowered by Kṛṣṇa if I become your humble servant... but first I have to learn what is “humble” and what it means to be a “servant.”

I miss you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Before, I could see you and hear you directly, get letters to answer my questions or news about you from others. Unfortunately at that time I could not comprehend the depth of your profound message and the exceptional servant of Kṛṣṇa I had the good fortune of serving. I know however, that you are still with me, in your followers, in your instructions, in my heart and I pray, now that I understand a bit more, that I can do something to help our ISKCON grow and distribute Lord Caitanya’s mercy. Please Śrīla Prabhupāda, give me the privilege of your devotional service.

I remain

Your servant,

Laxmimoni Devī Dāśī

Raṇadhīra Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most inconsequential obeisances at your lotus feet.

Please forgive my audacity in approaching you with this offering.

You are so elevated and I am so fallen. You saved my life, restored my soul, and I have given you only a pittance of defective service in return. My debt to you is monumental. I shall never be able to repay it, no matter how long or how hard I try. And yet here I am, shamelessly begging for more of your mercy. I miss you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, yet I am the only one responsible for our separation. You are always there for me in your books and letters, and in my wonderful memories of you. You are always available. Me, not so much. I long for the day when I can put my *māyā* aside and be of some small service to you.

May that blessed day come soon.

Raṇadhīra Dāsa

EXCERPTS FROM AN ATTIC DELVE

Since early days, dear Guru, father
such as Providence Street, Boston, Mass.
of little-ish use,
I've felt an ass.
And all the while
'twas in the street name,
was fixed in fate—
I wasn't to blame.
In quiet pre-dawn corridors,
air-damp and odorous,
a sandalwood aftermath
strayed in to morrow
like a well-liked shawl,
aired and cared for.
I asked how: and got
favour from a newfound friend.
Karandhar cares enough to wake me—
creeping to shower
we two only now
at your feet form a triad.
Your kabal of heartfulness—
alert for the birth,
for the show of your truth-words,
a day such as Providence, spring '74.
We asked and you said.
We listened and wanted
to remember the most of it always...
...of what to say to those who claim
that all mere words are merely words.
"So? Why do you speak? Why strive to
ardently argue and state the point—being
that if words have no point, why do you
make points by speaking at all ?" ...

... the most of it always eludes me
but feelings are clear as an Indian bell.
My consciousness stood to attention
in that pared down domain of focus.
Chill-morning senses were turning nowhere.

Śrīpati Dāsa

Balabhadra Dāsa and Chāyā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vānī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Please don't leave us. We know you would never do that. It would be our hearts broken with pain that would leave you due to bitterness from the many tests of our love for you and Lord Kṛṣṇa. Please stay by our side and never let this happen. Please give us the mercy to see you and the Cowherd Boy in every misfortune.

How does the heart not grow cold after seeing the deaths of so many beloved cows? How does the heart not become bitter after seeing disease ruin the peace of an unpretentious cow? How does the heart not leave the supreme originator of such suffering? Not just once, or twice, but many years of caring and having to face the same deterioration and not being able to change the course of disease because it is beyond changing.

The mind and heart have to change. The miracle is not in the cure, it is in understanding the suffering and how we must embrace it and see Lord Kṛṣṇa in its midst. The suffering will continue as long as there is life. And even though the cow is your most beloved animal, she does not escape old age, disease and death.

But *māyā* calls and says that there is no need for this suffering. You must have done something wrong, you haven't done enough, and there must be no God because if there was He would not be so cruel as to allow such suffering. Look at the young beautiful calf; look at the strong bull who leads the herd. They should never grow old, they should never die.

Rādhē Śyāma died last week. No one really knew how old she was. The veterinarian said she was probably in her mid twenties. She was a very old cow, in human years one hundred years old or more. She was full of life the day before she died. She led all the old ladies out of the geriatric barn in the first breakout of the season. It was the new, short, fresh grass on Lakṣmī's lawn that attracted her. She was feisty that day. The previous year she had to be fed and watered separately in the pasture as she had to lay down because she could not keep up with the herd. This happened several times. Then we put her in the geriatric barn in the fall as she could not keep up at all with the

herd. When all the other old ladies came into the barn for the winter, she got quite lively. She surprised us by staying strong during the winter. Then the morning after the breakout, she was lying in the middle barn with Mādhava (the ox) standing over her. We went to check on her and she had already left her body. It happened in the night. She was fortunate it happened quickly. It is a far greater test when dying is slow. Hers was a good, long life as a protected cow.

All those great souls that have nursed a dying cow, we pray that you give them the strength to keep their hearts open to your presence while they try to give their beloved cow comfort. In a most difficult time, you, Śrīla Prabhupāda are there. In every misfortune you and the Cowherd Boy are there. It is only your mercy that allows us to see you there. Without you, how could anyone's heart not become cold when the most innocent of creatures suffer?

The deepest of loves develops when the most difficult of times emerge. This is the most sacred joy of a cowherd. In the mud, in the cold watching the pain, wiping the face and chanting in the ear of the suffering cow brings Lord Kṛṣṇa to the place when the soul passes. Even though Rādhe Śyāma did not have our presence at the time of death, she had many years of our association with embraces and chanting of the holy name in her floppy ears.

Bless the cowherds worldwide. Protect them from fatigue and weariness in the face of disease and death, give them deep love and understanding in such times. Give them joy in times of birthing and youthful calf frolicking. Give them a deep sense of accomplishment and a plentiful harvest from plowing with their oxen. Gift them with rising in the early morning to see their cows basking in the morning sun as the mist leaves the hillsides. Bless them with the peace of the simple life of the humble cowherd unaffected by any desire for adoration, name or fame. In such a life there is great peace and closeness to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and your most dear cowherd boy, Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Balabhadra Dāsa and Chāyā Devi Dāsī

Advaita Ācārya Dāsa and Ārcya Devī Dāsī

WE MUST HEAR THE LORD'S CALL!

Only through the mercy of the pure devotee can we begin to see
Only by his grace can we be set free
Dear Prabhupāda, please continue to give us your mercy for this fight
For what you give is moral, good, and spiritually right
Your instructions, they come from Kṛṣṇa Himself
With love and compassion for our devotional health
Through goodness and knowledge and love we can advance
Through chanting and praying you give us a chance
This human life, so rare and special, Kṛṣṇa has given to us all
Please, let us not misuse this opportunity for to hell we may fall
(We must hear the Lord's call)
Happiness and love we are looking for
By your mercy, it's you Prabhupāda who is opening the door
To give you the praise that your deserve, I don't know
Maybe one day my love I can begin to show
Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, Gopāla, our God
Prabhupāda, you are our strength, our staff, and rod
Once more I fall short in praising your glories, O compassionate King
May your fame and glory be known, let the universe sing

Your unworthy fallen souls,

Advaita Ācārya Dāsa and Ārcya Devī Dāsī

Amogha Dāsa

My dear spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my respectful obeisances at your divine lotus feet on the occasion of celebrating your appearance in the material world.

As the year count continues and the body and I am in wears on, I don't feel old. This is because, as you explained, I am a spirit soul. This truth I didn't know before you came into my life some forty-one years ago. At that time I also did not know anything about God.

By your mercy I could understand my real self is eternal when I heard your disciples explain it. At that moment my whole life-concept changed.

By your mercy I heard from you that the Supreme Lord is an eternal youth, playful, loving, humorous, and blue. He has blooming eyes like lotus petals, and frolics in the forest of Vṛndāvana, far, far beyond this life-crushing world of old age, disease and death.

With Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the embodiment of the highest love for Him, Kṛṣṇa plays His flute, enchanting the divine birds and other creatures of that home in the spiritual sky to which you invite all who will hear your voice and read your books. Garlanded by forest flowers, adorned with jewels, fine scents and garments of the most splendid colours, God even dances with his dearest devotees.

How can we sufficiently thank you?

You revealed the holy *dhāmas* on earth, where we can place ourselves in obeisances on ground which seems so worldly yet is beyond this world and pure *cintāmaṇi*, or spiritual touchstone. You inspired the development of ISKCON in Māyāpur, where Lord Nityānanda and Gaurāṅga dance and sing, forever inviting us to join Them. They are so kind that They overlook our faults and embrace our services, however small and insignificant they may be.

If you had not created ISKCON here, where would we stay in Māyāpur? We wouldn't even know where or what it is.

Due to your pure love for Kṛṣṇa, He has appeared all over the planet in gem-like forms of rare unrivaled beauty, the Deities of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Nītāi-Gaurāṅga, Lord Jagannātha, Subhadrā, Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, Lord Nṛsimhadeva, and more. You revealed to us that the Deities are actually Kṛṣṇa, not stone or wood.

How dark and lost my eyes would be without seeing these divine forms of luminous beauty, with their merciful faces beaming love and mercy?

You have given us Kṛṣṇa, yet some foolish people try to describe your teachings as basic. How can a body of knowledge by which one can go back

to the spiritual world in this life be described as basic?

I find the whirlwind of daily life bewildering, and the activities of the fallen souls disturbing, but there is shelter in the association of your swan-like devotees, who chant and dance in ecstasy, celebrating the nectar of the holy names: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Thank you, my spiritual master, for being with me always. Tragedies and triumphs, health and injury, peace and chaos—through all you are there watching over me. Please guide me to ever-increasing service that will please you, please your devotees, and please Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Your insignificant servant,

Amogha Dāsa

Bhakta Dāsa

My Divine Master Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this sacred day of your appearance in this world I come before you with straw between my teeth, falling as a stick before you, offering my body, mind, and words to you life after life.

Had you not come to the shores of the Western world in 1965, humbly obeying the sacred command of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura given to you decades before, I can only imagine the fully condemned life I would have led.

Whatever I know, it is due to you only; whatever I have done wrong is my own disobedience to you.

While you were here, we invited millions of people to come and see you, and to hear from you; but only a few came, and only a very few surrendered sufficiently to be initiated formally as your disciple. How fortunate we were to be allowed to recognize you!

Once when we said, “All glory to Your Divine Grace!” you replied, “My glory will be when my disciples are worshiped all over the world.” Today there are some who believe that you never wanted your own disciples to become teachers and accept disciples themselves. That is not what I learned from you, and to me it is a grave insult to Your Divine Grace.

Of course every disciple forever feels that he is nothing but a firefly in the light of the sun, compared to your incomparable self, yet, at least we can repeat exactly what you have taught without adding or subtracting; that much we can do, and in this way the message of Kṛṣṇa received from you will continue to spread to every household on this planet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, by your causeless mercy alone, my faith in you and in Lord Kṛṣṇa is intact and implicit after forty-two years. The world today is in a hellish position everywhere, and I am convinced beyond doubt that there are no solutions other than the application of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. My humble prayer at your holy feet today is that you will bless me to remain forever your instrument, and you will find some service for me always.

Your eternal servant,

Bhakta Dāsa

Locanānanda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your most merciful lotus feet.

I am a fallen soul, picked up from a most miserable lifestyle filled with ignorant behavior, by your divine lotus hand. It is a miracle that despite my abominable activities, I am still somehow connected with your movement to spread love of God throughout the world. It must therefore be true that Caitanya Mahāprabhu does not consider who is fit and who is unfit to render devotional service within His *saṅkīrtana* movement. Otherwise, I would have been the first one eliminated from the ranks of your followers.

I once wrote to Your Divine Grace with a recommendation to reorganize the management structure in certain European countries and you wrote back saying how you liked my ideas. Śrīla Prabhupāda, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for encouraging me again and again to engage my body, mind, and intelligence in Kṛṣṇa's service.

In 1971, you called me into your room at the Bury Place temple in London and asked me to set up a meeting with the French philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre. In Los Angeles, in January of 1974, you asked my opinion when you were outlining your travel plans—to spend four months in London, four months in Los Angeles, and four months in India—which would have allowed devotees all over the world to come to see you. And when you installed the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Deities in France at New Māyāpur, I was permitted to hand you the conch shells with which you bathed Their Lordships. Afterwards, I fanned you with the *cāmara* during the initiation ceremony conducted outdoors on the rolling lawn behind the château.

I could go on and on mentioning the unlimited opportunities you gave me to serve under your direction. Except for a few instances of kindness shown to me by devotees in France and Israel, most of those windows of opportunity closed about ten or fifteen years ago, but by a stroke of very good fortune, just an hour before sitting down to write this letter, I received an invitation from devotees in Italy to attend the Milano Ratha-yātrā this fall. Then an email arrived with an invitation to visit Israel in September to do street *saṅkīrtana* in Tel Aviv. These gestures of kindness by the devotees are nothing less than a manifestation of your concern and compassion upon this lowly creature expressed through certain of your exalted followers who sincerely represent you.

We used to hear devotees say all the time that “Kṛṣṇa consciousness

is so nice!” Now we hear mostly criticism and complaints about how the movement is no longer guided by pure devotion, how the leaders are not sufficiently attached to Kṛṣṇa, and how your role as ISKCON’s topmost authority has been usurped. I cannot say to what extent these claims are true, but what I do know is that the movement to spread love of God in this age by propagating the chanting of the holy name is really under the leadership of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. It is love of Godhead that is the greatest force in this world. It is also the greatest force for changing the collective consciousness of mankind. Nor can anyone hinder the flow of the pure devotee’s mercy. By your mercy, all of the transcendental knowledge we require to go back to Godhead has been recorded in the form of your books, your most lasting legacy.

May all of the generations of Vaiṣṇava devotees vow to preserve your words of instruction and to cherish them within their hearts. May they always emphasize and prioritize the programs you yourself instituted in accordance with the words of scripture and the explanatory notes given by the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Nothing new has to be invented. We must simply follow the plan chalked out by Your Divine Grace and our predecessor ācāryas.

As the all-knowing lord of the devotees, you are aware of the condition of the hearts of your followers. You also know the state in which ISKCON finds itself today. All Kṛṣṇa conscious solutions are also known to you. Therefore, you are fully empowered to enlighten your followers and reveal how we are to implement your true intentions. Devotees everywhere should bow before you and pray that you illuminate and guide the leaders of our movement from within. Surely those prayers will not go unanswered and you will dictate to them from within how to act on your behalf with concern, compassion and complete transparency.

Falling at your lotus feet, I beg to remain always engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa’s pure devotee.

With great affection, I am

Your eternal servant,

Locanānanda Dāsa

Madhukānta Dāsa

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

*vāñchā-kalpatarubhyaś ca kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānāṁ pāvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I am eternally indebted to you for saving me from this miserable condition of material life. Please accept this offering as some token of my gratitude. I would also like to express my gratitude to your disciples, my godbrothers: Jayādwaita Swami, Satyarāja Dāsa, and Ranchor Dāsa for providing this alternative forum for your direct disciples to present you their Vyāsa-pūjā offerings. And also to all my godbrothers and godsisters who have come forward to contribute their offerings on this most auspicious and sacred day: the 115th anniversary of your divine appearance on Earth.

While attempting to compose some proper offering to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am immediately overcome with bewilderment by my utter inadequacy to complete such a noble task. However by your mercy in presenting to your disciples your wonderful *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* volumes am I aware of this pertinent advice of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī:

“The ocean of the transcendental mellows of devotional service is so big that no one can estimate its length and breadth. However, just to help you taste it, I am describing but one drop.”

Similarly, you are like an unlimited ocean of transcendental qualities and pastimes, but if I can simply describe one drop then others can get some taste of the divine nectar that is Śrīla Prabhupāda.

In a lecture you gave on September 27, 1968 in Seattle, the following exchange occurred in the question and answer session after your talk:

Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Dāsa: Prabhupāda, what if we know we should serve and we want to serve, but the service is so bad.

Prabhupāda: Yes. Never think that service is perfect. That will keep you in the perfect stage. Yes. We should always think that our service is not complete. Yes. That is very nice. Just like Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught us

that... He said that “My dear friends, please take it from Me that I have not a pinch of faith in Kṛṣṇa. If you say that why I am crying, the answer is that just to make a show that I am great devotee. Actually, I have not a pinch of love for Kṛṣṇa. This crying is simply My show, make show.” “Why You are saying so?” “Now, the thing is that I am still living without seeing Kṛṣṇa. That means I have no love for Kṛṣṇa. I am still living. I should have died long ago without seeing Kṛṣṇa.” So we should think like that. That is the example. However perfect you may be in serving Kṛṣṇa, you should always know that... Kṛṣṇa is unlimited, so your service cannot reach Him perfectly. It will ever remain imperfect because we are limited. But Kṛṣṇa is so kind. If you offer a little service sincerely, He accepts. That is the beauty of Kṛṣṇa. *Svalpam apy asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt*. And if Kṛṣṇa accepts a little service from you, then your life is glorious. So it is not possible to love Kṛṣṇa perfectly, to render service to Kṛṣṇa, because He is unlimited. There is a process, worshiping the Ganges in India. The Ganges River is considered sacred river. So they worship Ganges, the River Ganges, by taking water from the Ganges and offering it. Suppose in a small pot like this, either pot or your handful, you take some water from the Ganges and with your devotion and mantra you offer to the Ganges water. So you take a glass of water from the Ganges and offer it to the Ganges, what is there, gain and profit or loss or gain for the Ganges? If you take a glass of water from the Ganges and again offer it, so what is the gain and profit of Ganges? But your process, your faith, your love for Mother Ganges, “Mother Ganges, I offer you this little water,” that is accepted. Similarly, what we have got to offer Kṛṣṇa? Everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa.

So what can I offer to you, but your own words and teachings that have inspired and encouraged me all these many years. They are like rare and precious gems of divine wisdom. Personally, the talks and pastimes you have shared with us of your relationship with your guru mahārāja have always been a source of special sweet wisdom and intimacy that have sustained and nourished me. I have recently been listening to a talk you gave in Los Angeles on December 9th 1968 on the 32nd disappearance anniversary of your guru mahārāja. In that talk you share how this movement spread to the Western countries:

And my Guru Mahārāja, he also did not marry. From the childhood he is strict *brahmacārī*, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja. And he underwent very severe penances for starting this movement,

worldwide movement. That was his mission. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wanted do this. He, 1896, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wanted to introduce this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement by sending this book, *Shree Chaitanya Mahāprabhu, His Life and Precepts*. Fortunately, that year was my birth year, and by Kṛṣṇa's arrangement, we came in contact. I was born in a different family, my guru mahārāja was born in a different family. Who knew that I will come to his protection? Who knew that I would come in America? Who knew that you American boys will come to me? These are all Kṛṣṇa's arrangement. We cannot understand how things are taking place. In 1936... Today is ninth December, 1938(68). That means thirty-two years ago. In Bombay, I was then doing some business. All of a sudden, perhaps on this date, sometimes between 9 or 10 December. At that time, Guru Mahārāja was indisposed little, and he was staying at Jagannātha Purī, on the seashore. So I wrote him letter, "My dear master, your other disciples, *brahmacārī, sannyāsī*, they are rendering you direct service. And I am a householder. I cannot live with you, I cannot serve you nicely. So I do not know. How can I serve you?" Simply an idea, I was thinking of serving him, "How can I serve him seriously?" So the reply was dated 13th December, 1936. In that letter he wrote, "My dear such and such, I am very glad to receive your letter. I think you should try to push our movement in English." That was his writing. "And that will do good to you and to the people who will help you." That was his instruction. And then in 1936, on the 31st December—that means just after writing this letter a fortnight before his departure—he passed away. But I took that order of my spiritual master very seriously, but I did not think that I'll have to do such and such thing. I was at that time a householder. But this is the arrangement of Kṛṣṇa. If we strictly try to serve the spiritual master, his order, then Kṛṣṇa will give us all facilities. That is the secret. Although there was no possibility, I never thought, but I took it little seriously by studying a commentary by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura on the *Bhagavad-gītā*. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* the verse *vyavasāyātmikā buddhir ekeha kuru-nandana* (Bg. 2.41), in connection with that verse, Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura gives his commentary that we should take up the words from the spiritual master as our life and soul. We should try to carry out the instruction, the specific instruction of the spiritual master, very rigidly, without caring for our personal benefit or loss. So I tried a little bit in that spirit. So he has given me all facilities to serve him. Things have come to this stage, that in this old age I have come to your country, and you are also taking this movement seriously, trying to

understand it. We have got some books now. So there is little foothold of this movement. So on this occasion of my spiritual master's departure, as I am trying to execute his will, similarly, I shall also request you to execute the same order through my will. I am an old man, I can also pass away at any moment. That is nature's law. Nobody can check it. So that is not very astonishing, but my appeal to you on this auspicious day of the departure of my guru mahārāja, that at least to some extent you have understood the essence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. You should try to push it on. People are suffering for want of this consciousness.

While listening to this talk when you utter "who knew" three times, I could hear the deep emotion in your voice. And then you go on to a very personal request and appeal to your neophyte Western disciples to try to push this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement on. Then in the final part of your talk you go on to assure us of divine blessings:

So this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is authorized, very important. Now, you American boys and girls who have taken to this movement, please take it more seriously and... That is the mission of Lord Caitanya and my guru mahārāja, and we are also trying to execute the will by disciplic succession. You have come forward to help me. I shall request you all that I shall go away, but you shall live. Don't give up pushing on this movement, and you'll be blessed by Lord Caitanya and His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda. Thank you very much.

No Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you very much and please give me the courage, enthusiasm and determination to never give up pushing on this glorious, divine, and sublime Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in the purifying association of your ever expanding legion of disciples and followers throughout the whole world.

Your aspiring servant,

Madhukānta Dāsa

Mahātmā Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nāma-śreṣṭhaṁ manum api śaci-putram atra svarūpaṁ
rūpaṁ tasyāgrajam uru-purīṁ māthurīṁ goṣṭhavātīm
rādhā-kuṇḍaṁ giri-varam aho rādhikā-mādhavāśāṁ
prāpto yasya prathita-kṛpayā śrī-guruṁ taṁ nato 'smi*

“I bow down to the beautiful lotus feet of my spiritual master by whose causeless mercy I have received the supreme holy name, the divine mantra, the service of the son of Śacīmātā, the association of Svarūpa Dāmodara, Rūpa Gosvāmī, and his older brother Sanātana Gosvāmī, the supreme abode of Mathurā, the blissful abode of Vṛndāvana, the divine Rādhā Kuṇḍa and Govardhana Hill and the desire within my heart for the loving service of Śrī Rādhikā and Mādhava in Vṛndāvana.”

Gifts. You continually give them, I continually take them. Your gifts are most precious.

The mantra you give is *cintāmaṇi*, a wish-fulfilling stone. I first chanted the *mahā-mantra* hoping it would get me “high.” I had no idea how high it was going to take me! By chanting the holy name my relationship with Kṛṣṇa will be revealed and love in the mood of the residents of Vraja will be awakened. I pray for your grace that I may always take advantage of this gift of *prema-nāma*.

Like everyone, I need to do something, and if I don’t engage my nature for Kṛṣṇa, I’ll use it anyway. You allow me virtually unlimited ways to engage my propensities in your service. Rather than being a dancing dog in the hands of *māyā*, you make me your dancing dog, dancing my way back to Kṛṣṇa. Just by allowing me to work for you, I can become a lover of Kṛṣṇa. What a blessing! May I remain eternally grateful to you, not only for engaging me, but for accepting my awkward attempts to serve you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, the most special gift you give me is the association of your devotees. Yes, devotees have their faults, but only by their wonderful association am I able to remain in your service and make progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. By giving me the gift of *sat-saṅga*, there is hope that someday I can become Kṛṣṇa conscious. May I always appreciate, glorify and serve the devotees, remembering that without their association I cannot remain in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

My appreciation for the *dhāma* increases every time I visit Māyāpur and Vṛndāvana. Your presence is watermarked all over these *dhāmas*. The more I experience the wonderful effects of being in the *dhāma*, the more I appreciate you, the one who gave me the *dhāma*. May I always utilize this gift by remembering the holy places wherever I go and by visiting them whenever I can.

Whenever I saw you, a desire to increase my service erupted from my heart. The power of your presence made me spontaneously want to surrender to Kṛṣṇa. When I think of your intense desire to serve Kṛṣṇa, I realize this desire is contagious. By remembering you and your mission, I become easily infected. May I always be attacked by such a wonderful disease.

As you have spoken and stated in your books, repaying you Śrīla Prabhupāda, is not possible. Yet, I know that you are pleased when I take advantage of what you give me. I pray that I can be worthy of the name, “Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disciple,” by not only being forever grateful for what you give, but by fully utilizing these gifts.

Your servant,

Mahātmā Dāsa
(Alochua, Florida)

Manmohinī Devī Dāsī

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I could try and sing a heartfelt song or write a poem to tell your story;
I could write in vain forever trying to describe your glory.
For who among us can ever understand exactly who you are;
Beloved guru, savior, master... amazing śaktyāveśa-avatāra!
No one can compare to you and no one ever will;
You came alone, leaving Vṛndāvana-dhāma—your home, your guru’s
desire to fulfill.
We welcomed you at airports and clung to your every word;
We relished your every expression and recorded all we heard.
Your humor and your purity, your charm and noble bearing;
The way you cared and loved us all was overwhelmingly endearing.
Each moment was so precious, every gesture and purport;
The way no matter how we stumbled, you continued your support.
Soft golden brown your features with a smile rivaling the moon;
And eyes that laughed and knew it all... I think you left too soon.
Your lectures unveiled all the truths of us, God and creation;
We sat in awe and hardly breathed lest we miss a revelation.
We all know now for certain that the goal of life is this;
To serve your mighty mission, so spread pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
As Lord Caitanya’s general, you’ve passed us the baton;
And in spite of all our shortcomings your movement will go on.
You’re in your books you’ve told us many, many times indeed;
For now your books and pictures are all that we can perceive.
Firm faith and trust and gratitude grow deeper each passing year;
Although sometimes the separation from you is intolerable to bear.
Will we surely be with you again, beloved jagad-guru?
For as for me, my heart and soul completely belong to you.

Your eternal servant,

Manmohinī Devī Dāsī

Svarūpa Dāsa

At a time when the Vietnam War was raging on and the peace movement was growing, Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived in America and presented *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, a scripture in which Kṛṣṇa chastises Arjuna for being a pacifist and tells him to get onto the battlefield and kill.

At the height of the Civil Rights movement and a time when feminism was on the rise, Śrīla Prabhupāda came to teach that spiritually we are all equal but on the bodily platform it just isn't so.

When an entire generation was turning into bohemian hedonists with slogans like, "If it feels good, do it" and "turn on, tune in, drop out" and the battle cry was "sex, drugs and rock n' roll"... Śrīla Prabhupāda introduced *bhakti-yoga*, a discipline that required followers to give up sex, intoxication, meat eating and gambling.

When growing long hair was so 'in' that the musical "Hair" became a nationwide sensation, Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed his followers to shave their heads.

When other swamis, yogis and gurus were coming from India to the West preaching peace and love and we are all one... Śrīla Prabhupāda called them cheaters, rascals and crows.

When the book "*I'm ok, You're ok*" came out, Śrīla Prabhupāda remarked, "We say that we are ok, you are not ok."

To say the least, Śrīla Prabhupāda's message was a hard sell given the time, place and circumstances. He was even warned that if he tried to impose such rules and regulations onto Westerners, nobody would listen; no one would take him seriously.

Śrīla Prabhupāda saw through all the superficiality and more than anything else he saw that we were dissatisfied. We were unhappy. We wanted change. All the experimenting with communes, drugs and sex and all the protesting and rebelling was due to deep feelings of frustration and hopelessness. He told us that we were intelligent to want something better... to want happiness and peace... but we didn't know how to achieve it. He said, "I have come to give you the positive alternative."

Śrīla Prabhupāda never compromised. He was innovative and creative and made some adjustments to accommodate and achieve success in the matter of teaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness... but he never compromised. He didn't have to. His genuine purity, compassion and love was the force behind the message and attracted all of us like iron filings to a magnet. We gladly let him turn us hippies into happies... with (as he would describe) shining faces.

Yes, Prabhupāda's message was a hard sell and he came alone to a strange, hostile environment to distribute it as ordered by his guru mahārāja. Against all odds he captured our hearts and minds without ever compromising.

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga!

Svarūpa Dāsa

Rukma Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my sincere and hopefully humble obeisances, and all glories to your sincere disciples who are still endeavoring to follow in your footsteps.

Time has passed by so quickly and we now find ourselves in these old and very painful and difficult bodies—which of course is still the special arrangement of our Lord and Master who is mercifully giving us one last opportunity to become completely focused on getting out of this material hell once and for all. I am happy to say that I have always managed to follow the three regulative principles: (Married life) and chant my daily sixteen rounds, despite little association with my godbrothers. Who knew in November 1970 when we sent in our letters requesting initiation with a tiny offering of *dakṣiṇā* that it would be so difficult to keep our promises to always follow the four regulative principles? At that time we were so confident in our borrowed spiritual potency from Your Grace that if you had asked us to go to the moon for distribution we would have tried without question, with full confidence that it would be possible. However when left alone without your personal presence following your orders required a much higher calling and many of us lost focus in one way or the other. Fortunately, some of our stronger godbrothers and godsisters managed to keep your movement alive and it is my personal observation that it is perhaps our Indian bodied associates who have really saved the day. Whatever the case may be, your movement seems to be gaining strength although quite a significant way below the standard that you had personally set.

In any case we are now personally back on track after being very embarrassed and suitably humiliated by *māyā* and forced by nature to give up not following the fourth regulative principle—and again finding ourselves begging for the mercy that we could somehow miraculously find enough energy to do something for you in our last years on this miserable planet. Fortunately we have also found some strength from the association of your good disciples and *sannyāsīs*—Trivikrama Mahārāja and Narasimha Swami.

We always feel ourselves tremendously in your debt, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and we consider ourselves to be of the very most fortunate souls of our generation that we somehow or other were sent to render a little service in your association, even though very unqualified and very dull-headed. We sincerely hope and pray that we have not done anything to blacken your good name or impede the forward motion of your glorious movement. And if we have willingly or unwittingly done so, we most humbly beg your pardon and

the pardon of any of those whom we may have offended in the blindness of our ignorance.

We strongly feel that meeting with you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, your movement and the so many great souls who comprise that movement is without question the very best thing that has ever happened to us while on this planet and we pray that we should always be blessed to remain in that frame of mind and to follow on in your footsteps for ever more no matter the difficulty.

Again all glories to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Rukma Dāsa

Vāṇinātha Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

I want to thank you, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, for kindly accepting me as your initiated disciple and for allowing me to reside in your temples to imbibe the unlimited treasury of Vedic scriptural wisdom coming straight from Vaikuṅṭha. Never for a moment did the glow of cheerfulness and joy that you instilled in me by your merciful glance and constant elucidation of the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* leave me in all the forty-one years since I took up the association of your followers.

Please allow me to continue to be a witness to the unlimited truth of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* in the time I have remaining, whether it be two minutes or another forty-one years. At that time, may I please be allowed the benediction of being able to remember your lotus feet, for then my destination will be unlimitedly auspicious.

A thousand times the humble servant of your servant,

Vāṇinātha Dāsa Brahmācārī

Mādhavānanda Dāsa

Dear spiritual father Śrīla Prabhupāda,

You have been so kind to me, from 1969 when we first met, up to this very day; I offer my most humble prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet, and pray that Śrī Gaurāṅga Deva and Śrī Śrī Jāhnvā-Nitāi will, out of Their causeless mercy, help me to once again become pleasing to you, more and more, as the secret of success in *śuddha-bhakti* is pleasing the pure devotee of Śrī Gaurahari.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa kindly showed me so much love in my life, but when He sent me to you He was supremely kind. You were an ocean of kindness, mercy and strength when manifest before us, and now you are still as close as our jugular vein, as you are always with the omnipresent Lord. You are the most confidential servitor of the Divine Queen of Goloka Vṛndāvana, and She is so kind to have sent you to us in these difficult times of Kali-yuga. Śrīla Prabhupāda, I miss you so much; traveling throughout India with you were the happiest days of my life. Everyone who simply came into your presence found peace, happiness, and perfect understanding. You were always chanting the *mahā-mantra* on your beads or in *saṅkīrtana*. You were always speaking about Śrī Kṛṣṇa. You would always bring the group conversation back to Kṛṣṇa. You are so expert. You are so dedicated. You are so in love with the Lord of all.

You were so humble. Your purity and your humility would melt our hard hearts. All of your happiness came from your constant internal *bhajana* to the Supreme Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava. It was constant, uninterrupted, and without the slightest hint of *karma* or *jñāna*.

I remember:

1. While we all waited with you in the airport lounge for your servant to get your luggage, returning to the Calcutta airport from one of your extensive world tours. The devotees asked you how it was, and you said, "I was thinking of you the whole time." More melted hearts. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for your causeless mercy.
2. How you defended us constantly from any and all dangers, such as the time the *smārta-brāhmaṇa* in Hyderabad criticized you for making *brāhmaṇas* of Westerners, I have never heard you shout so loudly as the verbal argument escalated. We were so concerned that we ran to your room and just then the scoundrel decided to

leave. For the next seven days you were so grave in your morning lectures quoting verse after verse, such as *cātur-varṇyaṁ mayā sṛṣṭam* (“This is My system”) *guṇa-karma-vibhāgaśaḥ* (“based on the work one does and the character-qualities they exhibit”) (not according to their birth).

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda for your causeless mercy.
(to be continued)

Your servant,

Mādhavānanda Dāsa

Kuśa Devī Dāsī

Dearly beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my heartfelt obeisances to your lotus feet.

You have given us the scientific formulae to quench the thirst hastened by the blazing fire of material existence. We take comfort in your shelter through guru, Ṭhākuraḥ and *vaiṣṇava-sevā*.

We remember you required the temple presidents and GBC to give a service report. While I write letters to you year round, mostly asking for help with a particular problem, I am happy to report some meager and some major improvements made in your service.

1. This year we renovated our home with a large altar area to better facilitate our newly arrived *arcā-vigraha*. I am overjoyed to report that the Deity trinity long sought after finally arrived and is being worshipped.
2. We have dinner *sat-saṅga* programs about once a month. My Indian sons are having dinner *sat-saṅga* once a week.
3. We have been offered service in your Mayapur Vrindavan Trust project and for that I am most grateful. I miss Vṛndāvana so much, so I am indebted to be invited back to home, back to Godhead!
4. I am proud to report that my daughter has given birth to a wonderful baby boy on Narasiṁha-caturdaśī, thus he has been named Narasiṁha. She is requesting devotional paraphernalia from me to raise him in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We celebrated his *anna-prāśana* ceremony during which he chose the books. She thanked me for being raised in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This is your mercy!
5. Śrīmatī Tulasī-devī, kindly in my care, is doing well. We remember with such fondness how you guided us to worship and care for her in the early days. Worshipping and caring for Śrīmatī Tulasī-devī has been such a boon for us, we cannot thank you sufficiently for this *mahā* benediction.

While the family expands, so it contracts. I attended to my father during the last six days of his life. I became acutely aware of the blessed life you have bestowed upon us as I observed my father's attachment to his work, wallet, banking, and family. In delirium, he spoke as if he were on the job, even though he had been retired for over twelve years. I thank you for *kṛṣṇa-sevā*.

My father and I occasionally had profound talks regarding his upcoming passage. I felt like some kind of cheerleader, cheering him on, encouraging him by speaking of the great opportunity that lay before him. This gave him

hope in the face of death. I asked if he believed in reincarnation and to my surprise he said, “Yes!” I was delighted and asked him if he flies in his sleep. He said, “Yes!” I explained that just as he flew in his sleep, his subtle body would fly him to a better situation as his current body was increasingly inoperable. He found comfort in hearing that he would be trading his broken down body for a newly improved model.

We witnessed his terminal restlessness as he struggled with the Yamadūtas. He was totally relieved when we put *yamunā-jala* on his lips and *tilaka* on his forehead. He then requested “that” water as he experienced Yamunā’s merciful grace upon him. We brought his ashes to the Yamunā. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, my father’s passing was auspicious due to your enlightened instruction.

All auspiciousness in our lives is due to your gracious compassion and life rectification strategies. You gave us second birth. You have given us a blessed life filled with singing, dancing, *prasāda* and *sat-saṅga*. We have so much to look forward to in this life and the next.

I am feeling all choked up in the world in your absence. We miss you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and look forward to the benediction of your guidance and service life after life.

Your insignificant, yet eternally grateful servant,

Kuśa Devī Dāśī

Ātmānanda Dāsa

Most dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet. May all acclaim and recognition and gratitude be perpetually showered on you and your most glorious and magnanimous service to the Supreme Lord, His most confidential servitors, and indeed the entire universe.

Although I feel unable to offer anything pleasing in your service, I do have a strong appreciation of and attachment to your loving guidance. And, although undeserving, I pray that you continue to benedict me with everything I need to develop an intense desire to be purified by your words; and to spread and share those glorious vibrations unlimitedly. At present, I have a particular difficulty in my service to you and your followers. And I am praying for your further blessing to resolve it.

This year I spent about two months in our most special place, the holy, transcendental home of Lord Caitanya. My experience was both wonderful and challenging. I have always loved being in Śrīdhāma Māyāpur: in some ways, even more than in Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma, even though I know there is no difference between the two. Maybe because I am so unqualified, I experience the special, soft, unconditional love and support of the Pañca-tattva and Their *dhāma* as most soothing, strengthening and hope-giving.

There are the amazing Deities, and *kīrtanas*; Mother Gaṅgā; numerous *tīrthas*; the association of so many wonderful devotees; as well as almost unlimited opportunities for purification and service. And my visit was especially wonderful this time, because I was able to do significant service for individual devotees in the form of coaching and counseling; as well as providing training, consultation and social service development with the Mayapur Community Sevaks (MCS).

You and Pañca-tattva have blessed me to be able to use my training and experience to help individuals, couples, and management, deal with intrapersonal, interpersonal and community challenges and conflict, in a healthy and progressive way. This is, on the one hand, very satisfying, because devotees find so much solace, relief and clarity, as well as renewed enthusiasm. I feel profoundly grateful to you and the Lord for this gift.

Still, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I perceive apparent discrepancies and misrepresentations in the name of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, in the name of your teachings. And sometimes, in the course of my service, I hear experiences of neglect and mistreatment at the hands of those who claim to follow you.

Thus, I am plagued by frustration and doubt as to how to please you best with my abilities. And I am asking for your consideration and guidance.

I know you do not want me to enviously criticise others, but rather to be appreciative. However, I also do not think you want me to give up my individual thoughtfulness and realization, or to naively go along with what may be injustice, or neglect, or even abuse, in the name of Kṛṣṇa consciousness or your mission.

I expect that most, if not all, of these difficulties could be resolved if there was a stronger mood of cooperation and open communication within our communities and the society as a whole. Learning to work together, and cooperate, to purely maintain and expand your mission is, I think, one of the most difficult things for us, your followers. And I need your continued help and guidance to understand what you want me to do in this regard.

Many devotees have wonderful qualities and abilities and intentions, and many preaching projects have been started. However, many times, in many places, there are devotees preaching with little or no meaningful communication or cooperation with other devotees preaching even in the same area, or country. (We have that kind of situation here in New Zealand.) Or groups of devotees start ambitious projects, but end up failing, or giving up. This is often due to personal disagreements and/or unwillingness to learn how to really listen to and understand each other, faithfully and effectively apply the “*ṭṛṇād api sunīcena*” principle, to achieve mutually satisfactory resolutions, for the sake of continuing the project for your pleasure.

Sometimes I wonder if you are saddened by our immaturity, and our lack of faith in your instructions. In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* you explain that the ability to carry out the instruction of the spiritual master is there embodied in the instruction itself.

Your own example, with the Gauḍīya Maṭha and your godbrothers, is very instructive for me. You assertively, humbly, and confidently developed your own “independent” preaching—fulfilling the mission of your beloved spiritual master—without ever closing the door to working together. At the same time, for the benefit of the world, you boldly spoke out about some of their misunderstandings and misapplications of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī’s teachings and example.

You warned us that we should be careful not to relate with your godbrothers in the same way that you could. However, I think the principle is extremely important. (We do not imitate, but we follow the example, according to time, place and circumstance, and our level of realization.)

I have a deep faith that if we humbly and cooperatively struggle together

to find practical solutions based on your instructions, then you and the Pañca-tattva will bless us all with mutually satisfying and rewarding successes in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. However, in practice, generally, that commitment and endeavor seems mysteriously elusive for us. In a few rare instances, it is manifesting, and yet I know that that humble cooperative mood could be so much more prominent; and that so many more needy souls, within and outside of our communities, would be hugely relieved and enlivened... inspired to give their full energies in service of the *saṅkīrtana* movement.

If you have given us everything we need to be successful in your service, then what is so elusive or difficult in practically fulfilling what might be called your “ultimate instruction”—to cooperate together to spread your mission, and thus show our unconditional love for you? I think part of the answer is what I find in my own experience: I have to struggle very hard to be responsible: to be conscious of and to control my tendency to blame others; and to admit my own weaknesses, and to respect the other person’s ideas and sentiments, even if I do not necessarily agree with them.

I need to look deeply within myself, and to become more dependent on your mercy, and to associate more with those I see doing this themselves. I pray that you give me the clarity and spiritual strength to give up such *anarthas*, including selfish stubbornness, pretention, and arrogance. And then to have the confidence, humility, detachment, and patience to express and stick with my realizations as potentially valuable contributions to the cooperative effort.

The more I can become dependent on you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and your basic instructions, to allow these qualities to manifest in me, the more I know I am becoming your genuine disciple. I think there is nothing more important for me. And the more I struggle to do this (with like-minded devotees doing the same), the more I feel your loving presence and power, and your blessings to go further. By your potency, I am then able to help others to also connect with and understand your boundless compassion and empowerment.

Begging to remain eternally dependent on your association, and grateful for your unflinching acceptance of this fallen and struggling servant of your servants,

Ātmānanda Dāsa
(New Zealand)

Goṣṭha-bihārī Dāsa and Mahā-Viṣṇupriyā Devī Dāśī

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

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, our divine guru, father and friend,
Please accept our humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

You have been gone from this physical world and our eyesight for these last thirty-four years. Yet the time has flown by in a twinkling of an eye. Thirty-four years later and what can we say for ourselves, in all that time?

We can say that your presence is still so strongly felt amongst your disciples. We feel your presence when we think of you, honor you and try humbly to serve your mission. We feel your presence when we associate with our godbrothers and godsisters. We feel empowered by you especially on days like this; commemorative days of your glorious appearance, the only light in this dark material world.

Today, we are amazed at the flourishing of your precious ISKCON around the globe. We marvel at the high quality of so many sincere devotees that have come to ISKCON attracted by your books and preaching. You predicted this, when you told us in Honolulu in 1975, “Those who come to this movement after you, will be far more advanced than you, because they will understand the pure, perfect example without ever having seen it.”

We are also amazed at the caliber of Deity worship still going on around ISKCON today as remarkable. Within the past year, we had an installation of Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma at our New Raman Reti center. We thank you for sending all these wonderful souls and incredible Deities into our lives to inspire us and keep us fixed.

Amazing is the culture of the Americans, Europeans, Asians and Africans melting together in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, working side by side in service to you. You truly did build a house in which the whole world can live.

So many things that you told us about so long ago, we could not fully appreciate or understand. But in these last thirty-four years that appreciation and understanding has deepened and matured.

Personally, my husband and I can say that what little we could understand of your words so long ago, did ring true in our hearts. Yet today, we are still so powerfully experiencing this truth as we age. We are astounded to find so much clarity in your words as we mature in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We came as youthful twenty-year-olds, from a mesmerizing and disappointing world view, looking for answers and finding a constant certainty and veracity in

your words, your books, your convictions, your actions and your unassailable preaching.

You changed our hearts and minds, and gave us brand new “spectacles” from which to view the world. These special lenses were called *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Bhagavad-gītā*. It has become our beloved foundation and structure of strength for living our lives. We are no longer dazed and confused by the material energy. We are no longer gullible to the con artists, scammers and illusionists around us. What a great gift you have given us!

You were never at a loss for words in any situation, with anyone, or baffled by the material energy, as we were. In fact, you always had the most perfect things to say to each and every individual or group. You lived in a different plane of reality and you were able to envelope us all in that spiritual energy whenever we were with you. You knew best how to present Kṛṣṇa consciousness in palatable ways for all. You yourself marveled at the words that flowed through you in your writings, as you always enjoyed hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā* and all the books that you translated. You would tell us that this was Kṛṣṇa speaking directly through you. Kṛṣṇa was dictating every word. You were just the pure vessel. Oṃ Viṣṇupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Mahārāja recognized this quality in you when he said, “This boy likes to hear. He listens well. He does not leave.”

By your constant, sincere devotion you have proved to be the appointed one. The *paramparā* has infused you with all their spiritual energy and blessings. While always meek and humble, you ARE always a powerhouse of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, *bhakti-yoga* and undiluted, undying love for Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and all His associates. With you securely at the helm, we have managed to remain connected to you and your glorious ISKCON over the years. We thank you for that. We know that your mercy is always available to all of us. We have only to “take it,” as you have said.

Please bless all of us, in our aging years to stay connected, to remain in your sweet service and to assist in giving Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others sincerely from our hearts as you always did. Thank you for all your bountiful blessings over all these years. We humbly beg to remain in your service lifetime after lifetime.

Your disciples,

Goṣṭha-bihārī Dāsa and Mahā-Viṣṇupriyā Devī Dāsī

Govinda-mohini Devī Dāsī

I offer my humble obeisances unto the lotus feet of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the great Vaiṣṇava ācārya in the *Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya sampradāya*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda is the mercy incarnation (kṛpā-avatāra) of Kṛṣṇa and is the most confidential associate of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and the gopīs. He is a pure unalloyed devotee of the highest order and a nitya-siddha (eternally liberated soul). Śrīla Prabhupāda is compared to a lotus flower that can stand in a pond of murky water, but is never touched by the water. Although Śrīla Prabhupāda was asked by Kṛṣṇa to come to the material world and preach, he was never affected by matter or the modes of material nature, but is always in an eternally transcendental position. Śrīla Prabhupāda is decorated with all the beautiful twenty-six qualities of a pure devotee, and so many more. His demeanor and character were so pure, spotless and impeccable no one could find fault with such a great self realized soul whose mind and senses are one hundred percent engaged in the service of the Supreme Lord.

“The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in me, their lives are surrendered unto Me, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss by enlightening one another and conversing about Me.” (Bg. 10.9)

When I first saw Śrīla Prabhupāda years ago when he visited Australia, I thought he was a very saintly, exalted personality. Everything he spoke was profound, logical and the highest spiritual philosophy I had ever heard of or read before or since—nothing compared to it. I observed his perfect, exemplary spiritual behaviour and pure, spotless character. He manifested all those transcendental qualities of a pure, unalloyed devotee of Kṛṣṇa described in the Bhagavad-gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. He only spoke and acted in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and didn’t put on an act of being spiritual, as so many bogus swamis did. He never slipped up or fell into māyā. Seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, he engaged everything—mind, body, senses, activities, words and life in serving his Guru Mahārāja, who asked him in his first and last meeting to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the English speaking world. His energy was continually fixed on serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead without ever being diverted.

Surrendered souls like Śrīla Prabhupāda can never be diverted from the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, and I never saw him divert, not once for a second. Such souls are 24/7 engaged in glorifying the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and their hearts

and minds are submerged in thoughts of Him always. I saw, he was always working very hard, sometimes only sleeping one or two hours, translating transcendental books, giving classes, going on preaching engagements and teaching his disciples to become Vaiṣṇavas. He taught them how to cook for Kṛṣṇa, clean for Kṛṣṇa, worship Kṛṣṇa in the Deity form and encouraged them to chant, preach and distribute Lord Caitanya’s mercy to the fallen souls of the world.

I can’t begin to realize or appreciate just how great Śrīla Prabhupāda is. He is the most compassionate devotee and greatest philanthropist, not only to human beings but to all living entities. I remember reading a recollection from Mother Govinda Dāsī in Prabhupāda Stories: “I saw a large brown slug in all its slimy ugliness. Somewhat repulsed I leaned away from the creature. Śrīla Prabhupāda looked at me quizzically and I said: “Ugh, look at this,” pointing to the slimy, sliding creature. Śrīla Prabhupāda leaned forward and looked at the slug. His face grew full of love and compassion, and he said to me: “Chant to the poor creature.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s spiritual vision sees the spirit soul in every living entity whether he is a cat, dog, insect, slug, human being, demigod etc., he sees them all as being part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, but dressed differently in different bodies, just as it is spoken in the Bhagavad-gītā:

“The humble sage by virtue of true knowledge sees with equal vision the learned and gentle brāhmaṇa, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater.” (Bg. 5.18)

Śrīla Prabhupāda went through so many struggles to bring Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the Western countries and the whole world. He had so much compassion for the suffering souls, forgetful of Kṛṣṇa and their eternal relationship with Him.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s desire was to fulfill the desires of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda, His spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta and to spread Lord Caitanya’s movement of congregational chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa all over the world, bringing about a revolution into the impious lives of the world’s misdirected civilization. Śrīla Prabhupāda gave us the process to become Kṛṣṇa conscious and as we have free will, we have the choice to choose to take advantage of this rare opportunity or not. I firmly believe that if you choose to follow Śrīla Prabhupāda’s instructions sincerely and strictly, you will surely attain success and return to the loving, transcendental service of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the eternal abode of Goloka Vṛndāvana. I offer my obeisances unto

my exalted godbrothers and godsisters who have lovingly served and followed the instructions of their beloved spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for most of their lives without leaving the shelter of His lotus feet. May they be blessed by dint of their sincere service with pure, unalloyed love for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Govinda-mohinī Devī Dāsī

Kṛpāmayī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

I've been trying to write this offering for some time now. It is the last moment to submit and I continue to struggle. I am embarrassed, ashamed.

I can only say that in spite of profound ignorance each day, it becomes more and more apparent that you have so kindly given the greatest gift a lost soul can receive. I am certain that even this bit of clarity is a manifestation of your mercy and compassion.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, "my only wish is to have my consciousness purified..." and my ardent prayer is to know and love your Kṛṣṇa truly and deeply.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please let the soothing and life-giving rain of your causeless mercy nourish the thirsty hearts of all of the souls who suffer in this world. We let go of the Lord's lotus feet and are adrift in the nightmare of forgetfulness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have shown us the path. By word and by deed you have paved the way back to Godhead. Please take us by the hand, as a gentle father guides his child, and lead us safely and surely to the sweet land of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Still aspiring to serve you and become your loving daughter.

Kṛpāmayī Devī Dāsī

Mahāśinī Devī Dāśī

My dearest Prabhupāda,

Alas, my words are poor; I cannot claim to be a poet
You gave the seed of devotional service. You gave the order “sow it”
Your presence with us on this Earth made us strong and firm awhile
But I count among the number who’ve been tricked by *māyā*’s wiles
And yet the message is so strong, the messenger so pure
That all who heard and followed once cannot forget the cure
Ignorance, passion and goodness push here and there each day
But we hold this knowledge in our hearts; all we need do is pray
Pray to Lord Caitanya, who, chanting, walked this Earth
And gave for free the holy name; the cure for repeated birth
We recall your simple instructions to chant the holy name
Take some *prasāda*, read your books, give up the material game
I often wonder, looking around, how people carry on each day
Not knowing Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and how His energies hold us sway
How sad to think we’re in control; and the “master of our fate”
When *māyā* has swallowed us all and we live in an enslaved state
So “thank you” is insufficient for the answers that you brought us
But “thank you” is all we have, for the great truths that you taught us

Mahāśinī Devī Dāśī

Mahendra Dāsa and Sukhadā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

We are your undeserving son and daughter hoping to find the words to express our endless gratitude for having been blessed with the priceless gift of your association. Then, as now, times were turbulent, and we have had many valleys and peaks throughout the years since we took initiation from you in 1971. As we try to remember your sacrifices in bringing Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the West, it humbles and shames us to think that we are so fallen and have been of so little help to you in fulfilling the orders of your spiritual master.

But as we remember how loving and caring you were to all of us we have hope that in some small way we may make you happy in our small endeavors to help spread the message of Lord Caitanya Mahārabhu.

*harer nāma harer nāma harer nāmaiva kevalam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nāsty eva gatir anyathā*

“For spiritual progress in the Age of Kali, there is no alternative, there is no alternative, there is no alternative to the holy name, the holy name, the holy name of the Lord.”

This is what you have taught us. You have never deviated from preaching this message of Lord Caitanya. You have defeated the propositions and influences of impersonalism, moral relativism and materialism by simply repeating and explaining to us, with clear understanding, the words of the *Vedas* and the previous *ācāryas*. You have lived the life of a great soul, never asking us to do anything for your own self-aggrandizement. By your example you have given us a way to go back home, back to Godhead.

Since your physical departure, your ISKCON society has gone through some painful upheavals. You always told us to work things out, to get along with each other. Many of your disciples went away hurt, bruised, and bewildered by what was happening. Yet the seeds and early blossoms of Kṛṣṇa consciousness that you planted are here with us... that is the great and priceless gift that you offer and leave to us. Many of your disciples are reaching out to each other and preaching again to each other to stay connected and to increase our service to your mission. Remembering you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is what helps us all to remember Kṛṣṇa. Those seeds and blossoms are being tended with ever-increasing fervency!

We pray for the leaders in ISKCON that they will always remember your personal example and instructions as the constitutional bases for the hard decisions that they must make from time to time. We pray that none of us will commit any offenses against any Vaiṣṇavas. We pray to always remember you and what you have done to help save so many undeserving souls.

Please forgive our offenses. The mercy of the spiritual master is the only way by which we can obtain the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. You are with us forever through your books, your instructions and your spotless exemplary life.

Your very fallen son and daughter,

Mahendra Dāsa and Sukhadā Devī Dāsī

Maṇḍaleśvara Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I bow down at your lotus feet with great awe and reverence.

I am your initiated disciple and your eternal servant. Other than that I have no meaning. Up until the point at which I contacted Your Divine Grace, your merciful writings, your transcendental movement (the International Society for Krishna Consciousness), and your many pure and blessed followers—up until then, I was simply wandering the universe, lost and alone.

Daily, all around me and within me, I see the grim realities of *māyā*'s illusion and the dangers and entanglement of material life. Everything is just as you have warned that it would be. Were it not for your books, your mercy, your ISKCON, and your followers, how bleak and empty my life and my future lives would be!

The horror of continuing life after life without you is unspeakable. The magnitude of your gifts is unfathomable. My debt to you is eternal. I cling to your holy lotus feet, because there and there alone am I truly happy and without fear.

My desire to surrender utterly to those holy lotus feet is not exactly based on my hopes of winning heaven or escaping hell. In other words, I serve and worship Your Divine Grace because that is my constitutional, eternal position. In truth, I should need no other motive or justification than this. For countless births I have undoubtedly been serving—but I was serving my lust to be the enjoyer, my ambition to be the master, my dogged persistence to be happy without Kṛṣṇa. I was serving, but out of immense pride, I was always calling it something else. Without really understanding, I was in fact looking for what Your Divine Grace has given me.

By your mercy manifestations, Your Divine Grace has unflinchingly and repeatedly been opening my eyes and showing me the naked truth behind my foolish attempts to be happy within an illusion. At the same time, you have also given me a glimpse of my true, eternal self and my original, constitutional position of devotional service to the Absolute Personality of Godhead.

No other gift can compare to your mercy. You have saved me from the greatest illusion. You have delivered me from an interminable series of repeated births and deaths. And you are reinstating me in my eternal position of unmotivated devotional service to the Eternal Divine Couple, Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Once on a morning walk, one of your disciples suggested that the spiritual master was, in fact, “greater than Kṛṣṇa.” When I first heard that on

a recording, I held my breath, wondering how Your Divine Grace might reply. Immediately, you explained, that the spiritual master was “Kṛṣṇa directly.” We, your followers, also affirm this truth whenever we sing verse seven of *Śrī Śrī Gurvaṣṭaka*, when we pray *sākṣād dharitvena*: “The spiritual master is to be honored as much as the Supreme Lord, because he is the most confidential servitor of the Lord.”

I think this is also what I am understanding now as I write these words in your honor. The truth, however, is that I have no words, no understanding, and no devotion. In this mood I think it best for me to simply say that I beg Your Divine Grace that I may be permitted to eternally remain an insignificant debtor to you, engaged in whatever service you might give me at your lotus feet, safe and secure in the association of your ISKCON and your followers. All I can see is your mercy.

Your eternal servant,

Maṅḍaleśvara Dāsa

Nārāyaṇī Devī Dāśī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

Thank you so much for giving me abundant service in writing, traveling and teaching. It is a real challenge for me to be so busy, but at the same time to be personal and not to lose sight of the essence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I would like to increase the quality of my chanting, speaking and serving while at the same time increasing the quantity. I remember how you were so extremely busy traveling, writing and preaching, yet you always had time for your many disciples. Once when I was a bit late in joining you on a morning walk, you stopped your conversation to acknowledge my presence. I was just one insignificant devotee among thousands, yet you had the time to recognize me. I also remember when you called myself and my husband to your *vyāsāsana* after one *darśana-ārati* in Calcutta to say, “Thank you very much.” At that time we were the *pūjārīs* in the Calcutta temple for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. You especially liked the opulent flower decorations, which the bees also liked. You said that when the bees come to the Deities, then the Deities are pleased with the worship.

Now I would also like to hear you say, “Thank you very much.” It is not enough to please you once, but we must always be trying to please you every day for the remainder of our lives. We hope and pray that whatever service we do, that you will be pleased with us and that we can meet you again to see your smile and hear your encouraging words.

Your servant,

Nārāyaṇī Devī Dāśī

Pañcaratna Dāsa

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Here in the American South, there's a popular song sung in churches—'Amazing Grace.' It's a beautiful song about the grace of God and as I began writing to you this morning, addressing you with the words 'Divine Grace,' I was reminded of it. I was especially called to the line "'twas blind but now can see," and "that saved a wretch like me."

Surely, I have been most wretched and unfortunate without your grace. And it is truly your grace, for I have done nothing to deserve your kindness, at least nothing knowingly. It was by Kṛṣṇa's grace that I ended up alone in Toronto in 1970, living in a cheap boarding house on the same street as your temple. And there, by your grace, I was accepted by the ashram and engaged in service to your mission.

Now, 41 years later, despite my continued attachments, physical, mental and emotional that continually distract me from the unalloyed service you offer me, your grace sustains me. How else can it be that such a fallen and lowly soul as myself can taste just a drop of the sweet nectar bestowed by Śrī Nāma Prabhu. It can only be by your grace that my offences are overlooked and Śrī Nāma grants me a particle of the unlimited joy of his presence.

Not only in my life, but in the expanding world of pure *kṛṣṇa-bhaktas*, your grace is undoubtedly amazing—amazing for its reach, its breadth and depth and amazing for its ability to lift us up from the grossest ignorance.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for your divine grace. May I somehow serve as a channel for that grace to all those, like me, who do not deserve or qualify for it, but are lost without it. As the song continues: "I was lost but now am found."

Your humble servant,

Pañcaratna Dāsa

Sankarṣaṇa Dāsa

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, on December 17, 1973 in Los Angeles, you gave us, your disciples, the order: “Become guru and deliver the whole world.”

There is no doubt that the world desperately needs to be delivered. But delivering the world requires us to be *jagad-gurus*, on the highest platform of pure *bhakti*.

In this regard, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I’ve got a very serious problem. I cannot even deliver myself, what to speak of making a meaningful contribution to our assigned mission of delivering the entire the world.

Therefore all I can do, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is fall down at your feet and beg you to somehow or other utilize this worthless piece of trash named Sankarṣaṇa Dāsa in your world mission of ushering in a new Vedic age for the deliverance of the entire human society.

Your eternal servant,

Sankarṣaṇa Dāsa Adhikārī

Śatadhanya Dāsa

I don't know about others, but I do know that I have not yet fully surrendered at Śrīla Prabhupāda's lotus feet—I mean full and real surrender, *śaraṇāgati*—not academic, theoretical, politically correct, or pretentious surrender. As Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda says, "...at any given moment there is nothing in existence which can obstruct our full surrender to the Supreme Lord, save and except our own willful obstinacy." If I actually and whole-heartedly believed and accepted that Kṛṣṇa is God, and Śrīla Prabhupāda is His true representative, surely I would there and then surrender cent percent to the all-powerful supreme controller and cause of all causes, but, alas, I do not! I linger and loiter amongst illusive dreams and prospects of enjoying and exploiting this material body and senses, of making good on opportunities I perceive as beneficial to myself or my extensions, while utterly misidentifying my corporal existence as a worthwhile and expedient venture. Although I realize and daily resolve to abandon such a futile and agonizing struggle, I persist, as a driven zombie, in a deathlike, unconscious and illogical stupor in pursuit of untouchable objects, stool and vomit, which, clearly and undeniably, only further entangle me in the conditioned matrix of pain and suffering.

Nevertheless, this old train, spitting out steam and blackish coal dust, chugs on rendering some sort of devotional service to Śrīla Prabhupāda—for I, also, have a relationship with His Divine Grace—having touched and served his lotus body and having heard his transcendental lips vibrate my name, and he, in turn, having touched my heart. This relationship, unfathomable, but yet palpable, certainly is one of endearment, affection and love, and is embedded deep into my being. It is this transcendental relationship only, nothing more and nothing less, which sustains me and gives me the faith and conviction that one day, in the not so distant future, I will, indeed, fully surrender to Śrīla Prabhupāda in the true sense of the term. There is no mundane or perfunctory equation, equilibrium of mind or super prowess that can conquer, neutralize or prevail upon the all-powerful and overwhelming, subjugating force of *māyā*—how then can *māyā* be shunned *in perpetuum*? It is in this relationship *ONLY*, with Śrīla Prabhupāda, that any hope can be maintained and this *ALONE* is my only *SAVING GRACE!*

Your lowly servant,

Śatadhanya Dāsa

Satyadeva Dāsa

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you for:

Accepting me as your disciple, even though I am the most fallen and born with demoniac qualities such as extreme pride, arrogance, conceit, anger, harshness and ignorance.

Showing me what is right by insisting your disciples follow the four regulative principles of fidelity, sobriety, compassion and honesty that allows one to live conscientiously and non-violently, acting in this world in a way that frees one from ignorance and the repetition of birth and death.

Giving me the Gāyatrī mantras that enable one to worship the Deity, transcend the modes of nature that influence the twenty-four hours in the day, and deepen our perception of the Lord's personality who is fully and eternally present in His holy names.

Allowing me into the association of the greatest devotees such as Your Holiness, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Viśvanātha Cakravartī, Rūpa, Sanātana and Śrī Jīva, Gaura-Nityānanda, Śukadeva, Prahlāda, Nārada, Lord Brahmā, all of whom are present in the Bhaktivedānta purports of your books and are pouring unlimited blessings of wisdom and light upon all souls who are so fortunate to hear them.

Engaging me in the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu which is giving the highest gift of *kṛṣṇa-prema* to one and all regardless of having qualification or not.

Personally speaking to me and encouraging me to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* throughout my life because without receiving this *mahā-mantra* from your lotus lips surely it would not have been possible for me to have continued.

Spontaneously demonstrating to me the necessary qualities required while chanting the *mahā-mantra* that are the gateway to *kṛṣṇa-prema*, humility, tolerance, devoid of pride, and respect for all.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in my feeble attempt to express my gratitude to you for all that you have given, I am no doubt an offender because your glories are unfathomable and beyond my ability to properly articulate. I beg forgiveness for this offense and all my offenses to your lotus feet.

I also beg one blessing from you. Because you are Kṛṣṇa's confidante nothing is impossible for you. Please allow me to just once actually hear the holy name of Kṛṣṇa and empower me to share this experience with all whom I meet.

Begging to become your worthy servant,

Satyadeva Dāsa

Smara Hari Dāsa

I'm grateful for the life you've given
In bhakti you led the perfect role
The Bhaktivedanta Purports you provided
Convinced us of life's eternal goal

As Kṛṣṇa is with His close associates
Your followers treasure only you in their heart
ISKCON has truly changed the world
I feel blessed to play some small part

Inspired by your unequalled example
Bhakti has flowered in hearts, just countless
The covered path to Kṛṣṇa-loka
By Your Divine Grace can now be accessed

You invited all conditioned souls to come
But only a few did come to join
Even fewer stayed continually loyal
Many strayed who were not strong

Your ISKCON mission will last forever
And senior men who take headache to engage
To help fulfill your divine mission
Are truly the glorious contemporary sage

These senior men all are my prabhūṣ
Who facilitate my road to salvation
Our ISKCON is my pride and joy
BBT books source of my inspiration

Eternity it not nearly long enough
To express full depth of gratitude
Birth after endless endless birth
Let me strive for serving attitude

But I have no trace of qualification
Yet you are compassion personified
A pure ocean of divine mercy
My sinful life may yet be purified

Loyalty to your ISKCON has been my vow
Though my progress is far from complete
Let me increase your service till my last breath
In the shelter of your lotus feet

Smara Hari Dāsa

Somadāsa Dāsa

Śrīla Prabhupāda you're always aglow
With Kṛṣṇa consciousness that overflows
I need some desperately I know
From the lotus tips of your toes
What you started not so long ago
Has continued to unfold and to grow
Unfortunately for me it's been slow
So I don't have that much to show

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please keep me in your service. I need your mercy.

Your eternal servant,

Somadāsa Dāsa

Sujana Devī Dāsī

My dear spiritual father, Śrīla Prabhupāda,

At your lotus feet I offer my obeisances again and again. You are *jagad-guru*, savior of the whole world, and you are Prabhupāda, the master at whose feet all other masters sit.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you appeared in this world to bestow the priceless benediction of the holy names and to plant within our hearts the rarest of treasures—the taste for rendering pure devotional service. You have indeed, as you once noted, made our good fortune, for which we will be eternally grateful and eternally in your debt.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, by your grace I was blessed this past year to visit your temples in the holy *dhāmas*—Śrī Māyāpur Candrodaya Mandir in Māyāpur, and Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir in Vṛndāvana. Wherever I went, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the devotees I met were so blissfully absorbed in your service, in carrying on your mission. I was so impressed with the hard work, sincerity, determination, and amazing results they've achieved, be it building awe-inspiring temples, distributing your books, preaching all over the world, leading the devotees in ecstatic *kīrtanas*, or worshipping the Deities with great devotion and opulence. Seeing your disciples and, now, your grand-disciples serving you so nicely, again and again I was overwhelmed with the happy thought that you must be so very pleased with their efforts.

And the other thought that kept running through my mind was that I want to be like them. I am an ugly duckling, I'm afraid, with no hope of ever turning into a swanlike Vaiṣṇava devotee. But please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, please allow me to serve your sincere devotees and follow in their footsteps. In this way, there may be some chance that I also may someday, somehow, please you, in some small way.

*Begging for eternal shade at your lotus feet,
Your insignificant daughter and disciple,*

Sujana Devī Dāsī

Sureśvara Dāsa

First Darśana

Golden swan gliding
Almighty humility:
Bowwow bow down now.

First Dikṣā

He sees my lost soul
Calls me servant, mouth agape
“Come on, take your beads.”

First Dakṣiṇā

Shaved skull orange sheet
Begging down Hillbilly street
Five bucks absolute.

Last Words

My life continues
Only by Your Divine Grace

Sureśvara Dāsa

Svayambhūr Dāsa

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

In England one of your disciples, Suci Devī Dāsī, wrote to you saying that during your visits to England we felt very enthused, but after the visit we felt unhappy that you had gone to another temple. Your reply was that the physical presence of the spiritual master is called *vapuḥ*, and the teachings are called *vāṇī*, of the two, *vāṇī* is the most important, because the physical form of the spiritual master will go away but the teachings will remain.

During your physical presence, we felt a great deal of enthusiasm, but were lacking in maturity. Now we are left with our memories of you, and your teachings, and many long years of trying to put these teachings into practice.

Today is the appearance of Lord Rāma and we are celebrating this event at ISKCON Canberra (Australia), along with many of your followers who are young, as we were during your physical presence. These devotees are doing as we did so many years ago, taking part in the mission of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, being challenged by *māyā*, undergoing change in their lives and becoming free. This transformation is coming about by your sacrifice, by your courage and mercy.

As time passes we are learning to know you through your books and listening to your *bhajana* recordings, and co-operating with one another in maintaining your mission. This is our ongoing process of purification. The change can happen sooner or later. We can try to our utmost ability, but this change of consciousness depends ultimately on the mercy of Guru and Gaurāṅga, and everything takes time. I suppose that it is better late than never.

That shift in consciousness is a fact, I can see it happening amongst your devotees, and followers, and, strangely enough I can even see it happening in me. Yes chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa does work, thanks to you Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Thank you for the gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Your worthless disciple,

Svayambhūr Dāsa
(Canberra, Australia)

Trai Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to your lotus feet that are still traveling throughout this world in the form of your books saving it from the tidal wave of Kali-yuga.

In this far away remote little place of Bologna, Italy we are trying to spread your teachings through your books. We are taxing our tiny brains trying to find novel ways to attract new people to our little preaching center called *Centro Vaikuntha*. They are suffering so much anxiety due to the ever-increasing pressures of Kali-yuga and we are sure that if they come in contact with you they will experience the “Vaikuṅṭha” atmosphere free from anxiety.

This city is home to the oldest university in the Western world and therefore has a great number of atheists and speculators so it is a good field to conquer. You once wrote to me in regard to the temple I was residing in (Berkeley, California), a university town much like Bologna.

“That is one of our most important branches especially because it is located just in a very large university area well-known in your country as a famous seat of learning. So now it will be very important to flood Berkeley city with our books and literatures, because if we can convince the intelligent class of men of our Kṛṣṇa philosophy then our success for changing the position of your country and the rest of the world from a very dangerous condition is assured.”

You once called the modern schools slaughterhouses and here we can see how true that is. Their spiritual nature is being systematically destroyed therefore they fall to the most degraded materialistic life and you gave the solution for this most fallen student class in another letter to Berkeley.

“I am pleased to know that all of you are enthusiastically engaged in distributing our books. In this modern Godless civilization, everyone is greatly suffering due to lack of the real knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and our task is very great and very important. We must deliver this pure science of God to everyone and give them the chance to make their lives successful.”

Then even though I am so uneducated you sent me to another university city, Boston, and wrote to me again showing how concerned you were with recruiting some good men from the educated class. They are not easy to deal with but they have the greatest potential to do something for this movement. You wrote again:

“Recruit some educated men from the colleges, schools in Boston, train them up for preaching mission, in this way develop the quality of your men

to be the most surrendered servants of Kṛṣṇa. That will please Kṛṣṇa and you will feel also yourself becoming more and more happy in perfecting your life.”

Kṛṣṇa will be pleased only if you are pleased. You gave us clear directions how to please you, to give up all personal considerations and give our life and soul to carry on this mission of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

We are also carrying on a weekly *harināma* program right through the university area when all the students are out after the week’s classes are over. One of our students who has become a devotee is in turn finding novel ways to introduce Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the students here.

We hope our little effort on the part of all the devotees here will please you in some way as that is the only goal and purpose of our lives to see you smile on us.

Trai Dāsa

Vegavān Dāsa

The Person Who Sees Where Life Is

A shooting star leaving time and space
Of life there seems no trace
Seen by more than most
But few offering an honorary toast
The exit wound frozen in spaceless time
Guarded by troupers in polished shrine
Gathers the faithful hoping to be deserving
the mercy the mausoleum is preserving
Seeds of life, the unfettered might
Pushes through bitumen into the light
Seen by fewer than few
Although revealing what is true
The miracle, the messiah has indeed appeared
with angels of light to those who darkness speared
Found of course in the point of entry!
Where banished is the frozen sentry
In the timeless space of love

Vegavān Dāsa

Yadubara Dāsa and Viśākhā Dāsī

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn̄ iti nāmine
namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to you.

Although this world is filled with miseries, you have offered us a way to live in it in happiness. And you have offered us a way to enter a divine world of happiness beyond anything we now know.

What has made us worthy of your gifts? We fail to discover any quality, talent or endowment in us that could possibly attract this benevolence. Your mercy is all that we are made of and is our singular hope for our present life and for our lives to come.

Thank you for so graciously extending yourself so far and so wide that you somehow captured us. And thank you for keeping us captured.

Your servants,

Yadubara Dāsa and Viśākhā Dāsī

‘DUTIFULLY MAINTAINING ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA’S LEGACY’

Unto the lotus feet of my eternal master, preceptor, and dearest friend, accompanied by his host of devotees and ever well-wishers, I humbly submit the following for your pleasure.

In preaching we often find ourselves saying, ‘on behalf of Śrīla Prabhupāda,’ in order to convey one’s total transparency in representing the *guru-paramparā*. However, great care must be taken, for this can also be seen in another light which is not as praiseworthy. The less than praiseworthy quality arises from what Śrīla Prabhupāda clearly saw as a shortcoming of the Western mindset as evidenced by his translations of the offenses to the holy name—he emphasized the seventh as the most offensive, whereas the texts clearly emphasize the first. We should be ever mindful of our Western tendency to place the burden of our spiritual responsibility on our beloved preceptor.

This is such a subtle point, I feel I walk on a razor’s edge and pray for your mercy lest I slip and be labeled a heretic. We worship guru on the same level as the Supreme Lord, actually his and the worship of all Vaiṣṇavas is even more spiritually potent than our worship of Krishna. We continually remind ourselves that he is the architect of our spiritual advancement, in every way and in every aspect of our devotional service he reigns supreme. But his exalted spiritual position should not be used as a crutch. Although his guidance allows the lame to cross mountains, we must do so on our own two legs.

A dear godbrother of mine recently said in conversation, “There will never be another Prabhupāda.” I understood his mood—for the disciple there will never be another Prabhupāda like his Prabhupāda, but we must be so careful that in our praising of our founder-*ācārya*, Prabhupāda, we don’t become in any way envious of the contemporary godbrothers of Prabhupāda, remaining in his wake. Our Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted every one of his disciples to step up and become a *Bhaktivedanta*. *Vaikuṅṭha* attitude dictates that future generations experience the ecstatic tears of airport arrivals and departures, the loving glance that assures the fearful heart that one’s future prospect is fully safe and secure—the stern look and reminder that ‘you must abandon your cheating tendency.’

Putting oneself forward as spiritual master and accepting disciples requires an absolute self-sacrificing attitude. B.R. Śrīdhara Deva Goswami was reluctant to accept any disciples, but he relates that the pastime of Kṛṣṇa’s

headache softened him to the necessity of risking eternal damnation in loving service—die to live.

If in our outward display of glorifying Śrīla Prabhupāda there is a Jesusification of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda; if ‘on behalf of Śrīla Prabhupāda’ is distorted by philosophical misconception, if the position of guru is in any way minimized by institutional dictate for the future generation of disciples, then I fear we will be doing the greatest disservice to the spreading of this great Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

It is our duty as responsible devotees to continually preach and educate on the true position of guru. When we proclaim ‘on behalf of Śrīla Prabhupāda,’ I feel we are duty bound to make sure this statement does not rest on any misconception as to our personal responsibility in the matter.

Free of such misconceptions regarding *guru-tattva*, let us push forward this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement by taking full advantage of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *vāṇī* and ourselves fully surrendering to the self-sacrificing dedication required to introduce and guide all of human society as guru. In his concluding comments of the preface to *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, Śrīla Prabhupāda expressed that if just one pure devotee came as the result of the endeavor he would consider it a success. Let us redouble our efforts both individually and collectively, and rise to the platform of becoming that one pure devotee Śrīla Prabhupāda desired, and thereby magnify his success unlimitedly. Such purity will then allow us to fully embrace the legacy of our *guru-paramparā* and our ever well-wishers.

*yāre dekha, tāre kaha ‘kṛṣṇa’-upadeśa
āmāra ājñāya guru hañā tāra’ ei deśa*

“Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa as they are given in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land.”

I say unequivocally that this is the highest worship we can bestow upon our eternal spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Your servant,

Dulāl Candra Dāsa

Jagattāriṇī Devī Dāsi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you and your wonderful preaching and distribution of Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the whole world. I am so proud to be your insignificant disciple, and I wish to write something for your pleasure.

When you left this world in 1977 I was greatly disturbed. Prior to your departure I felt my relationship with you had become damaged by many mistakes I had made in my efforts to serve you. I struggled with a sense of having offended you and now you were no longer present to speak to or apologize to appropriately and it was difficult for me to feel forgiven. This troubled my mind for several years.

In 1983, my husband decided we should go and live in Vṛndāvana. He told me that it would help cure this sadness I was feeling.

There in Vṛndāvana you kindly appeared to me in a few short, but priceless dreams, because of which the “healing” of my self-confidence as your disciple took place. May I share a couple of them with you and also with the devotees?

One night I dreamt that you came to visit the *gośālā* where we were living. My husband was the person taking charge of you. You sat down on a seat by the entry gate as he helped put on your shoes. Suddenly you reached down and picked up a small piece of grass rope from the ground. The rope was limp and very straggly. You held it up before us both. When my husband reached forward to take it from your hand, you withdrew it, as if to indicate that you were showing, not giving it to him.

Then you reached down and picked up another piece of rope. This piece was made out of plastic, and the end had become all fuzzy (like Sai Baba’s hair). I studied the second piece of rope.

Again you picked up a third small piece. This one was made of cotton, and the end was tightly bound.

“What is the difference?” you asked.

I thought calmly and finally said, “The last one was pointy and straight.”

“Yes,” you replied.

Then, with a grave look you rose and left, accompanied by my husband.

As soon as I woke up I understood that you had just instructed me by these pieces of rope, about how my consciousness had to become “pointed and straight.”

I had another dream when suffering from jaundice.

This time I dreamt that I entered the temple room in a nicely kept house, with shiny polished floors, and you were there.

Without fear or reverence, I bowed down and paid my obeisances to you. Then while still kneeling, I asked you a question:

“Prabhupāda, you’ve told us that before we can go back to Godhead, we have to become free from all faults. There are some we know about, but there are also faults that we do not know about. How can we get rid of the faults that we do not even know about?”

You looked down at me in an affectionate way and replied:

“For the offences you know about, ask the devotees, they will help you. And for the offences you do not know about,” you paused for a moment, “also ask the devotees.”

My dream changed.

I was now in the room on the opposite of the corridor. You were lecturing in the temple room where we had met, and I now found myself in the opposite room. Something had caught my fancy—huge cream covered cheese cakes had been placed on a table. They were covered in strawberries. I could not take my eyes off them and therefore could not leave that place and go to where you were lecturing. Suddenly the door opened and the room filled with excited devotees. Each one had a small cream cake in their hand that they had been given by you at the end of your lecture. Now I was really confused as to what to do. I decided to run and get a cream cake as well, but when I entered the temple room, I saw you had gone.

I awoke immediately and lamented and lamented. Crying with regret I reflected on how fallen I was to prefer stupid cream cakes to a priceless opportunity to have your *darśana*. Throughout the morning I felt greatly unhappy, then later in the day I revealed both my dream and my unhappiness to a devotee friend.

She laughed, and told me: “Everyone knows that because the diet for jaundice is so strict, it is common to have dreams about eating extraordinarily rich food.”

As she spoke I suddenly remembered your instruction to me to ask the devotees for help. I had just followed your advice, which gave me some consolation.

Dear Prabhupāda, somehow through these simple, sweet, short exchanges, my confidence in myself as your disciple gradually healed, and remains healthy to this day. I know that this very much pleases you.

“The single-minded devotees are surrendered souls. They can perceive how

the Lord's potencies are working. They feel no anxiety if sometimes the Lord's mercy does not manifest, even after long pleading and prayers, for they have unflinching conviction that the Lord will protect them under all circumstances. The mood of the present age is not spiritually conducive, and hence it is difficult to develop a high degree of faith in the Lord. Still, it is certain that faith in the Lord never goes in vain. In the beginning we may be somewhat hesitant to accept this fact, but in time we come to understand that the Supreme Lord is always protecting us.

At times, when doubts and restlessness assail us, we must remain fixed in our resolve. The best remedy for doubts is to seek the association of saintly persons. Saintly souls who are learned in the conclusions of the revealed scriptures and have realized the Supreme Lord can dissipate our doubts and calm our restless mind with unequivocal instructions and exemplary actions." (*Renunciation Through Wisdom*, chapter 5)

From your unworthy, but very grateful daughter

Jagattāriṇī Devī Dāsī

Mahāmāyā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

On this day of your glorious appearance, in 2011, I am still wondering how I stumbled upon the unimaginable good blessing of your divine association. It seems that you created this blessing because otherwise there was no basis of qualification on my part. I certainly wasn't a spiritual seeker; I doubted the existence of God—an agnostic at best. And yet seeing and hearing your disciples chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa on the streets stopped me in my tracks. What IS that? Sound seemed to shift directions and nothing in my life was the same after that.

This year marks the 40th anniversary since I received initiation from Your Divine Grace. I still desire to do something substantial to please you and be an instrument in fulfilling your mission.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for all the mercy you have already given me, which I so much appreciate, yet I am requesting more mercy. Without your blessings, my life is useless. Śrīla Prabhupāda, I beg at your lotus feet: please engage me in your service.

Your servant,

Mahāmāyā Devī Dāsī

Ajāmila Dāsa

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet. All glories to you millions of times.

Most glorious was that day when you appeared in my life,
Which was full of darkness, sorrow, and all-around strife.
Your words illuminated all my comparative religion studies,
Clarifying the Absolute Truth with no concepts muddied.
When I first saw you in Sydney, you were shining like the Sun.
Your intro to seemingly difficult austerities was just such fun.
You installed Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha and you hoped for the best,
On your next visit you commented that our worship had passed the test.
So sweet were those times when you were around,
Even though your direct presence was not always to be found.
But that increasing sweetness is still fresh and new
For those who follow strictly what was instructed by you.
I have nothing at all to complain about—
You gave me all I need and said: “Just shout
Hare Kṛṣṇa every day and you will see,
In the end, direct association with Kṛṣṇa it will be.”
Oh! How my heart yearns to sincerely please you,
To see you smile and say: “Kṛṣṇa will bless you.”
When oh when will that be day be mine,
When I’ll see you smile at me again with effulgent eyes divine?

Your servant,

Ajāmila Dāsa

Anuttama Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

As your disciple, I regard it as my sacred duty to offer you praise on the anniversary of your appearance in this world. Yet as I ponder what to write I am aware that, beyond duty, this day offers an opportunity to meditate deeply upon you, the person who, more than any other, gave meaning to my life.

As I grow older, a deep sense of dependence upon you is beginning to awaken in my heart. Looking back on my adolescent and adult life, I'm inclined to say that I was always seeking God. It's more true to say that you called me out of illusion. You forced me off the path of material pursuits that was my destiny. I was truly lost, and you called me to you and set me upon a different path.

It was you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who inspired George Harrison to place the *mahā-mantra* in his hit "My Sweet Lord," a song that first haunted me, and later gave me comfort, wherever I went.

It was you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who sent a band of Hare Kṛṣṇas—with their shiny heads, nose-ring-laden ladies, and air of indifference to this world—that shook my seventeen-year-old suburban sensibilities and planted in my college-bound mind a doubt whether money, power, and prestige could ever appease the appetites of my soul.

It was you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who sent young Vaiṣṇavas to chant near campus walkways, enticing thoughtful students with transcendence and salvation, beyond what had become for me a tiresome struggle for grades, girls, and drug-induced highs that faded with the morning light.

It was you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who ordered your disciples to open temples in places like Denver, where their chanting, philosophical acumen, and affection for strangers convinced me there must be a Supreme Friend who desired my welfare.

And it was you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who allowed me to enter the sanctum of ISKCON by instructing your disciples to give everyone the chance to serve the Lord and to become part of your movement, no matter how deeply they were sunk into darkness, doubt, and delusion.

Recently I was enlivened by your presence while I read His Holiness Mukunda Mahārāja's beautiful memoir, *Miracle on Second Avenue*. I had little opportunity for personal service to you during your physical presence on earth—only a few fleeting moments across a crowded temple.

Yet as I continue to try to understand you better and give my life to you, glimpses into your heart inspire me onward.

Among many wonderful pastimes retold in this book, one in particular has stayed in my mind and helped me see more clearly the wonderful person, spiritual master, and devotee that you are.

Mukunda Goswami writes that he had just recently been initiated as Mukunda Dāsa Adhikārī. Although now a disciple under vows, he and his wife decided on their own to travel to the West Coast from New York City, and then on to India. While you were aware of their inclinations, you were informed only a day or two before they were going that they were leaving behind their guru, the New York temple, and the entire Vaiṣṇava *saṅga* in North America.

Mukunda Goswami details his last meeting with you in New York. After he announced his plans and exchanged a few awkward words, he prepared to leave:

There was a long pause. I wasn't sure how to say goodbye to him.

"California would be a good place for you to start a temple," I said at last. "There's lots of interest in India and spirituality in that part of the country, especially in Los Angeles. There's lots of open-minded people there..."

"Well, I guess I'll go then," I said. "Hare Kṛṣṇa." I bowed down on the floor before him as I'd seen others do.

I heard the swami's voice behind me as I reached the door.

"Mukunda." I turned around. "Just see if you can start one center on the West Coast. It would be a very great service."

I smiled and gave a half-nod. "Okay," I mumbled.

...I made my way back to our loft, wondering why the swami had mentioned opening a center after all the goodbyes. When I mentioned opening a temple in California to the swami, I had no intention of volunteering myself for the task.

History informs us that this gentle request weighed on Mukunda, and he and his companions soon changed course and opened a small temple in San Francisco, as you desired. Empowered by you, they would ride the wave of the 1960s youth movement and spread Lord Caitanya's mercy in astounding ways.

What strikes me most in this exchange, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is your vast patience and intense spiritual desire to share love of Kṛṣṇa. Your vision for spreading the fledgling ISKCON society was so broad, yet who would help you? Here was a disciple, one of the few who had made some kind of commitment, who announces—not discusses, not requests, but announces—that he is leaving to roam whimsically.

Yet, sensing this new student’s vulnerability, you lovingly, gently, pleadingly ask him to change course, to take responsibility for a part of your vision and thus achieve spiritual greatness—all as he casually walks out the door.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I pray that I too may stop whimsically walking out your door. Instead, please soften my heart and stiffen my resolve to stay fixed at your lotus feet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please bless me that I too might offer a drop of “very great service” unto you—you, who are that very great soul, pure devotee, and empowered spiritual master chosen by Lord Caitanya to deliver His message to the far corners of the earth.

Your insignificant servant,

Anuttama Dāsa

Bhajahari Dāsa Adhikārī

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Thank you for the many opportunities granted to perform some small services for you this last year. Our little café project is going along quite well, despite the fact that I recently suffered a severe heart attack. I know that this apparent reversal is yet another of Kṛṣṇa's blessings in disguise. While I was in hospital recovering, Ramyā gave me her Ipod which was full of your lectures. Lying there, associating with you through pure sound vibration, I was blessed with so many realisations. At sixty years of age, any lingering doubts about this wonderful mission you have mercifully given us are now being reduced to nil. I have since bought myself an Ipod and have filled it with your lectures, morning walks, conversations and your ecstatic *kīrtanas* and *bhajanas*. Keeping this little wonder of modern technology with me at all times, I can now be in your transcendental presence instantly.

I am certain that many of your disciples would have felt extremely blessed if they were offered the service of being your personal servant or secretary like Śrūta and Hari Śauri. To travel around the world with you, to hear your classes each day, to sit in on your room conversations, to be allowed to walk with you each day and hear your intimate and intricate presentations of the Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy, or more detailed explanations of how to push forward this wonderful movement. To cook for you, to give you massage, to type your letters, to be alongside you, in the thick of battle, daily, fully absorbed in your service. This would have been such a blessing. Now, with so many recordings of your lectures, conversations and morning walks available, practically speaking, anyone who wants to can travel with you on your many trips around the world.

Sometimes, younger devotees tell us that 'we,' your early disciples, are very special. To have walked, talked, served and listened to you 'personally.' On the one hand this is undeniably true. How fortunate I was to have been tricked into joining your transcendental army. But I also realise that you have left a sublime inheritance that is even more valuable.

How many classes did we actually get to attend?

How many room conversations were we able to sit in on?

How many morning walks were we invited to go along with you?

While you were here in London we had some unforgettable days. But adding everything up—how many days did you spend in the UK? Not really so many.

Some of your disciples in more remote parts of the planet never had the chance to meet you even once. When I think of this I am reminded of what Christ told Thomas,

“Because you have seen me, you have believed;
blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Vāṇī is so much more important than *vapuḥ*. Your *vāṇī* is always available. Your direct personal or physical presence was always going to be over sooner or later. Some ten years ago, a friend gave me the complete set of your lectures, morning walks, conversations, *bhajan*s and *kīrtan*s. Sometimes I dipped into them for a little while—here and there. I certainly appreciated the great value of the gift I had been given, but being distracted by so many of *māyā*'s little tricks, forgetting your mood of urgency, thinking that other things were more important than hearing from you regularly, I more or less neglected them. Now they have arisen, just like a tsunami, and are beginning to flood my crippled heart with knowledge, understanding and gratitude. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and thank you, Madhusūdana prabhu.

Listening to your *Nectar of Devotion* classes in Vṛndāvana, I hear you explain how we should not remain neophyte, we should not remain *prākṛta bhaktas*, materialistic devotees. We should improve to the level of a *madhyama* devotee, who knows four things. He knows the Supreme Personality of Godhead and he serves and worships Him. He knows the devotees and he associates with and tries to serve them. He knows who are innocent and he helps them to understand their eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Finally, he knows the atheists, those who do not want to hear about Kṛṣṇa. These souls become agitated and disturbed when someone attempts to glorify God, and so the middle devotee avoids them, he does not waste his time with them.

You then explain what is an *uttama* devotee and warn us not to imitate. The *uttama* sees every living entity as a pure devotee and himself as the most fallen. This is not an artificial position—but it is a genuine emotion. Such an elevated Vaiṣṇava wants only to give all respects to others and does not want respect. You tell us how such an elevated soul then comes down to the platform of *madhyama*—for preaching work. “People are engaged in material

activities and the devotee approaches them and says ‘You are engaged in wasting your lives in so many ways—you have got this human form of life and you are simply spoiling it, you are utilising it like animals, eating, sleeping, mating and defending.’” Śrīla Prabhupāda, hearing you preach so strongly and sweetly is life giving. All the years of not following your order to preach have been like walking through a dry and dusty desert. Now let me drink thoroughly from the oasis of your recorded messages.

On one afternoon in your garden in Los Angeles I am amazed to hear you telling a group of scientists that they are cheaters and bluffers for a full ten minutes, this appears to be BEFORE they have even been introduced to you. One disciple eventually introduces them, one by one, until one blessed soul was introduced as a theologian. Immediately you asked him if he understood what is God. Toe curling silence. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you then go on to show how this so called theology is just another bluff. In fact you are speaking so strongly that one of the other academics intercedes and says, “I think you are being a bit harsh on the Doctor.” Your preaching is just like a man chopping off dead and useless branches as he makes his way through a jungle of false logic and propaganda.

I love hearing you tell that story to some devotees in Hyderabad in 1976. You were giving an example of how by false propaganda people can be made to believe anything. You told the story with such enthusiasm and humour that everyone was laughing uncontrollably. The story was of two friends. One decided to play a trick on the other, and made a plan as follows. He spoke to several other friends and they all agreed that when they next met the victim, they would pretend that instead of seeing HIM they were seeing a GHOST. Later, when they meet, the trickster pretends shock.

“Oh, oh—Here is a ghost! You are a ghost!—OH NO!” and runs away.

All the devotees are laughing as you imitate. Later, the unlucky man meets another friend—and the same thing happens again. The second friend feigns surprise.

“Oh, oh—Here is a ghost! You are a ghost!—OH NO!” he also runs away.

This continues on and on with each friend he meets, until finally the man thinks to himself, “Everyone is saying I am a ghost—maybe I HAVE become a ghost.” By this time Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have everyone laughing uncontrollably. I think that laughing along with you is the most fun we can have in this world, and it is all there for us to take advantage of any time we wish. Thank you for allowing these events to be recorded.

This particular recording made me think of the so-called Moon Landing.

Tell a big lie long and hard enough and people will believe it. You spotted their deception on the very day their so-called landing was broadcast on the television. Sitting with a few disciples you surprised them by stating it was not the Moon. Therefore you must have been the very first person on the planet to pronounce it was a HOAX. Now millions and millions realise this fact. Nobody can fool you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

One day, here at Bhaktivedanta Manor you said, "If you go before the Deities and just once say to Them, 'From this day on I am Yours,' They will never let you go." Śrīla Prabhupāda, I did this and it works. It seems as though I am attached by a very long and strong elastic band. However far I wonder off track I am dragged back. Thank you.

Finally, on your divine appearance day, I beg you for one gift.

When I was a young disciple I never fully appreciated the association of my godbrothers and godsisters. Now, as I get older I realise how important they are. How, due to their enthusiasm, I also got some enthusiasm for *harināma* and book distribution. By their association I was dragged to *maṅgala-ārati* each morning, I heard *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* each day. I remember so well the enthusiasm of devotees like Rohiṇīnandana prabhu. If you could please arrange the association of just one devotee with just half of his enthusiasm and sincerity, I may then be able to do something useful in your service.

Falling down before you, I beg you to please save and protect me, and to bring me into your divine association, wherever that may be.

Your insignificant son and servant,

Bhajahari Dāsa Adhikārī

Bhavatāriṇī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my unlimited obeisances at your soft lotus feet.

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

All glories to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugala.

Please accept the following poem as my Vyāsa-pūjā offering to you:

THE TRANSCENDENTAL GARDENER

One hundred and fifteen years, since that holy day in Calcutta you
appeared.

One hundred and fifteen years, since that blessed day you first appeared.

You came to set the whole world free, by Lord Gaurāṅga's causeless
mercy

And it's coming down in a line from your spiritual master.

You came to set the whole world free, by Nityānanda's causeless mercy

And your message of service to God is the answer.

You are a transcendental gardener; planting seeds in barren ground

Watered by your instructions, bloom into the holy sound

Being heard in every village and every town

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare

Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

You came to set the whole world free by order of the pure devotee

You came to set the whole world free

And it's coming down in a line from your spiritual masters

You came to set the whole world free by order of the pure devotees

And your message of service to God

Wards off disaster

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare

Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

May I serve you eternally with love and affection,

Your daughter,

Bhavatāriṇī Devī Dāsī

Dhira-sānta Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I offer my prostrated humble obeisances unto you, who has opened my eyes with the torchlight of knowledge, which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance.

Vyāsa-pūjā is the appearance day of the spiritual master. It is the day when the representative of Śrīla Vyāsadeva is worshiped. Śrīla Vyāsadeva is the incarnation of Godhead who compiled the Vedic literature five thousand years ago. The person who can perfectly represent Śrīla Vyāsadeva is called a guru, or spiritual master, and only such a person is qualified to sit on the seat of Vyāsa, otherwise known as the *vyāsāsana*.

The spiritual master is worshiped on the day of the Vyāsa-pūjā—not because of his ability to speculate, give opinions or interpretations on Vedānta philosophy. The spiritual master is worshiped because he has perfectly heard, assimilated, and realised the words of his spiritual master, who has in turn heard from his spiritual master, and so on. In this way, back through the chain of disciplic succession, until we come to Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the author of all Vedic literatures.

Therefore the aim of human life is to become perfect by hearing the Vedic knowledge from a bona fide spiritual master in the disciplic succession. This is the key, or the secret that unlocks the door for the conditioned soul and frees him from the cycle of birth and death, allowing him to return back home, back to Godhead, where life is eternal, full of knowledge, and full of pleasure.

An ordinary human being cannot give us perfect knowledge, because such a conditioned soul is imperfect by four defects. He is working with imperfect senses, he makes mistakes, he is subject to be illusioned, and he has a propensity to cheat others. The spiritual master is above the four defects of the conditioned souls because he simply delivers the message of Kṛṣṇa as he has heard it from his spiritual master. The postman does not write anything personally, but he delivers what has been written. In a similar way, the spiritual master acts as the representative of God. As such, the disciple worships the spiritual master with the same awe and reverence with which he would worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

According to authoritative *sāstras*, the spiritual master is non-different from Kṛṣṇa, and because he is intimately connected with Kṛṣṇa, he is considered to be the mercy incarnation of the Lord. He will never say that he is the Lord, but that he is the servant of the Lord. In this way the spiritual master acts as an instrument of the Lord for delivering the conditioned souls

from the cycle of repeated birth and death.

The conditional life of the living entity in the material world is compared to a forest fire that is raging out of control and cannot be checked by any human endeavour. Only if there is a downpour of rain can the forest fire be extinguished. Similarly, the cycle of repeated birth and death cannot be stopped by any material adjustment. But the rain of mercy of the spiritual master can extinguish the blazing fire of material existence.

Therefore, the first business of the disciple is to embrace the lotus feet of his spiritual master and always depend on his mercy. Our beloved spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is indeed the modern-day Vyāsa, because he has broadcast the message of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā* and other Vedic literatures to the whole world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I pray to you for the ongoing strength I need to assist you and be part of history where descending transcendental knowledge will supersede ascending speculative knowledge.

Your insignificant servant,

Dhīra-śānta Dāsa

Gaura Gopāla Dāsa

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

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

*jaya śrī kṛṣṇa caitanya prabhu nityānanda
śrī advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I would like to thank His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda for coming to the Western nations and giving us the gift of Lord Caitanya and Kṛṣṇa.

It is stated in the *śāstra* that Lord Caitanya rarely appears in the material creation in Kali-yuga, therefore how fortunate we are to be given Lord Caitanya by the causeless mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda in this particular Kali-yuga.

I first met the devotees in May 1971 just after Śrīla Prabhupāda left Sydney where he had brought with him the beautiful Rādhā-Gopinātha Deities. I would go to the temple at Oxford St, Paddington and Upananda (now Avadhūta Mahārāja) would get me to read *Kṛṣṇa* book while he cooked the offering for Their Lordships.

For me, spiritual life was always a struggle, although at the beginning of these pioneering years of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, I definitely felt uplifted by a high wave of pure devotional service Śrīla Prabhupāda carried with him, which inundated the Western world, picking us up and carrying us on that rare high wave of devotional service and keeping us in the service of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Personally, I had no qualification to be with the devotees, however those early years were very special. Śrīla Prabhupāda's presence and mercy was freely available to anyone who took advantage of it. I eventually 'shaved-up' and joined Prabhupāda's wonderful ISKCON in Melbourne on 18th February 1972—that happened to be Lord Caitanya's appearance day.

The memories of blissful *kīrtanas* (up to eight hours a day on the streets) and the vast amount of book distribution in those years were exceptional and unique and without a doubt, the devotees were specially empowered. I haven't seen anything like it since!

From 1972 to 75 was a greatly amazing time in Australian ISKCON. We

had our first Ratha-yātrā in Melbourne in 1972, and in 73-75 we had Ratha-yātrā with a cart each for Balarāma, Subhadrā and Jagannātha, and of course we had Śrīla Prabhupāda attending in 1974.

There is a saying that history is never realized in its own time. We can apply this to the life and times of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda because as we know, the greatest time of the twentieth century was in the mid-sixties when Śrīla Prabhupāda landed on the shores of America carrying with him the teachings of Lord Caitanya.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was in the right place at the right time. We all ran to Kṛṣṇa consciousness without hesitation, because we felt the presence of the Lord there (great happiness and satisfaction). I knew I was home. Kṛṣṇa consciousness in those days worked.

Everything we did in ISKCON had a high energy about it in various flavours, depending on the service. We were all riding on the crest of a high wave. As an example, we got high just reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. I used to read a chapter a day of either *Kṛṣṇa* book or *Nectar of Devotion*, before I went out on book distribution or street *kīrtana* and even on the street. Madhudviṣa would also read *Kṛṣṇa* book for ten minutes, then chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra for an hour, then read again for ten minutes. This went on for eight hours a day in the beginning years of ISKCON, the best years of ISKCON. I would always feel great bliss and happiness from reading those books.

Book distribution and street *kīrtana* were the main objective of all devotees. Whenever we sold a book, we immediately felt a charge of spiritual happiness. I tested it out many times to make sure I wasn't making it all up. "Nope, it was for real." Every time a book was sold, zap, spiritual selfless pleasure. So who wouldn't sell Śrīla Prabhupāda's wonderful books, and as many as possible?

And then one day, it all changed and no matter how hard I tried to make that happiness come back, that particular experience at that moment in time and place of the early seventies, it was gone and a new and different chapter of ISKCON had begun.

As my godbrother Sureśa Prabhu explains, "Every now and again, after waiting a long time, sometimes years later, I get to be aware of a few ecstatic moments of Kṛṣṇa conscious bliss that was experienced during those early years with Śrīla Prabhupāda. That was my experience, but I think it may have been the same experience for the many thousands of Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples."

The happy, ecstatic feelings were 'full on' when Śrīla Prabhupāda was with us. I think that is a natural feeling from his disciples who personally associated

with him, although not all would feel this separation as some godbrothers and godsisters have over the years strongly learned to carry that period with Śrīla Prabhupāda deep within their hearts. Such rare devotees have become wonderful ISKCON gurus and magnets for Kṛṣṇa consciousness and have proved themselves over the movement of time.

Book distribution and street *kīrtana* goes on but not to the same intensity as it was when Śrīla Prabhupāda was with us.

Many devotees today could not do the same things the same way as they did during the early seventies and get the same result anymore. Of course that didn't mean there was anything wrong with Kṛṣṇa consciousness or ISKCON; it just wasn't the same as it had been in the beginning, this was my experience and many godbrothers and godsisters had similar experiences.

ISKCON devotees today are always trying to figure out how to revive the golden years of ISKCON when Śrīla Prabhupāda was physically with us, but today the 'high tide mark' is only but a fraction of what it once was in places like in Australia, North America and Europe. This is why I often hear today, "What ever happened to the Hare Krishnas on the streets in different suburbs and towns?"

Although things are changing for the better, the beginning of 2011 however, brings hope because there is a strong revival going on around the world in ISKCON where temples like Melbourne Australia had their first Rathayātrā with a chariot in thirty-five years (since 1975)!

We experienced for a short time a sense of happiness and joy we felt during the early seventies. Maybe 2011 is the beginning of a new wave of Krishna consciousness, only time will tell.

At present however, nothing over the last three and half decades comes near the high tide mark that Kṛṣṇa conscious bliss reached that was set in the early seventies.

On the other hand, it is Lord Caitanya's plan that it will eventually come again to ISKCON and stay, inundating the planet with a Kṛṣṇa conscious wave and on the crest of that wave will be a Golden Age of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

We felt complete satisfaction and bliss from distributing Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, going on *saṅkīrtana* and reading his books, and other devotional practices in the beginning of ISKCON. However, some of us have never felt the same 'devotional dedication' since. Something changed, and so far we have never able to get back to that 'high wave' we were riding on, that Śrīla Prabhupāda brought with him from Kṛṣṇaloka.

Even the *karmī* historians knew something was going on from 1965 to the early seventies but could not explain or clarify it. The closest non-devotee

historian so far to put this period in plain words was Hunter S. Thompson.

“San Francisco in the middle sixties was a very special time and place to be a part of. No explanation, no mix of words or music or memories can touch that sense of knowing that you were there and alive in that corner of time and the world.”

Whatever it meant, history is hard to know but even without being sure of “history” it seems entirely reasonable to think that every now and then the energy of a whole generation comes to a head in a long fine flash, for reasons that nobody really understands at the time—and which never explain, in retrospect, what actually happened.

There was a fantastic universal sense that whatever we were doing was right, that we were winning. And that, I think, was the handle—that sense of inevitable victory over the forces of old and evil. Not in any mean or military sense, we didn’t need that. Our energy would simply prevail. There was no point in fighting—on our side or theirs. We had all the momentum; we were riding the crest of a high and beautiful wave.

So now, less than five, six years later, you can go up on a steep hill in Las Vegas and look West, and with the right kind of eyes you can almost see the high-water mark—that place where the wave finally broke and rolled back.

This was the mood and backdrop that led to so many taking shelter of Śrīla Prabhupāda and the start of a Kṛṣṇa conscious revolution that would spread to every major city around the world within a short five years.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s personal presence on that high tide of Kṛṣṇa consciousness laid the foundation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya’s movement that would begin the Golden Age of spirituality, which was single-handedly given to the West by the ‘causeless’ mercy of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda, and today I believe we are on the crest of a new wave that will reach the homes of everyone on the planet.

Haribol, Hare Kṛṣṇa! It is Lord Caitanya’s plan.

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Your fallen yet inspired servant,

Gaura Gopāla Dāsa
(Australia)

Gokulānanda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Thank you for not cheating us.

Thank you for giving us the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Thank you for showing us the naked truth of this temporary world and for awakening us to the hard fact that there is little solace in the shifting externals of our fragile existence. You always reminded us that whatever pressing needs and concerns regarding our gender, social identities, or bodily relations we have acquired, they will all be dissolved by the whispering winds of time, as so many castles made of sand.

Thank you for pulling us, fallen and sinful, out of this hard struggle for existence, and offering us the sure enduring shelter of your glorious association, whereby we can get back to reality.

Thank you for your oceanic compassion by which you ventured to the heart of Kali's kingdom of sin, to this *mleccha-loka* of the West, to save us all from our own follies.

Thank you for leading countless souls out of this desert of illusion, away from the dangerous mirage of degrading flickering pleasures.

Thank you for opening our darkened eyes with the blazing light of your perfect teachings, as the luminous essence of the divinely inspired pure *gaura-vāṇī*.

Thank you for the inconceivable yet undeserved opportunity to awaken to our real eternal identity, simply by following in your perfect footsteps.

Thank you for showing us a glimpse of your world, the divine abode of endless love and infinite beauty, and inspiring us with your effulgent purity and selfless love to follow you on the joyful path back to Godhead.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, to somehow offer you some meager service remains as the only sure and enduring purpose we can hope to find. You alone are the true measure of our menial lives. Whatever else our lives have been, we can at least proclaim that which essentially defines us: that we have been saved by you alone, a true lover of God. Thus our indelible relationship with you is the saving grace that sustains all our lives, *tomāra karuṇā sāra*: "Your mercy is all that we are made of." If we can somehow become attached to serving you through your mission of mercy, then perhaps you will also bring us with you to our Sweet Lord's eternal festival of love.

As the years go by, we continue to observe with grateful awe the ever-fresh manifestations of your greatness in the lives and hearts of so many sincere souls—*phalena pariciyate*. As my own generation takes inventory of

our amazing lives in your miraculous association, a rising generation of your very sincere and capable followers are now giving us new strength and hope for the future. In spite of our defective allegiance to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, somehow the great light of your love and mercy continues to bring forth a prolific new crop of very dedicated devotees to better fulfill your potent vision. To see how well they absorb and reflect your mood of selfless compassion gives us the deepest satisfaction. This is a very inspiring harbinger of great things yet to come. As these fruits of your great mercy keep ripening, they will also become the best hope and light for their own searching generation.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for always being there for all of us.

Gokulānanda Dāsa
(Montreal, Canada)

Hari Dāsa

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

For me Śrīla Prabhupāda is the only ultimate spiritual master, guru, father, mentor, savior, provider; I have never seen any one so kind and loving than my eternal spiritual master. As I came from a virtual gutter, came to steal his watch and he saved my life by giving me his unlimited mercy and ultimate treasure of *harināma*, by which he gave me a golden opportunity to reach Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

I promise and commit, Śrīla Prabhupāda, that I would come to this very material world life after life to serve Your Divine Grace. Śrīla Prabhupāda fought the material world for us with only his strength of *harināma*, truthfulness and honesty. I have endless glories of Śrīla Prabhupāda but I like to end here for now, and remain at the lotus feet of His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda.

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda.
Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya!*

Eternal servant of Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Hari Dāsa

Janmanālaya Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to your Vyāsa-pūjā!

I am writing as if writing a letter to my father. Of course, Your Divine Grace can never be compared to anything mundane, but still, my feeling is that I relate to you as my father.

When I was looking for the goal of life, Kṛṣṇa kindly sent you and you were perfectly in tune with His ways in saving me and providing everything. Thank you both.

Furthermore, as a father, you were almost unbearably heavy in correcting your wayward son. “You are good for nothing, except wasting Kṛṣṇa’s energy.” But in the next moment, you were again clearly my well-wisher, kindly taking me by the hand. Thank you for everything.

Now the pangs of life in the material body become tangible. My request is that by your direction I may use the opportunity to go deeper in the realization of the truth of our relationship with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Father.

Your servant,

Janmanālaya Dāsa
(Sweden)

Nanda-nandana Dāsa

REMEMBERING YOU ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

Every step and every breath in my life reminds me of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Since Śrī Kṛṣṇa is everything and everything is related to Him, and since you are the transparent medium for me to know Him, everything reminds me of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda:

The early morning, the chirping of birds at dawn remind me of the sounds of Vṛndāvana while chanting *japa* on the roof of the Gurukula building. There were the sounds of peacocks and other birds. Everything reminds me of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

THANK YOU ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

This has been the most wonderful and incredible adventure that no one could ever imagine or think of. Thank you so much, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I am eternally indebted to you.

A GREAT IDEA

What a great idea to go to the forest, tending the cows and calves and playing all day long with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma! One of the *gopīs* said to her *gopī* friends:

“The highest perfection of the eyes is to see Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma entering the forest and playing Their flutes and tending the cows with Their friends.”

The first *mahā-mahā-prasāda* I ever tasted was a slice of orange chewed by you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. What a great proposal to taste Kṛṣṇa’s food cooked by mother Yaśodā, such as *kacorīs*, *halavā*, *purīs*, *luci cinis* and so on; undoubtedly I would like to take your remnants of such foodstuffs.

At this time for me it is just a wonderful idea to participate in that way in the Lord’s pastimes, but there will be the time when it will be realized, by your mercy. I have the certainty that that is what I would love to do.

And somehow or other in that capacity I could serve the youthful couple Kīśora-Kīśorī, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

*Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda.
Your servant,*

Nanda-nandana Dāsa

Rādhā-kunḍa Devī Dāsī

O most awesome magnanimous Śrīla Prabhupāda!

We offer our most humble prostrated *danḍavats* at your golden lotus feet millions and trillions of times! From the front! From the back! From all sides! Again and again, eternally! You are our savior! Our one and only matchless, priceless Śrīla Prabhupāda! Our only opulence, our life and soul, and our be all and end all! Your glories are far beyond the reach of our mind, body and words. You are more precious than life itself.

It was you only who came for us. Did anyone else come? NO! It was only you who came and showed us real love and compassion. No one else possessed real love in this Kali-yuga world. We were drowning in our condemned, shelterless whirlpools of insanity, and yet content—going to and from the court of Yamarāja. Then we met you! Who can ever fathom our inconceivable fortune?

O Para-duḥkha-duḥkhī! You didn't have to come to this Earth to save us. But you did, and therefore we owe you our every breath. Please don't ever kick us away from your lotus feet, thinking us too fallen. Glorious is that master who does not abandon his servant.

That *navamī* day in the month of Śrāvaṇa, when you appeared, is the summum bonum of all the holiest auspicious days of the whole cosmic manifestation combined! All the demigods dancing in ecstasy, showering flowers upon you... how ecstatic!

The ocean of compassion and mercy was held back by a dam, but Lord Nityānanda released it, flooding the world with pure ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa! When Lord Nityānanda's inundation of *prema* was again stopped, you personally came, to open wide the floodgates once again! In a world full of us cow-eating Christians who never heard of Kṛṣṇa, how did you make Hare Kṛṣṇa a household word in just twelve short years?

Most awesome Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya!*

Śrīla Prabhupāda, no-one in this world is as intelligent as you! You know Lord Caitanya and therefore you know everything. When they were "landing on the moon" the whole world was in front of their televisions befooled by these cheaters! "WE landed on the moon, and we will buy land on the moon and move there and be so happy!" But there was one person on this entire planet who was not cheated by them and that was you. You can never be cheated by anyone!

Most awesome Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya!*

Lord Caitanya's order was (CC Ādi 9.43), "One must boldly preach for

the benefit of all the suffering living entities.” It was His order, not His usual humble suggestion, and you did it!

Most awesome Śrīla Prabhupāda! You did it!

On the strength of that order, You sent us all out, door to door, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. twelve hours a day, rain or snow, two book bags on our back, with a thermos of *dahl* and three *chappatis*. This preaching *sevā* you have given us, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is the storehouse of happiness, in this life as well as the next!

You told us, “What is the use of your one-hour lecture? They will go away thinking nice lecture but then they will forget it. But if they take a book, it’s like a time bomb, one day they will read it and their life will be successful!” You said, “EVERY word of these books is for the benefit of all human society. There is no comparison, there is no competition these books will save the whole world! Even if they read one word, even if they read one *śloka*, even if they only touch the book, their life will be successful!” In 1973, you wrote to Rāmeśvara, “I want everyone out on the *saṅkīrtana* party everyday.” And we were out there... in ecstasy... every day. Those were the best days of our lives!

Śrīla Prabhupāda! By your mercy... every day, for the past forty years, I sing and dance in the most ecstatic *kīrtanas*, in the most beautiful temples, with the most beautiful devotees, dressed in the most beautiful dress... a *sari*... You have given us the most awesome wonders in all creation. You have given us devotional service! The *mahā-mantra*! ISKCON! *Kṛṣṇa-prasāda*! Your divine books! Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi! Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa- Balarāma! Śrī Śrī Rādhā Śyāma! The whole *guru-paramparā*! You have given us your very self! Is it possible to “repay” you for all this? We must please you somehow in this life. You said SO many times “If you really want to please me, then distribute books.”

Now that you have gone from our midst, Śrīla Prabhupāda, has the ocean of compassion once again been dammed up? Have we disappointed you? Have we become lazy and useless? You instructed everyone you met to chant the holy name and you empowered all of us to do the same. You were always begging us to get out and distribute books, distribute books, distribute books! Is it due to our pride that we are ignoring your order? You always told us, “Pride—*ahaṅkāra*—means the material world.” We are to renounce, but if we renounce your divine order, then?

Are we acting whimsically, swimming in the muck of material life? You told us once that your guru mahārāja said, “Go out and preach! Let the neophytes remain in the temples ringing their bells. Just open your eyes and see the tragedy that has happened! They have become sense enjoyers and have given

up preaching! Everyone is suffering due to the absence of the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas.” (We are not even in a temple ringing any bells.)

O! Śrīla Prabhupāda! Please help us! Please help us! Please place your lotus feet on our heads! Please give us *vyavasāyātmika-buddhi*! Please give us resolute intelligence and determination. Please get us out on the streets again, as you wanted us, always singing and dancing in joyful *saṅkīrtana*, distributing *kṛṣṇa-prasāda* and your time bombs! This only will deliver this EXTREMELY miserable world! The suffering souls are missing us. One radio announcer asked, “Where are those happy Hare Kṛṣṇas? They were always smiling, singing, and dancing down the street! Where have they all gone now?” Everyone is anxiously looking down the road waiting for us to come to their rescue. Please empower us Śrīla Prabhupāda!

In those ecstatic days with you, we were all so humble, hard working, and happy... we did anything for you! Move mountains? No problem! But now we have fallen flat on our faces without you... like Arjuna, when Kṛṣṇa left the planet, he was defeated by some simple cowherd men. If you are merciful upon us once again, then even though we are trapped here in *māyā*'s mighty clutches, we will again have firm faith in your divine order. Once again, you will make us dance in the nectar of the pure holy name of Kṛṣṇa! You will personally dispel all our *māyā* and once again we will remember and love Kṛṣṇa!

Your mercy is all that we are made of. There is no instance of anyone getting free from the clutches of *māyā* without serving and pleasing the pure devotee. By pleasing you, then only we attain pure love for Kṛṣṇa.

You kindly uncovered the secret of all secrets from Lord Caitanya—the process for attaining love for Kṛṣṇa simply by the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. And you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are the personification of this most merciful secret of Lord Caitanya. You have distributed this transcendental message to the entire world! Weaving a wreath of the holy name and *kṛṣṇa-prema*, you have garlanded this most fortunate Earth! You traveled around the world 14 times preaching the pure philosophy of Lord Gaurāṅga in such a way that even a barbarian *mleccha* and *yavana* like me, could understand it!

Most wonderful, awesome Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya*!

Some devotees want to perform their *bhakti* “peacefully at home,” but you told us that this “selfish behavior is totally unacceptable.” It was your explicit order for us, “Distribute books! Distribute books! Distribute books!” At the end, you told us, “You will prove your love for me by working together cooperatively and preaching all over the world.” By serving your orders, you are pleased and then only we are happy! Otherwise forget it, we are walking

dead! “A dead man does not preach,” you told us over and over, again and again. At the very end, you were translating your *Śrīmad- Bhāgavatam* and you could hardly speak! Bhagatji, your friend, came in your room and said, “Now you don’t have to preach any more, you have done enough of that!” You replied, “On the battlefield, sometimes a soldier will get his head cut off, but still he continues fighting, swirling around, fighting with his sword... I want to be like that! I want to be Lord Caitanya’s soldier who dies with his boots on! I want to preach till my last breath!” At your age! You were not eating, not walking or speaking! And THEN you decided to go to London to preach! They took you out on a stretcher! Do any soldiers go on the battlefield to fight on a stretcher? But YOU did Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Most awesome Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya!*

We are eating, walking, and talking but not preaching. Please give us real compassion for the blind suffering souls. Please empower us to preach and distribute your books till our last breath.

Once you came in a dream and said sadly, “They are stealing from me!” Let us all be financially accountable to you, understanding that all “our” wealth belongs to Him only. Make us know for certain that “hoarding of money is the cause of material sense gratification and misery.” Make us use “our” opulence for your exciting, ecstatic preaching programmes, *prasāda* distribution, *saṅkīrtana*, book distribution, college programs, defeating the scientists and demons! There is nothing in this world more ecstatic than these programs you have given to us, Śrīla Prabhupāda! If we give up our personal wealth for preaching then we will be so happy! Like Hanumān, let us take Lakṣmī to Lord Rāma, or later we will regret it.

Once in Bombay, You were describing the hell you went through while preaching. The two heart attacks on the boat, living on skid row with all the drunkards and drug addicts, to make one devotee only! You said, “I didn’t look right, I didn’t look left, I walked straight through hell fire to come and get you all.” But it wasn’t till years later that I realized why you were describing all that hell you went through for me! Being a total coal-black, cold and stone-hearted, ungrateful, wretched cockroach as myself, I had no idea what the love was that you were so selflessly and freely giving to all of us. You HAD to describe all that you suffered for us, otherwise we would have never noticed it! Just to get a tiny drop of appreciation from a *rākṣasa* is miraculous. We had no idea who you were, no clue what you were doing, nor what you were giving us. We just knew that you were the coolest, most amazing thing that we’d ever seen in our life!

Most awesome Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya!*

We used to see you every day in the *Bhāgavatam* class. Who can ever forget your most beautiful golden face? There would be ecstatic tumultuous *kīrtana*. All the devotees leaping in the air, crying “JAYA ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA!”

Then you would sing *Jaya Rādhā Mādhava* like no one else in this world. Just to see you every day, showering mercy everywhere. Just to hear you every day—your words—the essence of nectar! Just to see you smile, enchanting us all! But alas, when can we see you again?

In 1973, on the appearance day of your guru mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, we saw you crying in separation. So also, today on your appearance day, we cry in separation from you.

Your aspiring very lowly demon servant,

Rādhā-kuṇḍa Devī Dāsī

Rāgātmikā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

The occasion of your auspicious appearance day always marks the time for some serious introspection and taking inventory of my relationship with you as your disciple. Unfortunately, I am still struggling to be a true disciple of yours. Too often a victim of the enjoying mood, I am robbed of the innate propensity to hear the Lord's words and pastimes (*śravaṇam*). Due to insufficient hearing, my flapping tongue has not acquired a taste for topics of transcendence (*kīrtanam*). Consequently, my heart is devoid of the ability to remember you or the Lord (*smaraṇam*) while executing my daily service.

Kindly take notice of my pitiable condition, oh you who are constantly absorbed in loving thoughts of your Lord. I pray that you compassionately glance upon my dry, desert-like heart and revive my thirst for the nectarean pastimes of Kṛṣṇa. Thus, my tongue will be decorated with those pastimes and remembrance of Kṛṣṇa and His associates will gradually awaken more and more. Then, with a purified heart, by your grace, I can hope to be of true service to you and all I come in contact with in the course of that service.

“Glorification of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is performed in the *paramparā* system; that is, it is conveyed from spiritual master to disciple. Such glorification is relished by those no longer interested in the false, temporary glorification of this cosmic manifestation. Descriptions of the Lord are the right medicine for the conditioned soul undergoing repeated birth and death. Therefore, who will cease hearing such glorification of the Lord except a butcher or one who is killing his own self?” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.1.4)

Most revered Śrīla Prabhupāda, please protect me from the suicidal path.

I aspire to be (Kṛṣṇa) consciously engaged in your service eternally,

Rāgātmikā Devī Dāsī

Sarvamaṅgalā Devī Dāsī

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances at your lotus feet. We so loved paying our prostrated obeisances to you when you walked amongst us.

I just began to write this on the morning of my birthday. Devotees are kindly sending me good wishes for my wellbeing and devotional service. I wouldn't have known any of them if it were not for you. In fact, for sure my life would have been totally inauspicious.

This birth is so fortunate, more than I could ever have imagined and hoped for, only because of you and the fact that I was somehow picked up out of a hellish condition of life and by pure mercy allowed into your divine presence. It was and is indeed, **divine** for you are invested with His, the Lord's divine grace. You are the unalloyed vessel for such grace which you bestow magnanimously upon the fallen souls of this world and other worlds beyond our vision, for you are the *jagad-guru*.

Arjuna asks Kṛṣṇa in *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* in chapter 2, verse 54, "O Kṛṣṇa, what are the symptoms of one whose consciousness is thus merged in transcendence? How does he speak, and what is his language? How does he sit and how does he walk?" This is my meditation today and many days of my life. In so many transcendental ways you changed us simply by allowing us to be in your presence. Causeless mercy was given in your glance, your smile, your walk, your gestures and everything about your persona which manifested divine grace. You captured us in your golden glow. You carry *bhakti*—from you ecstatic *prema* emanates... somehow or other, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we were bathed in your effulgence and we will never be the same again. Every one of us who has been in your presence will testify to a taste of pure ecstasy.

I speak of this because I am a beginner and you allowed me this taste that sustains me to still try to follow your instructions. Even though I am quite hopeless in many regards as a disciple, because of your mercy I have not given up hope of improving in my duty to you. Your infinite kindness can never be repaid, still we are bound to you in our endeavour to follow your instructions.

Lord Kṛṣṇa responds to Arjuna's question in text 54 by describing symptoms of the pure devotee and you make it clear in the purport what is the most important quality which is "how the man in Kṛṣṇa consciousness speaks; for speech is the most important quality of any man." In the beautiful song to the spiritual master, *Śrī-guru-caraṇa-padma*, we pray, "my only desire is to have my consciousness purified by the words emanating from his lotus mouth." To follow your teaching is the only life and how fortunate we were not

only to hear but to directly see those words emanating from your lotus mouth. Śrīla Prabhupāda, I apologise for being such a neophyte. I am embarrassed by my lack of progress and idleness in developing a true taste for the holy name, despite having been allowed to see Kṛṣṇa's very, very dear pure devotee. I can only re-commit every day to try again and again. Despite my unfortunate conditioning, you have made me fortunate.

Always, I pray at your beautiful lotus feet that they will never kick me away. There is no life outside of your service and your service is forever at the feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Again and again I pray for your continued mercy on this fallen soul for on my own I have little strength or ability to improve. I am well aware that even my desire to do so is sadly lacking. Without your mercy, there is no hope of advancing. When I think of the word 'advancing' I don't think of it in terms of becoming an 'advanced' devotee—only that I might advance towards you, to have your *darśana* again, to do something to please you and to live in your presence eternally. This is the spiritual world for you are always with Kṛṣṇa. Only by your association can we reach His lotus feet.

I feel that I will never forget the experience of seeing and hearing you, Śrīla Prabhupāda and I pray that this is so. You are present in your books and miraculously in voice on tapes and CDs. Krishna is so kind to allow us to taste this nectar. By His mercy we have you and by your mercy, we can associate with Him in sound and in service. Because I am fortunate to have association with those who have a greater taste than I, I feel hopeful that they will help me with my weaknesses. This is another evidence of your magnanimity—that you created a society of devotees to give each other strength and encouragement. And despite all the inauspiciousness of Kali-yuga, this is still going on.

The mere memory of your golden head coming up the stairwell in your old Bombay quarters enlivens and thrills my heart and gives me courage. Some may think this sentimental but Śrīla Prabhupāda, we can repose our sentiment in you and all will become purified. You know that you once wrote me a beautiful note saying, "Thank you for your kind sentiments." The paradox is that although you are unforgettable, I become covered with ignorance and I forget you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are totally imbued with the spiritual qualities you have described in the *Nectar of Devotion*. As the beloved servant of the Lord you manifested these before our very eyes. Your ecstasies flowed into your books and your lectures, yet never did you display anything cheaply. Such a word has no relevance to you. Everything is cent percent pure and so deep that it will take us lifetimes to grasp what you teach. What is the need for any other books or teacher? Although all the purports of the Vedic literatures are

presented in your books, you are empowered to give the essence to fallen souls who had no knowledge of Kṛṣṇa and engage us in devotional service. Kṛṣṇa invested you with genius as a component of that divine grace. Because of you alone, I was able to walk into the temple today and gaze at the beauty of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

You taught, “Preaching is the essence.” Thank you for allowing me to participate in Lord Caitanya’s *saṅkīrtana* movement. All glories to Your Divine Grace. Please forgive any inappropriateness in my offering to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your eternal servant,

Sarvamaṅgalā Devī Dāśī

Sevānanda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vānī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

The time has come again to celebrate your divine appearance day, and again I sit and stare at a white sheet of paper, dumbfounded—wondering what to say. My mind becomes overwhelmed with emotion; and, also with the magnitude of the subject and task at hand—that is properly glorifying you—the great, and transcendental personality of Śrīla Prabhupāda—my spiritual master. Of course, nothing I can say will really be adequate, or do justice to you.

It is actually a very personal and intimate topic to discuss. I remember that you also would sometimes begin discussing your guru mahārāja on his Vyāsa-pūjā day, only to end up in tears, unable to continue speaking. Serving in separation is more than simply a poetic ornament. It is filled with loving anguish and tears. I feel I have never really finished grieving. Perhaps I never will. Nevertheless, it is our duty to glorify the spiritual master—at least three times a day; and, especially for your divine appearance day!

Sometimes, when asked about Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, you would reply, “What can I say? He was a Vaikuṅṭha man.” I often think aside from spiritual emotions, it was because the subject was just too big to broach easily.

“The spiritual master is to be considered as good as God—as great as the Supreme Personality of Godhead!” (Śrīla Prabhupāda) and, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.17.27, Lord Kṛṣṇa states that the spiritual master is non-different from Himself (*ācāryam māṁ vijānīyāt*); and, is the representative of all the demigods (*sarva-devamayo guruḥ*). Therefore guru, especially a great ācārya like you Śrīla Prabhupāda, represents God, His devotees, and the demigods.

“There is the book—*Bhāgavatam*, and the person—*Bhāgavatam*!” (Śrīla Prabhupāda) and, “Whosoever makes any distinction between Me, My pure devotee, and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is forever lost.” (Lord Caitanya in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata, Madhya-khaṇḍa*, chapter 21)

“Guru is the Supreme Personality of Servitor Godhead!” (Śrīla Prabhupāda), *Curvaṣṭaka*, verse 7 (*sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-sāstraiḥ* ...). Lord Caitanya vowed to flood the world with *kṛṣṇa-prema*, “and if some people were cowards, and flee to foreign countries; never mind, I will send my *senāpati*—great general after them to save them anyway.” (*Caitanya-bhāgavata*) Only you did that, Śrīla Prabhupāda—only you!

And you did the impossible! You increased the prestige of our illustrious Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya* by spreading it throughout the world. By spreading and establishing the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu all over the world, you have fulfilled the desires and mission of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Lord Balarāma, Brahmāji, Śrī Nārada, Madhvācārya, Lord Caitanya, Lord Nityānanda, all illustrious associates of Lord Caitanya’s *gauḍīya-līlā*, the six Gosvāmīs, Narottama Dāsa, Śrīnivāsa, Śyāmānanda Paṇḍita, Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, Śrīdhara Svāmī, Śrī Bhaktinoda Ṭhākura, and Śrī Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. No one can deny this—no one!

When you were physically with us, we all felt that we were home at last, like a fish returned to water. We loved and trusted you completely. We felt loved by you, constantly—loved and saved! Your temples and centers virtually throbbed and hummed with a powerful, sweet, life-giving, loving, energy. We felt you would not, could not ever leave us. We always assumed that we would see you again. When we heard that you were coming for a visit, that was all that mattered—eating and sleeping was not given a second thought. When we came in close proximity, we could hardly tear our eyes from your golden form long enough to bow down and pay our obeisances. Sometimes we’d forget the words of our *guru-mantra*, because all we could think of was getting up and seeing your lotuslike face again. Or like looking at one’s heart, or like your lotuslike hands warmly embracing our hearts. It’s hard to describe. You instilled in us such love and trust, that your disciples— young men and women—would perform incredible, sometimes super-human feats of austerity and service for you. A young man would go alone (or with family!) to a foreign country to open a temple with \$10 in his pocket only to please you—completely trusting in Kṛṣṇa via your mercy! Travelling *saṅkīrtana* parties of book distributors would take vows not to spend any of your Book Fund Lakṣmī, or dollars. “No. It’s Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Lakṣmī!” We would beg our food/*bhoga*, and even gas for the van. We were like little children running around filled with fearlessness and loving faith in you—our spiritual father. A few words, or a smile from you could fill the room with ecstatic love, while a scolding, or even a disappointed look could make a room full of austere,

mature transcendentalists burst into tears. The temple atmosphere was one of joy, confidence, love, trust, and duty... “Simply Wonderful!”—just like the sweet you created.

Our love should be the same today, as our duty is! “This indeed is the duty of all true disciples: to repay the debt to their spiritual master by offering him, with pure hearts, their wealth, and even their very lives.” (SB 10.80.41)

Since you departed, your Mission ISKCON has expanded..., as has our understanding of your exalted position. Like everything spiritual, it is ever-expanding.

Once, you told us, “Actually the Pañca-tattva mantra is more powerful than the *mahā-mantra*,” but that to chant it instead of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra would be an offense. “Lord Caitanya, who is Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Themselves, told us to chant the *mahā-mantra*, therefore that’s what we do.” Naturally intrigued, some of us tried it. Incredibly, no matter how hard we tried, we would find ourselves automatically, again chanting the *mahā-mantra*. The Pañca-tattva mantra would lead us back to the *mahā-mantra*!

Similarly, meditating on and praising you has the effect of leading one back to wanting to serve and please you more and more.

With old age arriving, comes an even heavier weight of responsibility. Our debt to you can never be repaid, however, we feel increased urgency. We must follow your instructions and orders! The potency for success is contained therein. Then everything will be successful. We have simply to try sincerely.

“We have to fight against all this nonsense—nonsense scientists, nonsense religionists. It is not an easy-going, sleeping business. We have to fight with so many demons. Otherwise, *khāwā dāwā dukāna*, my guru mahārāja used to say. Beg some rice, bring it, cook it and sleep.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda, room conversation, July 2, 1976 in New Vrindavan)

“We have to become very strong preachers. Then this movement will stay. If you simply take the temple worship, it will not stay very long.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda, morning walk, July 2, 1974, Los Angeles)

“I shall request you all that I shall go away, but you shall live. Don’t give up pushing on this movement, and you’ll be blessed by Lord Caitanya and His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda, lecture on Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda’s disappearance day, Los Angeles, December 9, 1969)

“No, there is nothing that can stop the *saṅkīrtana* movement because it is the will of God Himself, Lord Caitanya, that His holy name be heard in every town and village.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda, Letter to Makhanlāl, Māyapur, June 22, 1973)

“So this movement will go on. Nobody can stop.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā lecture, London, August 22, 1973)

“There is no doubt that this *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Caitanya will overtake all the earth and all opposing parties will be cracked down to nothing.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda, letter to Karandhara, January 1, 1971)

“Oh! Gurudeva! *Kṛpā-bindu diyā*, by a drop of your mercy make this servant of yours more humble than a blade of grass. Give me strength to bear all trials and troubles, and free me from all desires for personal honor.”

Your insignificant servant,

Sevānanda Dāsa

Sudevī Devī Dāsī

My dear Prabhupāda,

Kindly accept my prostrated obeisances.

I am most fortunate to be your disciple. You have instructed me over the years, up to the present to continue to engage in devotional service to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead—Kṛṣṇa, and to follow guru's instructions. I am unworthy of this for I am fallen and entangled in this web of *māyā*. By your causeless mercy Prabhupāda, please let me eternally remain at your lotus feet, do what you want with me, for the spiritual master is always with his disciple.

The pure devotee of the Lord is our connection to Kṛṣṇa, without the guru we are nothing. Out of thousands we all have come across Kṛṣṇa's representative, a pure devotee, a guru. Kṛṣṇa has sent Śrīla Prabhupāda to bring us all back home back to Godhead. Let us all follow Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions, and fulfill Prabhupāda's vision, for I (we) must bring forth this movement of Lord Caitanya to the masses, bring this chanting of the holy names all over the world, for this is the mercy of Prabhupāda *jagad-guru*.

All glories to you Śrīla Prabhupāda, all glories to you Śrīla Prabhupāda, all glories to you Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your insignificant servant,

Sudevī Devī Dāsī
(New Vrindavan)

Vaiṣṇavānanda Dāsa

ETERNALLY INDEBTED TO ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vānī-pracāriṇe
nirvīṣeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisance at your lotus feet on this auspicious day of your divine appearance, Vyāsa-pūjā.

Kindly forgive my feeble attempt to glorify you; there are no measures of words or deeds that can properly describe the unfathomable mercy that you have bestowed upon me. I will never in this lifetime, nor eternally be able to repay you for accepting me as your disciple and receiving the benediction of your exalted association.

Your association, *sādhu-saṅga*, is our most coveted desire, the crest jewel of all attainments. You once asked your disciples, “What is the value of one zero?” Everyone being perplexed, reluctantly replied, “No value.” Then you asked for the value of two zeros, three zeros, innumerable countless zeros, no value again everyone responded. Until the “one” of Kṛṣṇa is added, hence full value is there, you instructed. Similarly, you are the “one” before the many zeros, Śrīla Prabhupāda, just like Lord Kṛṣṇa, you have added full value to our lives. You have given all your disciples the sublime opportunity to return back home, back to Godhead.

On this blessed day of your divine appearance, Vyāsa-pūjā, I want to implore you to please remain the “one” in my life and give me the fortitude not to succumb to the temptations and allurements of this dark venue of Kali-yuga. Śrīla Prabhupāda, please give your blessings and allow me to remain at the shelter of your lotus feet. I promise that someday I will become your ideal son and perfect disciple. I am eternally indebted to you!

Your son,

Vaiṣṇavānanda Dāsa

Vedavyāsa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my *daṇḍavats* in the dust of your lotus feet.

Thank you for appearing on Earth to fulfill the desire of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
Thank you for spreading the chanting of the holy name to every town and village.

Thank you for carrying the message of Godhead to the West.

Thank you for giving out the seed of devotional service without discrimination.

Thank you for showing us how to water the *bhakti* creeper, make it grow and protect it.

Thank you for fanning the little spark of faith you saw within us.

Thank you for instructing us how to perform *sādhana-bhakti*.

Thank you for animating us to chant and dance in ecstasy.

Thank you for transforming us from hippies into happies.

Thank you for accepting us as your disciples.

Thank you for awakening our dormant attraction for Kṛṣṇa.

Thank you for taking us to our Eternal Friend.

Thank you for leading us back home, back to Godhead.

Thank you for guiding us to a bright future.

Thank you for making us fortunate.

Thank you for being a bona fide representative of the disciplic succession.

Thank you for depending exclusively on the mercy of guru and Kṛṣṇa.

Thank you for following in the footsteps of the *mahājanas*.

Thank you for executing perfectly the order of your spiritual master.

Thank you for founding the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Thank you for struggling so hard to establish ISKCON on a solid foundation.

Thank you for uniting even the most diverse personalities under the banner of ISKCON.

Thank you for steering the ISKCON ship across the ocean of Kali.

Thank you for welcoming everybody on board, regardless of their external situation.

Thank you for adjusting the Vaiṣṇava principles expertly according to time, place and circumstances.

Thank you for doing always the needful.

Thank you for devoting all your time and energy to broadcast Kṛṣṇa's glories.

Thank you for preaching vigorously at every opportunity and under any condition.

Thank you for distributing the priceless treasure of *kṛṣṇa-nāma* to one and all.

Thank you for upholding the purity of Vaiṣṇava dharma.
 Thank you for presenting the timeless tradition of *bhakti* without compromise.
 Thank you for repeating the message of Godhead without change.
 Thank you for disseminating the fundamental spiritual knowledge of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.
 Thank you for illuminating the world with the light of the *Bhāgavata*.
 Thank you for drowning us in the nectar ocean of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.
 Thank you for lecturing day-in and day-out on the timeless message of the *Vedas*.
 Thank you for revealing the true nature of both the material and spiritual worlds.
 Thank you for transmitting the science of Kṛṣṇa with unparalleled clarity.
 Thank you for explaining all the intricacies of devotional service.
 Thank you for disclosing the most confidential knowledge.
 Thank you for speaking untiringly *kṛṣṇa-kathā*.
 Thank you for answering all our questions.
 Thank you for slashing our doubts with the sword of knowledge.
 Thank you for dispelling the dense darkness of our ignorance.
 Thank you for cutting our attachment to this material world.
 Thank you for saving us from the most dangerous type of fear.
 Thank you for helping us to overcome all difficulties.
 Thank you for delivering us from the ocean of material existence.
 Thank you for reminding us of our real nature.
 Thank you for reviving our original consciousness.
 Thank you for changing our hearts.
 Thank you for opening temples and farm communities all over the world.
 Thank you for travelling continuously to enliven your devotees.
 Thank you for inviting everyone to experience a higher taste at the Sunday love feast.
 Thank you for showing us how to prepare and honor *kṛṣṇa-prasāda*.
 Thank you for installing the Deity form of the Lord.
 Thank you for teaching us how to perform Deity worship.
 Thank you for celebrating with us Gaura-pūrṇimā, Janmāṣṭamī and Rathayātrā.
 Thank you for introducing the Māyāpur-Vṛndāvana festival.
 Thank you for conceiving Māyāpur City and the Temple of the Vedic Planetarium.
 Thank you for constructing the Krishna Balaram Mandir.
 Thank you for sacrificing your comforts for the welfare of the world.

Thank you for providing nourishment for the soul.
 Thank you for impressing upon us the pressing need to finish our business in this lifetime.
 Thank you for pushing us to sacrifice all our energy for Kṛṣṇa.
 Thank you for connecting us to the live wire of the *guru-paramparā*.
 Thank you for bringing about a revolution in our lives.
 Thank you for pointing out “simple living and high thinking” as the solution to all problems in life.
 Thank you for emphasizing the importance of protecting Kṛṣṇa’s pet animal, the cow.
 Thank you for highlighting the importance of serving Kṛṣṇa’s dear ones, the Vaiṣṇavas.
 Thank you for enthusing us to use our skills in Kṛṣṇa’s service.
 Thank you for offering us the opportunity to serve the Supreme Absolute Truth.
 Thank you for finding some use for us in your preaching mission.
 Thank you for appreciating even the most insignificant service.
 Thank you for blessing us with your causeless mercy.
 Thank you for praying to the Lord for our spiritual well-being.
 Thank you for remaining always our ever well-wisher.
 Thank you for uplifting even the most fallen.
 Thank you for displaying all the wonderful qualities of a pure Vaiṣṇava.
 Thank you for inspiring us by your shining example.
 Thank you for spiritualizing everyone and everything that came in contact with you.
 Thank you for allowing Śivānanda Prabhu to come to Europe.
 Thank you for encouraging him to open a temple in Hamburg.
 Thank you for publishing *Śrī Īsopaniṣad* which brought me nearer to Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.
 Thank you for translating *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* until your last breath.
 Thank you for engaging me in translating your books.
 Thank you for tolerating my feeble attempts to serve you.
 Thank you for loving me despite all my shortcomings.
 Thank you for granting me shelter at your lotus feet.

*Eternally indebted for all that you have done for us,
 I beg to remain your humble servant forever,*

Vedavyāsa Dāsa

Vinode Vāṇī Devī Dāśī

My beloved master, dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda:

*yadā parānanda-guro bhavat-pade
padam mano me bhagaval labheta
tadā nirastākḥila-sādhana-śramah
śrayeya saukhyaṁ bhavataḥ kṛpātaḥ*

“O all merciful spiritual master, representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, when will my mind be completely surrendered unto your lotus feet? At that time, only by your mercy, I shall be able to get relief from all obstacles to spiritual life, and I shall be situated in blissful life.” (Prayer by Śrīpāda Śrīdhara Svāmī from *Krishna* book, Prayers to the Personified Vedas)

Gurudeva, as the years pass, I experience myself as still being at the start of my devotional service. In some ways, that is your mercy, because I experience your books, and particularly *kīrtana*, as new and fresh. In other ways, my current lack of surrender and advancement is lamentable. Where did I go wrong? I tried to serve, surrender to my authorities, and remain enthusiastic, but somehow I find myself outside your temples, working, struggling to attend *maṅgala-ārati* and chant the minimum sixteen rounds of the *mahā-mantra*. Certainly, this state is due to my offenses to you, devotees, the *Vedas*, the cow, the earth, Śrīmatī Tulasī-devī, and the *arcā-vigraha* of the Lord. What have I not done for my own sense pleasure?

To someone as devoid of purified devotional qualities as myself, you have been unlimitedly merciful. In casting your net wide, you have also caught me, a tiny flapping creature, and pulled me onto the boat of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Thank you for engaging me in this lifetime and allowing me to experience a drop of the bliss of *āśrama* life, advanced Vaiṣṇava association, and surrendered *sevā*. Thank you for allowing me to live in Śrīdhāma Māyāpur and Vṛndāvana-dhāma; that was truly mercy and I am grateful.

Thank you for listening and reciprocating with my devotional thoughts and prayers, and always being here for me. You are my rock!

Thank you for keeping me well and safe. This world has become an even more dangerous place since you left, Śrīla Prabhupāda. People are suffering terribly. Somehow, I am protected.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I have a petition today. I worry for the suffering of the world and I’m sorry that we did not develop ISKCON farms and cow

protection as you directed. Kali-yuga has advanced so far, Prabhupāda. These are horrible days for the world, and your divine intervention is greatly needed. I know you would care if you were walking amongst us.

In the few years I have left in this body, please help me to fix my mind on your service and instructions. Allow me:

to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra sincerely and constantly;

to attend *maṅgala-ārati*;

to read your books and share this nectar with others;

to serve your devotees with all humility and enthusiasm;

to rise in the night and cry out for you to take me with you;

to always be grateful for YOU and your gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

You are the only treasure of my life, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Please remember me as I come to the end of my life. Keep me close to you so that I may serve you again. Your lotus feet are the only safe place in the three worlds.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I adore you, my dear master.

Your fallen daughter,

Vinode Vāṇī Devī Dāsī
(Alachua, Florida)

Yaduvendu Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

All glories to Śrī Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga!

Forty years in Kṛṣṇa consciousness has been an amazing adventure. Through that time I've experienced all the ups and downs of life, the good and the bad, the ecstasy and the pain.

At seventeen I was naïve and probably more than a little arrogant. Like most young people I had the mistaken idea that I was special and destined for great things. Yet, one by one all of my dreams and aspirations—even to be a great devotee, have failed. But that's okay. At fifty-seven, I now understand that life ends in defeat for everyone. We can possess nothing that is not ultimately taken away.

I imagine this must be extremely difficult for anyone not in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. What would a non-devotee have left once he has lost his youth, intelligence, strength, beauty and in the final stages, his ability to digest food, his mobility, his memory, hearing and eyesight etc? Our situation is an extremely fearful one. I'm now experiencing that material life is actually about nothing but loss. But isn't that what you told us all those years ago?

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, what you brought to the West in 1965 was not another religion—a vague hope based upon sentiment, but the remedy to all of life's problems, for we are struggling in material existence only due to forgetfulness of our relationship with the Supreme Absolute Truth, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Knowing this and understanding that we have no other recourse but the shelter of the Lord, makes all the difference, for through your expert guidance, the more we suffer the more we are able to focus on the goal of life, ultimately becoming free from all anxiety. You have taught us that real success is based upon one thing—remembering the Lord at all times, in thought, word and deed. This is your gift to the world.

Your ever grateful disciple,

Yaduvendu Dāsa
(South Wales)

Yaśomatī Devī Dāsī

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirvīṣeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

*jogyatā-vicāre, kichu nāhi pāi,
tomāra karuṇā-sāra*

“Your mercy is all that I am made of...”
*karuṇā nā hoile, kāndiyā kāndiyā,
prāṇa nā rākhibo āra*

“If you are not merciful unto me, I can only weep, and I will not be able to maintain my life.”

In this way, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura sings. I will not pretend to understand love on the level of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s. However, today, the meaning of his words has reached a new depth.

As I look at my life, it has been touched by your mercy at every turn, right from my youth. When finding no meaning to life, I would have just as well invited death. You rescued me with knowledge and gave my life a purpose. Then over the years, whenever I got comfortable in this illusory world, forgetting, losing focus, de-prioritizing my beliefs, my convictions, you reminded me and drew me closer, always sending guides on my path to remind me of your mission, inviting me to take part in some insignificant way, befitting my qualifications.

Your mercy is inherent to my life, as I know it. Your mercy **IS**, all that I am made of. Yet, here I am trying to offer something to you, like a child spending the parents’ money on a gift for them or the offering of Gaṅgā water to Gaṅgā-mātā. I have nothing to present, nothing to give, nothing but this life, which justly already belongs to you.

You are always there guiding me, from a distance. *Vāṇī* is always the way of association for me—books, lectures, and messengers, representatives, temple authorities, GBCs, husband, children, seniors, juniors, friends, strangers, whomever you chose to remind me of your teachings at any particular moment.

I can offer you thanks, but even if I were to offer thanks incessantly for the rest of my life, even if I had a thousand mouths to do it with, it would not change the debt I have with you. I thank you and give you my life repeatedly, please engage me in your service, give me the intelligence to be useful in your great movement.

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, as I go through life, mechanically engaging in attempts at devotional service, mechanically following your basic instructions, while internally following my own whim, I find myself ridden with envy for my godbrothers and godsisters, and even nieces and nephews, who seem to have such spontaneous love for you. Allow me to find a way to serve them in spite of my all-encompassing and tenacious pride, which persists at polluting all my attempts. I hanker for the *guru-bhakti* they cherish in their heart. Where is that love for guru that reveals eternal love for Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa? Where is **my** *guru-bhakti*? The feeling evades me. Let me serve you unconditionally without regards for self, with spontaneous affection.

Today everyone is offering praise to you and I stand in awe at your immensely magnanimous compassion and dare to beg for yet one more drop of mercy:

Please bless me with this elusive love for *guru*. Let my steel framed heart become unlocked, free to learn to serve the Vaisnavas and their masters eternally. Please once again bestow your mercy upon me.

karuṇā nā hoile, kāndiyā kāndiyā,(prāṇa nā rākhibo āra)

Anything of any consequence, of any value in my life is due to your compassion on this minute entity. Therefore, my life is yours. I beg you to consider utilizing it in your service and glance favorably on your rebellious servant.

Your eternally indebted daughter,

Yaśomatī Devī Dāsī

Yogīndra Dāsa

*tapyante loka-tāpena sādhaḥ prāyaśo janāḥ
paramārādhanaṁ tad dhi puruṣasyākhlātmanaḥ*

“It is said that great personalities almost always accept voluntary suffering because of the suffering of people in general. This is considered the highest method of worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is present in everyone’s heart.” (SB 8.7.44)

SPRING/SUMMER, 1976

Śrīla Prabhupāda exemplifies the mood of this verse in his translating and commenting on it. His work on the eighth canto was done during what turned out to be his final around-the-world tour, i.e. between the 10th of May, 1976 when he finished the seventh canto, and the 1st of September when he finished the eighth canto. Despite being over eighty, Prabhupāda traveled extensively during this period from Honolulu to Los Angeles, Detroit, Toronto, New Vrindavan, Washington D.C., New York, London, New Mayapur, Teheran, Bombay, Hyderabad and New Delhi. Still he was able to do the entire eighth canto in less than four months!

Also at this time Śrīla Prabhupāda gave large initiations. On July 19th, for example, he initiated approximately a hundred devotees in New York. On July 20th Hari Śauri Prabhu noted in his diary:

“It seems that every time Prabhupāda holds a big initiation, he becomes afflicted with some type of physical ailment. He now has a heavy cold which is worsening.” Senior disciples implored Prabhupāda to retire for his health. “I want the benediction to go on fighting for Kṛṣṇa,” he said, “just like Arjuna.” On the flight from New York to London, Prabhupāda became very ill. He nonetheless continued his itinerary at great personal inconvenience.

Vegavān Prabhu, the Stockholm temple president in 1976, went to London to meet Śrīla Prabhupāda at the end of July (which turned out to be the last leg of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s last around the world tour). Vegavān phoned Ajita Prabhu in Stockholm and told him to send the traveling *saṅkīrtana* party *brahmacārīs* to New Mayapur, France, where Śrīla Prabhupāda was headed. At that time after six months in the Stockholm temple I had been recommended for initiation. So, en route to New Mayapur I spent a half day going around to stores in a town in south Sweden in my saffron *dhotī* begging for donations for my prospective Indian guru.

Having not yet learned the language, I was reading Swedish from a crypt sheet (prepared by my fellow *brahmacārī*, Ariṣṭahe Dāsa). I collected a humble sum of SEK 70:- (about \$15). When we arrived at New Mayapur, there were many devotees gathered from all over. Vegavān came from London and I gave him the *guru-dakṣiṇā* for Śrīla Prabhupāda. Although Śrīla Prabhupāda was not receiving many visitors the first days after his arrival at the château due to cough and cold, Vegavān pleaded to Prabhupāda's servants that he had Lakṣmī for Śrīla Prabhupāda. I heard from Vegavān that Śrīla Prabhupāda accepted graciously the Swedish notes but in his practical, common sense way asked if they could be exchanged into dollars.

Vegavān asked me if I wanted a pass at guarding Prabhupāda's door that night. I went at the appointed hour and relieved a French *brahmacārī* who gave me some *prasādam* cookies and a stick. It was the dead of night and dark all around, but after some time I heard a voice from inside Śrīla Prabhupāda's room. I can understand in retrospect that Śrīla Prabhupāda had risen in the middle of the night while everyone was sleeping and was dictating his books. Since the eighth canto was completed shortly thereafter on the 1st of September, 1976 according to the concluding note at the end of the canto's final purport, I can make an educated guess that it was the eighth canto I heard Śrīla Prabhupāda translating that night.

"It is said that great personalities almost always accept voluntary suffering because of the suffering of people in general. This is considered the highest method of worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is present in everyone's heart." (SB 8.7.44)

We Swedish *brahmacārīs* waited a day or two for Śrīla Prabhupāda to come out from his quarters and one evening he went for a walk. When the door to his quarters opened, a stream of light from the window behind him exalted my first glimpse of His Divine Grace illuminating the shadowy corridor and stairway I stood on.

After his walk with senior leaders and *sannyāsīs* he went to the temple for *darśana* of Gaura-Nitāi and then sat on the *vyāsāsana* and we sang *Śrī-guru-caraṇa-padma* (if I remember right. In that case it was the one and only time I recall singing *guru-pūjā* in Prabhupāda's presence). After that he went up to his room without speaking.

One lesson that has stuck with me from that time was that I noticed there was one flamboyant visitor at New Mayapur, who went by the name Rādhe Śyāma (although there is reason to doubt he was initiated). He was following Prabhupāda around the world, but I heard that Prabhupāda was not pleased that this man was unaccountable to any ISKCON authority.

Vegavān suggested we return to our service of book distribution in Sweden. One of the *brahmacārīs* in the party argued vehemently that we had driven half way over Europe to come there and should remain for the rest of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s visit. Vegavān asked me what I thought and I agreed with Vegavān that our main association with Śrīla Prabhupāda was in the field of service, so we left. Śrīla Prabhupāda installed Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma and held initiation there in the next few days. I returned to New Mayapur in 2006 for the 30th anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s visit and heard Hari Śauri Prabhu read from his diary what Śrīla Prabhupāda was saying and doing in 1976 during his eight-day visit at New Mayapur.

May I always remember Śrīla Prabhupāda’s instructions and quote them without difficulty.

Your servant,

Yogīndra Dāsa

Ekanaṭha Dāsa

*śrī-guru-caraṇa-padma, kevala-bhakati-sadma
vando mui sāvadhāna mate
yāñhāra prasāde bhāi, e bhava tariyā yāi
kṛṣṇa-prāpti haya yāhā haite*

"The lotus feet of our spiritual master are the only way by which we can attain pure devotional service. I bow to his lotus feet with great awe and reverence. By his grace one can cross the ocean of material suffering and obtain the mercy of Kṛṣṇa." (Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura)

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated *daṇḍavats* at your divine feet.

Oh pure representative of Lord Nityānanda, your glories are unlimited and unfathomable. I owe you my life, my very existence. If it were not for you, I would have perished long ago in the gutters of Istanbul. When will my stone-like heart finally soften up to fully realize and appreciate your teachings, the oceans of pure transcendental knowledge emanating from your lotus-like mouth? You are fully capable to untie the knot of material attachment. I surrender unto you. Out of your causeless mercy you have come down and liberated us from a most hellish and abominable condition. You so very kindly delivered the holy name, to extinguish the blazing fire of this miserable material existence in our hearts, and freed us from the painful cycles of birth, death, old age and disease. But alas, my envious nature cannot fully appreciate it. Please have mercy on this wretched soul, a fool number one.

I remember once during your *guru-pūjā* in Bombay 1974, when the assembled devotees each took their turn offering flowers and paying you obeisances, I decided just then before my turn was up to act 'so-called' very humble. So I appeared before Your Divine Grace, offering my flowers to you, while loudly within my mind declaring myself to be a fool number one, a complete rascal not deserving to be there before you that instance. I deliberately avoided eye contact. I paid you my *daṇḍavats* and proceeded to my spot where I was previously standing. One of the devotees elbowed me in the side, exclaiming, "Did you see that?" "See what?" I asked. "Śrīla Prabhupāda gave you a gigantic smile!" Hearing that, I became totally embarrassed, understanding that you actually had read my mind and even

though I lacked complete seriousness, you still accepted the offering!
All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Thank you for your mercy and blessings.

Your paltry servant,

Ekanātha Dāsa

Karlāpati Devī Dāsi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my heartfelt obeisances.

How can I glorify you? It is like trying to praise the sun for being warm or the water for being cool and refreshing. Your qualities adorn you in a similar way, loudly proclaiming how dear you are to Śrīmatī Rādhikā and to Lord Kṛṣṇa and endearing you to all who come in contact with you.

After more than forty years endeavoring to be faithful to your instructions I am just now realizing the great good fortune that was mine, to have you pick me up out of the material world and engage me in your service. So few living entities receive that opportunity—to receive your mercy and compassion in the form of the holy name, your words, your books, and your direct service, as well as to bask in your smile and to receive your blessings if fortunate enough to please you, or to receive your chastisement as you guide and remove all the unwanted things still residing in our hearts. Please enter my heart, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Help me to take up your mood and to eternally be engaged in my constitutional position assisting you as you serve the Divine Couple.

Being the servant of the servant is the most fortunate position of all since the living entity receiving your mercy has the opportunity to become one of the most dear to the Supreme Lord. I have always thought of myself as your servant. It is where my mind takes shelter and remembrance is sweet. You took the most unqualified, or as you have said, ‘not the most of anything,’ and have engaged us in opening and maintaining temples of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, of Śrī Nityānanda and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and Their Lordships Jagannātha, Balarāma, and Śrīmatī Subhadrā. The temples are like hospitals where souls suffering the pangs of material existence can learn the truth and purify their consciousness. We study and distribute your books which are still transforming hearts and will continue to do so for hundreds of generations in the future. They transform the lives of seekers of the truth and reveal their eternal identity as lovers as God. Your books are so clear and grave—telling the truth about the world we find ourselves in and of how to transcend it, but even greater than that you are telling us about the spiritual world and helping us fan our desire to be there. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not dependent on any external arrangement. You have given us the opportunity for a ‘higher taste.’ The glitter of the world pales in comparison. Your miracles are happening every day as you transform our hearts. The price is our eagerness to accept your mercy and to cry for it like a child, lost in the desert dying of thirst. Accepting your mercy means chanting the holy names, always remembering

Kṛṣṇa and never forgetting him, following your instructions and maintaining loving relationships with your devotees.

Your glory is manifest every time a soul eagerly embraces the chanting of the holy names, bows down in front of the Deities, or engages in any of the nine principal processes of devotional service. Without your mercy, few of us in the West would ever have begun to chant the holy names, let alone want to chant them purely. You are the divine medium that takes our offerings to the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhikā and Lord Kṛṣṇa. I have the rest of eternity to thank you.

Your lowly servant,

Karlāpati Devī Dāsī
(Mountain View, Hawaii)

Kṛṣṇa Kṣetra Dāsa

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I again come before you on the occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā to offer myself, with body, mind and words as obeisance and tribute.

As I go about my life, trying to serve you, occasionally an odd memory appears, surprising me. Recently it was a passage from the biblical Psalms that I, with only faint comprehension, memorized as a child in a Christian “Sunday school” class. Out of nowhere, some days ago the memory of Psalm 23’s first line came to me:

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

From you I have learned that the Lord takes pleasure in herding cows. Through your guidance He guides me, and in so doing, He leads me toward freedom from all want. It is you who, by example and precept, have shown me that wanting—desiring temporal fruits—is unnecessary and pointless: the Lord beckons us to His shelter, present now and everywhere. Kṛṣṇa is a cowherd, and yes, He may also appear as a shepherd should it so please Him, should His devotee wish to see Him as such. The Psalm continues (in the King James translation, as I learned it long ago),

“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.”

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, have brought me to the green pastures of *kṛṣṇa-sevā* and to the still waters of your fathomless vision of Absolute Truth: I come ever and again to the lake of your words to drink, my thirst slaked.

“He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.”

As a child memorizing these lines, I had only the vaguest idea what “righteousness” means. Now, by your grace, at least an inkling of its meaning comes to me; and though I fall short of even that inkling, I understand that righteousness dwells in the Lord’s holy names, and in the proper chanting of his holy names. “My soul,” I now understand is rather “I, a soul.” A simple truth, so life-transforming!

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

By your grace, and by your care, I am sheltered. Death may approach, but now I put trust in your words, the words of Kṛṣṇa: Death is a passage, and real life is accessible, beyond death, in devotional service. Evil—the shadow that is a turning away from the Lord, has no substance. And Lord Caitanya’s *sannyāsa-daṇḍa* and waterpot are ever in view, emblems of His teaching of devotional renunciation, as the substance of the assurance of divine existence, knowledge, and bliss.

“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.”

By your grace, I come to know that my enemies are nought but lust, anger, greed, and the like. You have invited me to the feast of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* that you set before me and before all who would partake, and you have blessed me by accepting me, a wayward soul, as your pupil. Into my small heart you pour to overflowing your kindness, ever reminding me in dark moments, “Kṛṣṇa is so kind.”

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

Surely only because of your goodness and mercy can I understand what goodness and mercy actually are. Let me always follow you to continually capture and to convey your goodness and mercy to others. And kindly allow me to remain ever in your house of devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, together with all those who honor you and cherish your teachings.

Your aspiring servant,

Kṛṣṇa Kṣetra Dāsa
(Oxford)

Śrīdhara Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet.

Over four decades have passed since I met Your Grace and was so fortunate to have been accepted by you for initiation into the glorious line of Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* descending from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu through Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Though I possessed no qualifications, you very kindly brought me into the field of your empowered guidance within the transcendental system of *guru-paramparā*.

Your love, mercy, and compassion is evident to me now on this auspicious observance of your appearance day. Week by week I am sensing an intensification of my orientation to be a more comprehensively surrendered instrument within your desires to spread the profound teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the chanting of the *mahā-mantra*. I beg of you to help me deepen my commitment and engagement in the service of your transcendental desires and to intensify and purify my chanting of the *mahā-mantra*.

Your humble servant,

Śrīdhara Dāsa

Madana Mohana Mohinī Devī Dāsī

*śrī guru-caraṇa-padma, kevala-bhakati-sadma,
bando mui sāvadhāna mate*

The lotus feet of our spiritual master are the only way by which we can attain pure devotional service. I bow down to his lotus feet with great awe and reverence.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet.

As we experience musicians, actors, sports heroes, even political figures arousing passion in some for some time in some places, we see that you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, evoke deep spiritual feelings from so many, unlike anyone else in this world.

Each year during your Vyāsa-pūjā, I find myself meditating on how all the devotees throughout the world are glorifying you, expressing their love and showing their respect and honor for you, hour after hour, in place after place—and this includes many who have never personally seen you. But this does not happen just one day of the year, but each day of the year, and year after year, for you are the true hero, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

You are the real saint amongst saints. While those praised for their material activities will die and their names will die with them, your glories will live forever.

So often I think about how your lotus feet once graced this planet and even though we can no longer see them, they still walk in the hearts of your devotees. And sometimes, Śrīla Prabhupāda, when I feel great distress, I mentally place those lotus feet on my head and feel great relief. Thank you for this mercy. Please allow me to always nestle my head in those divine lotus feet.

May we all cooperatively join in your heart to please you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.
Hare Kṛṣṇa.

My heart is like a heavy stone,
Dull and without feeling.
And so this attempt to glorify you
Is so difficult to do
For you have such
Unfathomable qualities and achievements

That are as deep as the ocean.
Please bless me
That this limitless ocean of compassion
Will be the wealth of my mind.
I look at your picture,
At your smiling face,
And I pray that this smile
May guide me
To give others that smile
Of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.
What greater gift is there?
What better absorption?
Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please always bestow that smile
Upon me
So I may wake up
From the slumber of *māyā*
Unto the shelter of your lotus feet
Which will help me continually give that shelter
To others.
Forever.

Your forever dedicated and indebted servant,

Madana Mohana Mohinī Devī Dāsī

Lalitā-sakhī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Repeated obeisances at your glowing golden lotus feet. May their dust always warm and enlighten my heart.

We were so carefully protected and nurtured by you in our sheltered birthing nest and, as fledglings sometimes will, we feared surrendering our security.

Some took to the air. Did you push? Or did they jump? Perhaps a push for the timid and a jump for the courageous, but for both their need to fly was strong. And what did they discover when they used their God-given wings?—a vast sky with guardian angels waiting to guide and protect them in their newfound flight.

Dangers? Oh, they exist. Betrayal? Never! That frightening doubt disappears in the vast sunlit sky of truth. Your glories increase unlimitedly in their hearts as they glimpse the extent of your transcendental gift. What could be more natural?

I pray at your lotus feet that I may steadfastly follow your path and that one day I will be accepted into the multi-hued flocks soaring aloft on their journey to join you in the eternal sky of the loving pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

Aspiring for your service,

Lalitā-sakhī Devī Dāsī

Anavadyāṅgī Devī Dāsī

I fall down at your lotus feet, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who alone is still delivering innumerable fallen souls from ignorance of our eternal beings.

I feel so unqualified to write as your disciple having been so benedicted to offer you some small service, but now over thirty years later fail to even honor my rounds faithfully.

Every day I struggle with *māyā's* illusions of comfort. Your advice to never forget Kṛṣṇa and always remember Kṛṣṇa refreshes my mind, giving me hope and encourages me on. I know in my heart and soul that due to your causeless mercy you are always with me and I can never forget you.

Your aspiring servant,

Anavadyāṅgī Devī Dāsī

Arjuna Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

“Śrī Gurudeva is the personification of the bliss of Kṛṣṇa’s mercy. He is the storehouse of compassion for the poor and suffering souls. He reveals divine knowledge, pure devotion, and ecstatic love of God, and he is the savior of the fallen souls. Therefore offer your mind, body, and very life at the feet of Śrī Guru and always chant the divine names of Śrī Hari.”

Someone explained to me once that by your mercy, we can speak something on this day even though there may be some literary flaws. Just like a loving father appreciates the incoherent stammering of his young child as the child tries to express his affections, by your mercy, you appreciate our outpourings and heartfelt appreciations reposed at your lotus feet.

By your mercy I am getting to understand more and more that Your Divine Grace is truly the only light and love in this very dark, temporary world. You are the Supreme Personality of Servitor Godhead.

By your mercy, I was initiated some thirty-eight years ago. You also gave me second initiation only a few months later. I can remember that when I stepped into your room to receive the Gāyatrī mantra, I lost all material composure and just seemed to be floating over to where you were seated. You were so effulgent and so grave. Who can imagine, what deep ecstasy you were feeling at that time. Yet, you came out of trance to explain the Gāyatrī mantra to me, by your mercy. And only by your mercy, even through all my lust, greed, and anger, I have practically never forgotten your divine lotus feet even for one day. Whether I am up or down, by your mercy, I continue to chant Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s divine holy names and cry out to you deep in my heart to please rescue me from certain circumstances time and time again. By your mercy, you were always there and now, after all these years, it is amazing that I feel your presence more than ever, and this can only be, by your mercy.

In 1972 I asked you a question. I expressed how confused, overwhelmed, and disappointed I was that there were so many philosophies and interpretations of those schools of thought—what to speak of so many religions out there. How can I ever know God, or what was the truth? Who to follow? You explained that logic and argument will not help me. One logician may be better than another and may convert some argument and decision with a better logical conclusion. A philosopher cannot be a philosopher unless he differs with another philosopher. You said emphatically that we cannot decide

from the books, or from philosophical speculation, or by argument and logic. You went on to explain how you follow the *Bhagavad-gītā* and that it is quite perfect in the matter of understanding God. Your Divine Grace suggested that I find some recognized authority and just follow in his footsteps. I thought you would push the point that I should follow you only, like so many other masters have said in the past. Instead, Śrīla Prabhupāda, by your mercy, your reply was the defining moment in my existence. You said that your only wish is simply that everyone should understand and love God, because human life is meant for this purpose. So, if a man loves God more than anything else, he is the perfect man. You told me very lovingly that you wish that I may follow this principle and be happy! At that moment, I knew in my heart that I had found my eternal lord and master. At that point, I knew that Your Divine Grace had brought unlimited humility to perfection! I was raptured and captured, arrested by this mood.

When reading your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I became attached to the personality and name of Arjuna. I related with him on a few levels. In my neophyte condition I prayed to Lord Kṛṣṇa that He please give me this name at initiation or I might not be able to carry on. I wanted a sign that my prayers were being heard. When I approached Your Divine Grace on that wonderful day of my initiation, I knew that the name offering would make or break me. I offered my obeisances, got up, and repeated the vows. I was so much in anxiety thinking about the name. But by your mercy, you handed me my beads, and with a beautiful smile that I remember till this day, you said, "Your name is Arjuna Dāsa!" The whole Los Angeles temple erupted in applause and cheers. I was stunned and simply dropped flat out at your lotus feet. It was the most ecstatic moment in my life! By your mercy, my faith soared sky high.

By your mercy, you accepted the donations I was sending up to your room every few days. I was slowly giving up all the money I had come to Los Angeles with. I was detaching myself slowly but surely. I wanted to attract your attention. My faith, by your mercy, was increasing. You were very happy that this 'nice boy' was always sending up the cash! In your loving reciprocation you sent me down a beautiful picture of yourself and seemed to have signed it three times! Your servant said that you gave me all your blessings. That could only be, by your mercy.

By your mercy, I was distributing your books profusely. This was the engagement you told me most pleased you. Also, you mentioned to me that I should read and study your books and prepare myself fully for going back to Godhead. Śrīla Prabhupāda, only by your mercy, can this ever take place.

During the occasion of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī's disappearance day, you once again showered your mercy. I thought that at any moment you would just break out in ecstasy, because while you were speaking, so much loving emotion was there. After about twenty minutes of mentioning how much you appreciated us all in helping you with this mission, as you spoke these words, "because you are all helping me," tears shot out of your lotus eyes, as you choked up. They shot out in torrents and we were all instantly stunned! We all tasted at that moment, a spark of real spiritual love, as we cried spontaneously along with you, and goose bumps appeared. That was only, Śrīla Prabhupāda, by your mercy!

By your mercy, I was able to come on quite a few morning walks in Hawaii. I remember you always calling the early morning surfers, sufferers! Śrīla Prabhupāda, truly my eyes adored you. I was absorbed in all your movements and gestures. What to speak of the words that were emanating from your lotus mouth. We could never keep up with your walking pace no matter how hard we tried! Your Divine Grace moved as if on a magic carpet! Thank you for letting me stay around and walk with you on the beach at Ala Moana park all those beautiful mornings.

Thank you for letting me play the *mṛdaṅga* as you sang *Jaya Rādhā-Mādhava* on quite a few occasions. Thank you for letting me catch all the flowers you would throw out from your *vyāsāsana*, and thank you for allowing me to get in line twice to receive some *mahā-prasāda* sweets from your lotus hands. Thank you also for letting me chant *japa* along with you on the porch at the Hawaiian temple one afternoon. At that time I asked you what happens to a disciple that falls down.

You immediately said that he was not your disciple. Then I asked what happens if that person starts following again. You contemplated for what seemed to be eternity and finally answered, "Then again he is my disciple." This is by your mercy. "Disciple", you continued, "means disciplined to follow. Disciple is contained in the word discipline."

In 1976 in your Vṛndāvana room, by your mercy, you recognized and remembered me so lovingly as the boy from Hawaii!

I was trying to preach in a certain zone and there was some resistance coming from the GBC man stationed there, but, by your mercy, in order for the preaching to go on, you told me that preaching was beyond GBC!

What a revolutionary statement!

On this auspicious day, I pray that all the expatriates, the disenfranchised, those who have become bitter and hurt, those whose hearts are wounded, the women who felt pushed out and neglected, the ex-gurukulis, the youth,

and any other devotees who are not presently serving for one reason or other be touched within their hearts, by your mercy, and once again join us in this *sañkīrtana* mission.

In closing, my dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, I also pray that, as I travel through the closing chapters in this life, please never let me stop appreciating your glories. By your mercy, allow me always to remember your lotus feet. And please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, never, ever let me forget your lotus feet.

Your aspiring disciple,

Arjuna Dāsa
(Dallas, USA)

Bādarāyaṇa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I am a most fallen, wretched and unfortunate soul, yet I know that your love is all-encompassing. It embodies unconditional compassion, acceptance, forgiveness and encouragement. Thus I can continue to go on in hopes of one day being able to attain your favor and thus the grace of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, Rādhā-Śyāmasundara, Rādhā-Muralidhara.

I have seen so much that is wonderfully unified in your mission and so much that is marred by divisiveness and fault-finding. Those whom I truly admire emphasize the good qualities of all devotees in their endeavors. Sometimes it may be necessary for the mission to point out what appears to be deviations from Śrīla Prabhupāda's directives.

However, those that I admire do so with utmost care and caution, always desiring to understand the true intent of the persons in question. After all, we are dealing with Vaiṣṇavas, who are VERY dear to the Lord. Utmost caution, care and humility is the safe haven. If the message is given in this way, with due respect, then the other parties may have an open heart to hear how they could better serve your mission, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I pray that you may inspire us all to go deeper and deeper into this mood, so that your mission may remain strong and unified by bonds of love and respect. Then we will have the potency necessary to truly inspire a revolution of consciousness in the impious lives of a misdirected civilization (your words from the introduction to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*).

What unified your mission when you were on the planet in your *vapuḥ* form? The mood was to please you. What pleased you—what did you emphasize—how did YOU spend your time? As Rādhānātha Swami recently said in a lecture, “When you go into a beautiful building, who inquires, ‘How wonderful a foundation there is here!’” Few people would think of this. Yet without that strong foundation, everything else would not last long at all. You spent your time, hours a day, in the pre-dawn darkness, translating and writing your Bhaktivedanta purports. You were instructed by your beloved guru mahārāja to write books and preach in the English speaking countries. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta said to you, “If you ever get money, print books.” You fastidiously followed his directive. After establishing the ISKCON society you devoted your time tirelessly to this endeavor. The BBT grew and expanded. All over the world devotees were working in different capacities to maintain the temples nicely as outposts to print and distribute your message, the message of the *Bhāgavata*. The money that came into the BBT was loaned out, twenty

thousand dollars here, fifty thousand dollars there, five thousand somewhere else—for what?—to open and build temples and farm communities all over the planet. Your disciple Ādi-deva recently told me that the BBT loaned the boldly artistic and innovative ISKCON F.A.T.E. preaching project forty thousand dollars to get off the ground. The movement was built upon the BBT. It became the strong, solid foundation that everything else rested upon. Who can dispute that? Rāmeśvara has direct experience of seeing this happen in real time. He wrote the checks. The Paris temple, the New York temple, a German temple, on and on. Of course there was the spiritual standard of purity which you demanded of us, and the myriad of projects that were simultaneously being enacted to establish Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the Western world, such as Deity worship, *varṇāśrama* and so on... Yet your heart was in the BBT. You said, “ISKCON is my body and the BBT is my heart.” Profound.

So what does that mean for most devotees, who are unable due to circumstance to directly engage in this aspect of your mission? My realization is that your legacy is up to your followers to ensure. We must, as your followers, see to it that the foundation is always strong and intact. If there is a crack we must fix it with great care and attention. So we can inquire from our leaders, “How is this most heartfelt desire of our beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda being increased and made more wonderful, so the conditioned souls can come in contact with the pure devotee and disciplic succession more and more and more?” We must encourage others in leadership positions and otherwise to make this foundation a priority. Not that it must be done like it was done thirty years ago. Innovate, get creative and inspired to fulfill Śrīla Prabhupāda’s desire of contacting countless souls through his books. Do something small or something big, do anything, and see how the mercy flows. “This is our most important welfare activity,” Prabhupāda writes, “the greatest gift to human society.”

This principle unified the mission previously. Now there are soooo many missions. There is nothing inherently wrong with that. However, if they are not unified by a common thread, which is this strong foundation, then we become a disenfranchised movement. *Kīrtana* is now taking the center stage, as it should. It is the *yuga-dharma*. It is all attractive. But *kīrtana* alone, perfect and complete in and of itself being non-different from Lord Kṛṣṇa, will not reach its full potential panacea effect against the ills of Kali-yuga, without the torchlight of transcendental knowledge to clear away misconceptions. Hearing AND chanting. The two together, *kīrtana* and transcendental knowledge, are insurmountable super heroes that Kali’s forces will not be able to withstand.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I pray that we all may be encouraged to deepen our

commitment to your instructions daily, to working conjointly with love and respect, to perfecting each and every one of our individual visions of service to your mission. And I pray that we may each take responsibility for the work which you dedicated life and soul for, your Bhaktivedanta purports. Let us find ways and means to work together to ensure that this distribution of transcendental knowledge in the form of your books is going on in more wonderful ways, year by year. That was the standard in your time here, and it must be the standard for all time if we are to change the course of history.

*Begging to be a small fly on your pen or typewriter in some other universe
and a menial insignificant instrument of your mercy,*

Bādarāyaṇa Dāsa
(New York City)

Bhaktavaśya Devī Dāsī

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Again on this most auspicious anniversary of your appearance in this world, we, your disciples, have another opportunity to honour you and try to thank you for the most precious gift, our spiritual lives.

With each passing year I have become more acutely aware of how rare and limitless that gift is. Your words are a constant guidepost in my daily life. The hundreds of anecdotes and stories you told have renewed meaning. The frog in the well, where formerly I laughed and thought it was directed towards others, now I see that you were also teaching us not to become puffed up with false pride, even over the great fortune of personally receiving initiation from you. You never deceived anyone, and although never afraid to chastise us when the situation demanded it, you were also quick to forgive and encourage each of us to continue on the path, assuring us of ultimate success in achieving the goal of love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

“Remain the servant of the servant, a million times removed,” you said at a time when service to God, guru and humanity was not popular. “Follow in the footsteps, but do not imitate,” you reminded us over and over again, knowing the human frailty to want to become the Lord and master.

You taught us everything we need to know about devotional service—what it is, how to attain it, who is Kṛṣṇa, Lord Caitanya, introduced us to the residents of Vraja and for those of us who may have found the task of understanding it all too daunting, you gave us the simple rule, “Always remember Kṛṣṇa and never forget Him.”

Like the members of the Pañca-tattva, you never discriminated over who was worthy and who was unworthy to receive the seed of devotion. Rich or poor, intellectuals or illiterates, pious and impious, you said to everyone, “Come on back home, back to Godhead.”

The only payment you asked is that we take up your magnanimous offer and extend it to others.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the saviour of the most fallen and the true friend of the devotees.

Bhaktavaśya Devī Dāsī

Bhojadeva Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Savior of the whole world!

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

To witness the mercy, depth and potency of your ever-expanding mission, has been a continuing source of awe and amazement while traveling periodically over the last ten years through Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, India, China, Indonesia and America.

Armed with supreme faith in the instructions of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Prabhupāda, you first landed on the *bhakti*-barren shores of America with a divine agenda. Externally it appeared you were alone, but internally you arrived with the full blessings and backing of your *gurudeva*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta and the whole Gauḍīya *sampradāya*, Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madana-mohana, Śrī Rādhā-Govindajī and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha, in order to exemplify perfection, and also scientifically teach the progressive stages of *bhakti-yoga*.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa relates to His devotees who appreciate Him in neutrality, reverence, friendship, parental love and *parakīya-rasa*. As Śrī Kṛṣṇa's representative, you personally gave us a preview of these *rasas*. You were kind towards everyone you encountered, both devotees and non-devotees alike.

You generated a response of awe from so many people all over the world, by your purity and love. You have been, and are, our best friend. As our eternal father, you showed your loving concern for our welfare and provided loving chastisement as needed. And as a confidant of the Supreme Lord, you personally guide and reveal to each duly qualified disciple, the form and nature of the disciple's individual eternal *sevā*, in relation to the loving pastimes of the Divine Couple.

We continually pray for your merciful glance upon us. It was always a profound moment of truth and grace when you looked at us, eye to eye. We knew we could hide nothing under your gaze, which humbled and encouraged us, since your love and compassion radiated and ruled the moment, no matter what pollutants you might have been observing in our hearts.

I pray that by your mercy, I can come before you now each time, with cleaner heart.

I thank you endlessly for your mercy and guidance, and pray that your blessings will guide me further, in attempting to purely serve your lotus feet.

Your aspiring servant,

Bhojadeva Dāsa
(Los Angeles, USA)

Bhūmi Devī Dāsī

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Last year was the first year that each and every one of your disciples were invited to participate in a joint effort to glorify Your Divine Grace together. I wish to thank His Holiness Jayādvaita Swami for this opportunity to praise you and re-dedicate my life to you, in their association.

Since this time last year, you have given me so many opportunities to increase my service to you. If we keep ourselves constantly in a state of gratitude for the enormous boon you bestowed upon the world for our benefit, we will recognize service opportunities around every corner and at every moment. We will be fully conscious of the overwhelming debt we have to you and not waste a second of our precious time on anything that does not serve this mission of repaying you for our deliverance.

We will never do or say anything that may discourage other devotees from fully participating in the process of devotional service. We will not belittle the service of other devotees in a narcissistic attempt to appear like our service is somehow better than theirs, or that our blatant blasphemy of our godbrothers and sisters is somehow acceptable to you and “needs” to be aired. We will have full faith in the *touchstone* quality you possess of being able to create pure devotees all over this world. To constantly malign the service of others is a direct attack on you, and your ability to purify the *anarthas* in our hearts. All devotees should never tolerate hearing criticism of your disciples or your ISKCON.

A disciple of yours will take every opportunity to bring this same message to others too, without getting discouraged if, despite our best efforts, people want to keep forgetting the Lord in their heart, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and continue in this material world suffering endlessly. We will continue pushing on to bring love of God to the world, in the mood of Lord Caitanya who offered it to everyone, freely, despite our lack of qualification.

In *Śrī Caitanya-candrāmṛta* by Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī, verse 77, it states:

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu does not consider whether a person is qualified or not, nor does He see who is His own and who is an outsider. He does not consider who should receive and who should not. He does not consider whether it is the proper time. The Lord at once gives the nectar of pure devotional service.”

In this mood, as your disciple, I pray for more determination to finish my

sixteen rounds every day while being completely attentive, my three Gāyatrīs, following the four regulative principles and reading your books with great relish and rapt attention. There are no short-cuts in becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious and we never become too advanced to follow your basic guidelines.

At the same time, let me help others, by setting a good example, not by shoving it down throats and condemning others in a self-righteous way. Let me become more and more humble everyday, so I don't spend a second lost in all-consuming blame, grudges and vendettas and spend my time scheming revenge instead of helping others go back to Godhead. Our time is running out in this life, and our death is looming. We need to collectively re-dedicate ourselves to cooperating together to fix your ISKCON, and bring it back to the standards you set, so you will be proud of us, instead of us constantly giving you grief. We need to become responsible, which means when you give us direction, we RESPOND.

On this day of your Vyāsa-pūjā, 2011, I re-dedicate myself to serving you with every last ounce of energy but realize I can only do this with your mercy. Please preserve what I have and carry what I lack, so that your incredible gift to us is available for all, for generations to come.

Your fallen disciple,

Bhūmi Devī Dāsī

Citraka Dāsa

My dearest Lord and master, savior and transparent medium, a bona-fide representative of the Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya *paramparā* and messenger of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I prostrate myself and offer you my heartfelt *daṇḍavats* unto your lotus feet.

In the *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya* (13.2), there is a quote spoken by Lord Caitanya to Sanātana Gosvāmī: “My dear Vaiṣṇava, seeing a person like you is the perfection of one’s eyesight, touching your lotus feet is the perfection of the sense of touch, and glorifying your good qualities is the tongue’s real activity, for in the material world it is very difficult to find a pure devotee of the Lord.”

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have allowed me to reach the perfection of my sight because I saw you, the sense of touch because I touched your lotus feet and by striving to glorify you, the perfection of my tongue because you are the pure devotee that Lord Caitanya was talking about!

In your offering to your spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, you were exclaiming: “Oh! My Master, the ‘evangelic angel.’”

Being born in a Greek body I know that the term “evangelic” comes from the Greek words “eu” which means “good” and “angelic” or “aggelos” which means the one who announces, who brings news. How could there ever be a better befitting description for the person that brings you the news that your material existence has now finished like you did for me! Yes, by Kṛṣṇa’s mercy—who brought me to meet you—you are the one that performed this miracle and changed the course of my destiny for ever!

One of the reasons I was attracted to Kṛṣṇa consciousness is your ontological approach to the Absolute Truth rather than the deontological one I have been exposed to before meeting you and your teachings.

The deontological approach to God I had been taught about is based on ethical, moral values and ritualistic duties often recommended and performed without the full understanding of their meaning and real goal. Like religious *dharmas* described in the *Bhagavad-gītā* to be given up.

For example, in the Greek Christian Orthodox religion in which I was raised, they identify so much with the national history, local customs and traditions that the transcendental nature of the soul’s function is being directed and wasted in useless rituals and man-centric so-called piety, all in the name of religion and God!

When I met Your Divine Grace, I was completely in ecstasy to learn from you the real nature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, His energies,

His pastimes, His entourage and the reason why I am finding myself in this body subject to the suffering of the material world. It was this wisdom and knowledge you distributed that satisfied the intellect and accomplished the development of strong conviction and faith, which otherwise would have remained sentimental and vulnerable to *māyā's* potency.

I remain forever indebted for this immeasurable benefit you have created in my life, benefit which I relish and experience each and every day as I practice your teachings!

Your presence in my life through your books, you wonderful disciples, and the beautiful ISKCON society that you have created have saved me from *saṁsāra* and brought me close to Kṛṣṇa's devotional service!

In a verse by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Bhagavad-gītā* you comment: "The association of a *mahātmā* is very rare, and yet it is available to a sincere seeker. Upon contacting a great soul, one should realize one's good fortune, and with a joyful but serious attitude one should surrender unto his lotus feet."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am completely aware of such good fortune and each day I try, joyfully but seriously, to surrender to your desires and instructions as they represent the will of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Fortunately your association is still available to all sincere seekers through your books and your followers.

The highest and most powerful treasure that myself and we all received I think, is the experience to be in the presence of a real and living saint, which other than the nectarean bliss and joy that this direct contact produced, it constituted also the actual proof of the potency and the authenticity of the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

This conviction and faith that you instilled us with during your direct association is still the main moving force of your ISKCON movement as it continues spreading that faith in Lord Caitanya's message.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you for having exemplified the perfect surrender and correct mood to Lord Caitanya's movement!

I humbly pray to be of some service to this sacred mission of yours and contribute with my meager attempts for the spreading of your saving grace to other living entities.

Your aspiring servant,

Citraka Dāsa

Dhaneśvara Dasa

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Millions of *daṇḍavats* at your lotus feet. On this occasion of your appearance in this world we glorify you by remembering your excellent qualities, the warm ways in which you dealt with people, and the wonderful feats you performed in establishing Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.

You prepared yourself and qualified yourself for your mission by a proper education, learning Sanskrit, English, studying and mastering *śāstra*, mastering devotional instruments such as harmonium and *mṛdaṅga*, as well as the devotional songs they accompany; by 69 years of life experience, including raising a family, running your own business, and complete realization of the Absolute Truth.

- You did what needed to be done with the facility at hand, often when there was no facility.
- You left your home country, going to a foreign land where you had no experience, and at an age considered impossible for such activity. That age gave you experience and wisdom.
- You didn't waste time, you hardly slept, and you didn't rest, but worked tirelessly, to the amazement of everyone.
- You appreciated even the smallest thing that anyone would do for you.
- You always supported your followers in their endeavors to serve you and Kṛṣṇa.
- You gave encouragement always, especially where it was needed.
- You made your followers believe in themselves and in Kṛṣṇa.
- You always knew the most appropriate thing to say in every circumstance.
- You were surrendered to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in all respects.
- You always gave credit to others, accepting as your only credit that you presented the message "as it is" without change or deviation.
- You were *sama-darśī*—equally disposed toward everyone.
- You were beyond the duality of this world, always transcendently situated.
- You were never deluded by *māyā*, never once attempting to enjoy the honor, worship, facility, money, followers, etc. given to you.
- You always remained fixed in the Absolute Truth because you had already seen it, and understood it in comparison to the temporary, miserable condition of this world.
- You gave the perfect example of a devotee to your followers so that they would understand the essence of being a real devotee.

We must remember that these things didn't just "happen" to you because you were some special person. Rather, you became a very special person because with steadfast determination you actively worked for such results. You were, and are, the highest example we have of what it means to be Kṛṣṇa conscious and an ideal devotee. By your excellent example we know what we should do, following in your footsteps, and we pray for your grace so that we may fix our determination to do likewise. Imagine how the world will change when dozens, hundreds or even thousands of your followers begin likewise acting with unwavering determination to save this world. We pray to see it. We pray to have a part in it. What a wonderful future can be achieved by those who seriously understand and employ your legacy.

Thank you again and again. Thank you a million times and more for your unswerving faith, your heroic actions, and your unlimited love. We pray to be worthy of the gifts that you have so generously given us.

Begging to always remain your determined servant,

Dhaneśvara Dasa
(Rostov, Russia)

Gaṇeśa Dāsa

2011 VYĀSA-PŪJĀ HOMAGE

TO HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA

(Note: This homage originally has two parts but has been abbreviated to fit the Vyāsa-pūjā book. The second part is available from the author.)

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracārīṇe
nirvīṣeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA AṢṬOTTARA-ŚATA-NĀMA-STOTRAM

Śrīla Prabhupāda is:

1. The *cinmaya-rasa* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
2. The *sampradāya-ācārya* of the world.
3. Always absorbed in *kṛṣṇa-prema*.
4. The faithful servant of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda.
5. The deliverer of *prema-bhakti* to the fallen *jīvas*.
6. One of Mahāprabhu's generals in the *saṅkīrtana* army.
7. Able to deliver those who have no desire to serve Kṛṣṇa.
8. A *mahā-yogī*.
9. One who sees past, present and future.
10. The representative of Śrī Śuka.
11. Always intoxicated with *rasa-bhakti*.
12. One who inspires awe and reverence in those beholding him.
14. The destroyer of the "rascal scientists'" conclusions.
15. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's confidante.
16. Able to make plain to fallen souls, the deep and hidden meanings of *śāstra*.
17. Our most dear friend.
18. The lord and master of his sincere followers.
19. Able to explain the absurdities of that which previously seemed intelligent or logical.
20. An expert in everything.
21. One who teaches his followers how to develop their eternal *rasas*.
22. One who makes difficult things seem easy.

23. The first *ācārya* to spread Kṛṣṇa's *śikṣā* over the entire Earth.
24. The greatest learned person who made so-called scholars look like fools.
25. One who could defeat any argument.
26. One who conquered our senses with his unparalleled tasty *prasāda*.
27. One who inspires love of Kṛṣṇa.
28. One whose qualities are non-different from Kṛṣṇa's.
29. The true representative of Bādarāyaṇa Śrī Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva.
30. One who makes small children laugh and grown men cry.
31. The *sannyāsī* who attracted the love of thousands of beautiful women.
32. The FIRST jet-setter *ācārya*.
33. The world *dīgvijayī*.
34. He who serves his disciples.
35. One who teaches by example at every moment via his speech and actions.
36. Fearless.
37. The darling of Gaura Mohan and Rajani.
38. The most valuable jewel in human form.
39. He whose character and personality cannot be forgotten.
40. He who astounded scholars, scientists, theologians and policemen with his logic.
41. Devoid of personal desire.
42. Full of desire to please Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
43. The 'morning walk' *ācārya*.
44. He who dispels doubt, fear and illusion by his words.
45. Detached from personal sense pleasure.
46. One whose importance, stature and glories is not yet known to mankind.
47. One whose importance, stature and glories will be known to mankind.
48. Literally the savior of the entire world by his *parivrājakācārya* preaching.
49. One who showed (*ācārya*) his Gauḍīya godbrothers how to preach throughout the world.
50. A mighty lion able to scare away the rabbits of false conclusions.
51. One whose glance could bestow *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.
52. One whose glance could melt the hearts of his *śiṣyas* or act like fire.
53. He who came to reestablish a Vedic society.
54. Always present by his *vāñī*.
55. He whose 'Bhaktivedanta Purports' flooded the homes of millions of people around the world.
56. The performer of herculean tasks that other men could not dream of doing at the age of seventy.
57. The equal of Śukadeva, Nārada and Vyāsadeva in stature.

58. He who cooked, served and liked tasty *prasāda*.
59. One who followed and did not follow *sāstric vidhis* such as Ekādaśī.
60. The savior of the hippie generation.
61. He who personified '*jagad-guru*' and one at whose feet all great masters sit.
62. Prepared to come to the material world on Kṛṣṇa's will.
63. One who had the bodily symptoms of a *mahā-puruṣa*.
64. The personification of 'simple living and high thinking.'
65. Unattached to personal comfort.
66. The cynosure of his *śiṣyas*.
67. One who embarrasses those who think they are learned.
68. The simultaneous enemy and friend of the atheists.
69. Always prepared to forgive the repentant.
70. He who makes the *paramparā* brighter than it was.
71. He whose mind cannot be fathomed and is beyond the comprehension of un-devoted souls.
72. He who had large feet, large ears and an even larger heart.
73. The personification of '*patita-pāvana*.'
74. He who tolerated the ignorance of his followers and the criticism of his godbrothers.
75. He who never tolerated atheism, envy or blasphemy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
76. He who was sent by Kṛṣṇa to 'write those books.'
77. He whose feet were as soft as melted butter.
78. He who could be as hard as a thunderbolt and as soft as a rose.
79. Forever accompanying those who adhere to his teachings.
80. One who sees the covered love for Kṛṣṇa even in lower species.
81. The personification of Bg. 13.8-12.
82. One who made the unfortunate, fortunate, by his chanting.
83. "A lamb at home and a lion in the chase."
84. Ever present in the hearts of his servants.
85. Funny and grave simultaneously.
86. He who presented millions of years of knowledge within his books.
87. Kachorī-mukha, Moti and Nandulal.
88. One who didn't like austerities.
89. Humility, knowledge, realized knowledge, renunciation and devotion personified in human form.
90. He who read his own books.
91. Chastiser of the 'Moon-landing' hoaxers.
92. He who foretold the future and how to cope with it.

93. A tireless preacher.
94. One who did not sleep.
95. He who ate less than a palm-full of *prasāda*.
96. The yogi who didn't eat for months but continued translating *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.
97. The deliverer of any sincere soul who follows his teachings.
98. Not able to commit sin or *aparādha*.
99. He who never forgets Kṛṣṇa for even a moment.
100. The Supreme Personality of Servitor Godhead.
101. One whose singing is unique.
102. The founder-*ācārya* of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement.
103. He who lives forever in his divine instructions.
104. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's very self.
105. He who supplanted our limited mental fantasies with the unlimited reality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *līlā*.
106. Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's prediction fulfilled.
107. He who taught that the spirit of the *sāstras* is more important than the letter.
108. The *prāṇa-nātha* of the author.

Your servant,

Gaṇeśa Dāsa

Hrimatī Devī Dāśī

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn̄ iti nāmīne
namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe
namo brahmaṇya-devāya go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca
jagad-dhitāya kṛṣṇāya govindāya namo namaḥ*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet, walking amongst the *surabhi* cows on the pasturing grounds in Vraja, which are moistened with their milk.

I bow down to your lotus eyes that are anointed with love to the Supreme cowherd boy Govinda.

Your lotus ears are like a calf drinking the milk of the *Vedas*. Let my ears taste the constant flow of nectar coming from your lotus lips glorifying the transcendental pastimes of the two cowherd brothers Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

I seek shelter of your lotus hands, which are milking the cow of the *Upaniṣads*. Let me taste and relish that delicious, nectarine milk, called the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Your pure mind is always engaged in thinking of this little cowherd boy Govinda.

All Your senses are engaged in the loving service to the Lord of the cows.

You are one of the divine cowherds in the supreme abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, known as Goloka, the land of the cows.

You possess all the four legs of the bull of religion, Dharma, which are compassion, austerity, cleanliness and truth.

With the plow *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, you cultivated our hearts and sowed the spiritual seeds. Now it is up to me to water this creeper of devotional service, so it can produce the most valuable fruit, pure love for Kṛṣṇa.

The essence of your teaching is to live simple and be Kṛṣṇa conscious.

“Stick to your own place and grow your food. There is no question of transport. Little transport is required, that bullock cart. Krishna was being carried on bullock cart. There is no use of petrol. Use simply the bull. They are already there. Utilize them.”

I pray to you, my spiritual father, that I may be able to follow this instruction and live a simple life amongst cows, so that I may one day be reunited with you, in the abode of the Lord of the cows.

Please bless me that I may never forget you.

Your humble servant,

Hrimatī Devī Dāsī

Jagaddhātrī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. Your effulgent glories are ever expanding, transcendental confirmation of your pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness glories. Tonight, when I attended the Rāma-navamī program with the assembled devotees here on the Big Island of Hawaii, I once again saw this manifested.

Although some of us are your initiated disciples, many of the '*saṅga*' here are young, born years after Your Divine Grace's departure, and have taken *dīkṣā* from other magnanimous Vaiṣṇavas. By your mercy, you planted the seed, and now the garden is growing. They follow the path of *bhakti* that YOU, Śrīla Prabhupāda, brought to the West; chanting the holy name, engaging in *harināma-saṅkīrtana*, and establishing simple living and high thinking. Their devotional sentiments and glorification of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are living proof of your pure desire to serve your Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Prabhupāda's request to bring Lord Caitanya's message to every town and village. When I see them and hear them, I see you shining through.

We have not had your transcendental form for thirty-four years. At times I am longing so much just to have one glimpse of your radiant face which dispels all darkness. But your *vāṇī*, your words, are so powerful that they not only remain with your initiated disciples, but permeate the lives of these sincere souls who have taken birth since that day in 1977. I see you everywhere, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and I know you are lovingly guiding all of us to stay on this path back home to Godhead.

My only prayer is that you please kindly continue to allow me the association of these sincere devotees, some your children, some your grandchildren. By their association, I may someday be able to offer you meaningful service. You have told me that everything is based on desire, so I beg for this boon. I can never repay you for the causeless mercy you so freely bestow. But if I can become a proper recipient of that mercy, then I may in some small way please Your Divine Grace. And that will be the perfection of my life.

Your insignificant servant,

Jagaddhātrī Devī Dāsī

Kadamba Devī Dāsi

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

You have said that your guru mahārāja sent us, your disciples to you, to help you carry out his order. I would like to think that I am so blessed as to have been directed to this movement by the divine intervention of such an exalted personality. But I think it is your generosity towards us that allowed us to participate, and I think it is the strength of your devotion to your spiritual master that attracted us to you. We are a most fortunate few on this planet who took our discipleship directly from you.

You have given us charge of carrying this message of Lord Caitanya and to continue on what you have begun. Please continue to give us the potency to do that for you. The process is that the message doesn't change, but is passed from one generation of disciples to the next in the *paramparā* line, and now we have become part of that chain.

You said what you had was unflinching faith in the words of your spiritual master. Grant us also unflinching faith in your words, and that we may adhere to them with the same conviction that you showed for the words of your spiritual master when he directed you to bring the message of Lord Caitanya to the English-speaking world.

You didn't come to the Western world as a scholar or a scientist although your scholarship and scientific knowledge far exceeded that of any mundane academician or scientist. You came to us as a spiritual scientist to teach us the science of being a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. It is strange that the world often recognizes and holds in high esteem personalities whose messages are paltry and insignificant, yet it fails to adequately acknowledge someone whose message is more valuable than gold. Perhaps that is the covering potency of the Lord.

I don't know who you are, but I know that you were never ordinary. One cannot have spiritual information to the degree and depth that you have, from ordinary scholarship and learning. You gave us the identity of the God the world prays to, and let us glimpse His personality and the magnitude of His strength, love, power, and kindness.

The books you left for us are your mercy to all humankind. Your writing and your words remind us that we do not belong to this world. Whether you are speaking gently or sternly, your message is always one of compassion, reminding us that we do not belong to this temporary world, no matter how much we stubbornly cling to the idea that we do. The only safe place is the shelter at your lotus feet.

Help us to keep the treasure of your message pure. Please continue to direct us. Help us broadcast to the world the message of Lord Caitanya that you shared with us. Let us be worthy disciples who take up our responsibility to share this information with the world.

Thank you for all you have given us.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Sincerely,

Kadamba Devī Dāśī

Mahāmān Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Because you have strictly and without deterrence followed the instructions of our Gauḍīya ācāryas headed by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, you have achieved that which is inconceivable.

Lord Caitanya's statement in *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, pṛthivīte āche yata nagarādi-grāma, sarvatra pracāra hoibe mora nāma*, was not understood or conceived as a reality, until you made it a reality, and now the whole world is caught in the web of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* mercy. Such unprecedented success has astounded, and at the same time touched the hearts of scholars as well as ordinary persons.

One relates the spreading of ISKCON to the ever-increasing size of Matsya *avatāra*, for whom the water bodies proved to be too small. Similarly, by the purity and potency of ISKCON, the entire universe(s) may be too small for Lord Caitanya's fathomless mercy. Come what may, my wish is to always remain your humble servant and son, and serve you eternally. For myself, going 'back to Godhead' or entering into some *rasa* are of secondary importance. Of utmost importance is to always abide by your order and remain at your lotus feet, for having your shelter means having everything desirable.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you instructed us that preaching is our realization, the higher realization, but still the highest realization is to save oneself. I therefore pray to you, that like the squirrel in the pastimes of Lord Rāmacandra, I feel satisfied and happy in my insignificant service to you.

*Thanking you for saving me,
Your aspiring servant,*

Mahāmān Dāsa

Mahārḥā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet.

Thank you for having taken me on as your disciple. I love reading your books and am feeling your shelter through advanced association coming my way.

One wonderful devotee said when we think of our guru we will be so humbled by his greatness and purity that we will cherish him in our heart and it will even be hard for us to utter his name lest tears should come to our eyes due to our gratitude towards him.

You are that great guru, Prabhupāda. Your love for your guru and Kṛṣṇa were high, yet you kept the secret feeling in your heart. What could we understand? We were just beginners.

I'm not a big devotee and may have to take many more births to prove my love for Kṛṣṇa, yet, as Viṣṇujana Swami once said, "The distance we have come thus far is far greater than the distance we have left to go."

*I love you, Prabhupāda.
Thank you for your love,
Your servant forever,*

Mahārḥā Devī Dāsī

Mohana Dāsa

ENABLED

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your most,most glorious lotus feet.

Since my most fortunate encounter with your Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, you have **enabled** me to do many things one could only dream of. Without your kindness and mercy I would still be groveling without any hope in the materialistic life I chose before meeting you. Now there is hope in my life with your blessings.

During my days as a *brahmacārī* I gave class once or twice but found myself extremely nervous and felt totally unqualified to speak on your behalf. I have never given class since, preferring to be the one who did the more physical service.

Over the past few years I have had the opportunity to give class to many thousands of people (over 50,000) but in a different way. Not changing your message, but preaching to people worldwide by way of the Internet. I have twenty-three videos on Youtube praising you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and telling some of the glorious pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Some of the comments I have received are:

“All Glories to your wonderful classes and lectures, bringing light to a world of darkness.”

“Your channel has the most wonderful videos! I was touched to tears.”

“Thank you for your beautiful channel. Hare Krishna!”

Without your mercy and kindness to such a fallen rascal as me, none of this would be possible. I strongly feel you have **enabled** me to be of some small service to you and to perhaps help some people to increase their faith in your ISKCON.

Wishing to remain in the precious dust of your lotus feet,

Mohana Dāsa
(Leicester, UK)

Mṛgākṣī Devī Dāsī

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn̄ iti nāmīne
namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Prabhupāda! Prabhupāda! Prabhupāda! Prabhupāda!

After all that we've been through
Prabhupāda I know it's true
We owe everything to you
You gave ISKCON!

We didn't know that we are not these bodies
We didn't know what life is to be for
We didn't know that we should love each other
As the shining lights of God's blessed splendor

You took us from the darkness
Somehow you saw some worth
You fed us, you clothed us
You gave us second birth

Still we argued and we stumbled
Through our days and through our nights
We broke so many promises
We knew it wasn't right

Prabhupāda! Prabhupāda! Prabhupāda! Prabhupāda!

After all that you've been through
Prabhupāda I know it's true
We owe everything to you
You gave ISKCON!

Though we put you through such hardships
Still you prayed for our return
To the place you knew that we belonged

You hoped someday we'd learn

Yes, we try somehow to follow
In your guiding mercy trail
Sometimes we cannot see you
For false ego makes us fail

But you built for us a home to come to
Even when we're low
If we dive into your service
Our hearts will start to glow

We'll remember when you sat here
Giving everything you know
Still you're here, but in sweet silence
Now it's our turn to bestow

Prabhupāda! Prabhupāda! Prabhupāda! Prabhupāda!

After all that I've been through
Prabhupāda I know it's true
I owe everything to you
You gave ISKCON!

Don't know if we can do it
All I know is we must try
If we bid our anger, lust and greed
Forever a goodbye

I've got nothing worth giving you
That can repay such debt
But at your lotus feet, my Lord
This crusty heart I set

Do with it as you please
For I don't know a thing
About loving, about living,
About this song you sing

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

Prabhupāda! Prabhupāda! Prabhupāda! Prabhupāda!

It isn't hard to be
Spontaneous and free
Humble servants, we
Must be ISKCON

It must live on!

Begging to remain your eternal servant,

Mṛgākṣī Devī Dāsī

Nirākulā Devī Dāsī

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Though I am a wretched and insincere person I beg for the ability to somehow offer my heartfelt appreciation for all that you have done for me on the occasion of the 115th anniversary of your divine appearance.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for your causeless mercy, which I experience in so many ways, every day of my life. You knew that you would not be long amongst us, so you left us a treasure trove in the form of your books, lectures, letters, *bhajan*s, films and instructions. You left us beautiful Deities, temples and farm communities; and you gave us a society of extraordinary Vaiṣṇavas.

Thank you for creating this worldwide ISKCON, which is non-different from you, and the vehicle by which we can steadily and systematically elevate ourselves to the platform of pure and spontaneous devotional service. It is also the agency through which we are supported in our service to distribute the knowledge of *bhakti-yoga* and the holy name to millions around the world. Your genius is evident in all that we do as we continue to push on your mission.

Recently I have had the privilege of associating with devotees from all over the world—godbrothers and godsisters, your granddisciples and great-granddisciples, and I am deeply humbled by the scope and depth of their service to you. Their taste for hearing and chanting; the new and innovative ways by which they bring Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others; and the deep and loving relationships they nurture with each other are indications of their steadfast determination to carry out your wishes, those of Mahāprabhu and the previous *ācāryas*. Observing these Vaiṣṇavas, who have enthusiastically taken to devotional service due to being inspired by your teachings, I am induced to resolutely and humbly move forward to assist them as they sincerely strive to fulfill your directives.

By your example you have shown me that simply by taking the order of the guru to heart, one's life becomes perfect and all things, even those that seem impossible or unimaginable, are attainable. I witness the spiritual successes that my godbrothers and godsisters realize by taking even just one of your instructions like "read my books" or "work together cooperatively" as their life's purpose and I want to emulate their examples.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I too, want to be single-minded in my devotion to your desires. I can feel the slight stirring of an awakening in my heart that this aspiration creates. Yet still I am unable (or unwilling) to fully surrender to your

lotus feet. I often feel like the bee licking the outside of the honey jar, unable to taste the real nectar due to my numerous offenses and envious nature.

On this day I recommit myself to the service of your mission and the Vaiṣṇavas who have made it their life. Please be merciful to me and use me as you will. I have no other shelter but your lotus feet.

Begging to become your devoted, loving servant,

Nirākulā Devī Dāsī

Oṃkāra Devī Dāsī

My Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet, my dear Gurudeva. Thank you for accepting me as your disciple.

Sometimes I am sad and lonely here, bereft of the temple and devotee association in Pittsfield, Massachusetts (yet). But when I spiritually ponder deeply, I glow... because I have you! I've felt and been drawn to this intimate relationship, feeling, so, so close to you. As I chant my rounds each day—as I sing “*samsāra-dāvānala*” and “*śrī guru-caraṇa-padma*” each morning—I reflect, Śrīla Prabhupāda, how you are here with me, and I bow down at your lotus feet, with deep awe and reverence.

I look at my Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa *śālagrāma-śilā*, my Girirāja-jī *govardhana-śilā*, my Jagannātha and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Deities and pray. I am ever grateful because all this is part of Vaikuṅṭha! This is my special gift from my dear guru and from Kṛṣṇa to help me go back to Godhead. So, I am not really alone in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Śrīla Prabhupāda and Lord Kṛṣṇa are with me!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I remember the very first time I saw devotees on Second Avenue... I was only eleven years old. I knew it was about “being spiritual” and I was so, so very attracted. I wanted to be “just like them.”

It was when I turned seventeen, I was on a subway, and it just so seemed to happen that I picked up a *Back to Godhead* magazine that someone left on a seat. I knew it was for me. That very day I became vegetarian and started chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. I knew my life was changing from thereon.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I walked to the Brooklyn Temple on Henry Street, for the very first time, at the age of seventeen. It was the Sunday feast, and you were giving a lecture. I didn't know that you would be there that Sunday. That was my first time to the temple—and I never left. You fascinated me, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, with your spiritual potency, your equipoised strength, your simplicity, and most of all, I knew I was really, truly home!

Thank you, my dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, for showing me the way. I pray to keep following you for all my years in this material body, so I can once again meet with you, at the end of this lifetime, and hope to go to the spiritual world, to serve Kṛṣṇa and to serve guru—eternally.

I bow down with deepest respect, love and gratitude, forever indebted.

Your spiritual daughter,

Oṃkāra Devī Dāsī

Parividha Dāsa

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.

I wrote the lyrics below to go with a melody from my youth.

Where are we in the morning
during *maṅgala-ārati*?

Are we in the temple room,
or in our beds?

Where are we during *japa*
and *guru-pūjā*?

Are we in the temple room,
or still in bed?

Where are we in the morning
during the morning lecture?

How will we ever learn?

When will we ever learn?

You taught us all we need to know.

You showed us how to go back home.

When will we ever learn?

When will we ever learn?

The servant of your servants,

Parividha Dāsa

Prthuśravā Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

On this anniversary day of your appearance in this world we have come together to contemplate our great fortune in meeting you and having the opportunity of serving you.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura glorifies the spiritual master as one “who is an ocean of auspicious qualities.” One of the principal qualities of a Vaiṣṇava is *kṛṣṇaika-śaraṇa*, surrendered to Kṛṣṇa, and surrender to Kṛṣṇa means submitting to a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa. This is the standard process for understanding Him. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have taught us the process of surrender—how to be a perfectly qualified disciple of a bona fide spiritual master—by your life’s example of hearing from and serving Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

You are the empowered person chosen by Lord Caitanya to create a balanced program of *sādhana* and service according to time, place, and circumstance so that any sincere person can take up devotional service. You made surrender “do-able.” Our *sādhana* includes absorbing ourselves in the essential Vedic literatures accompanied by your purports, your lectures and the culture of Deity worship which you gave us. And for our service you asked us to preach, distribute books, conduct Ratha-yātrā festivals, etc.—all in order to drown others with Lord Caitanya’s inundation of love of Godhead. For like Lord Caitanya, your compassion and kindness toward the conditioned souls has no limitations.

“The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will inundate the entire world and drown everyone, whether one be a gentleman, a rogue or even lame, invalid or blind.” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 7.26)

You saw that this inundation could be effected in society through the establishment of *daiva-varṇāśrama*. Thus all classes of men and women could use their talents for Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure living in a spiritual village practicing simple living and higher thinking. They would be independent of the asuric society and economy and would instead depend on the land for organic produce and on the cows for love-laden milk.

Schools teaching the principles of respect and gratitude and training the students in the *daiva-varṇāśrama* culture would allow good souls to cultivate

their finer intelligence, which would lead to the awakening of their love for Kṛṣṇa. Such peaceful persons would be able to more easily hear from Your Divine Grace and your devotees and thus happily receive the gift of devotional service.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are our *mahājana* and you have shown the path for reaching Kṛṣṇa. Now all we have to do is follow with enthusiasm and surely you will bestow upon us that treasure of love of Kṛṣṇa that is hidden in your heart. *Dharmasya tattvaṁ nihitaṁ guhāyāṁ mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ.* (*Mahābhārata, Vana-parva* 313.117) Let us not simply worship you with flowers and eloquent words. Please bless us that we can serve you with our full energy and assist you in establishing that divine society which you envisioned.

Praying at your lotus feet, always begging for your mercy, I, Pṛthuśravā Dāsa, desire to follow in your footsteps.

Ramaṇya Dāsa

All glories to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda on his most glorious Vyāsa-pūjā celebration today.

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svaminṇ iti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for allowing me to glorify you on this most auspicious day of your Vyāsa-pūjā, 2011.

My offering is very insignificant, and on this day I was feeling that without you I am nobody, and totally in ignorance. But reading your transcendental books about Śrī Rāmānujācārya, I feel some inspiration to make this humble offering, to your lotus feet.

On this day of *daśamī*, and the disappearance of Śrī Rāmānujācārya I would like to thank His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda for everything.

I will try to glorify the summum bonum of all the great *ācāryas* in the disciplic succession of the Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya *sampradāya*, the ISKCON founder-*ācārya* A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda because he founded his own *sampradāya*. Śrīla Prabhupāda, as soon as I recognized your transcendental voice, I was totally revived, and when I hear your lectures, giving spiritual instructions, the ignorance is destroyed, and I feel my original constitutional position, an eternal servant at your lotus feet.

Your Divine Grace, you are the real ambassador of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and Goloka Vṛndāvana, giving us transcendental messages, and distributing them all over the Universe. You are the *jagad-guru*; just like Lord Varāhadeva lifted Mother Earth, and put her in the right position, similarly, you put this planet in the right position and direction.

Lord Śrī Nityānanda is so merciful in delivering all the conditioned souls; so, similarly you became more merciful by delivering His message. You told us to just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, eat *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*, in every town and village of this planet—it is only by your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Today on Gaura-pūrṇimā, the whole world is worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, because you came and gave Him to everyone freely. It is not a coincidence that you appeared in Gauradeśa, and today the whole world is worshipping Guru and Gaurāṅga. Only because of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrī

Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu is known throughout the world.

I pray to your lotus feet to please help us clean the mess we are doing to your ISKCON in all aspects—all the big and small mistakes that we are making in the different departments that you established. I pray that we maintain your teachings as they are, and push on your ISKCON, *saṅkīrtana* mission, and the desire of your *gurudeva* Śrī Śrīmad Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Mahārāja—the desire to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.

You once said, “I will never leave the one who follows my instructions.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, O master, our shelter and our guide, thank you for all the spiritual matchless gifts like the Ratha-yātrās all over the world.

Thank you for all the festivals we have, thank you for the spiritual family, for the Vedic culture you revived. Because of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are learning the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, our shelter and our guide, let us fix our minds at your beautiful lotus feet, and be the only vision in our lives.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your humble servant,

Ramaṅya Dāsa
(Alachua, Florida)

Saṅgīta Devī Dāśī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

All glories to Your Divine Grace whose presence on this earth mercifully forced open our eyes and lifted the illusory veil of our false sense of “self” that has plagued us since time immemorial.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, whose resolute teaching and exemplary ways inexplicably transformed our inclination toward low-grade habits into Vaiṣṇava beliefs and customs.

All glories to you, our most treasured Śrīla Prabhupāda, who by your perfect understanding of time and circumstance, ignited a global explosion of spiritual and cultural change that unceasingly continues to reshape the world today.

All glories to you, our beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda, whose reassuring smile can still be recalled and who continues to give us unending hope throughout a lifetime of endeavor.

All glories to you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, who speaks to us from within and without as you continue to encourage us to strive to live and speak as you once lived and spoke.

Although we intellectually understand that you are forever with us, Śrīla Prabhupāda, we miss you. The only consolation is in knowing that we will see you once again. In the meantime, I pray for the ability to tell other souls about you, about Lord Kṛṣṇa, and about our real home in the spiritual world.

Your eternal servant,

Saṅgīta Devī Dāśī

Śravaṇānanda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you and the wonderful pastimes you exhibited for the saving of the most fallen souls of Kali-yuga. All glories to your divine appearance within this sphere of material energy where there was only forgetfulness of who we are and why we are here. You still remain in sound and sight, which is non-different from you; for our benefit.

After over thirty-nine years of association with your most wonderful divine presence I find the bellows are still breathing and the vehicle of this corpse still is moving in the realm of this dark material world. My eyes and ears are the most valuable assets so I may see and hear you. Every day I pray that I may never forget all the millions of divine pearls of wisdom that have emanated from your divine mouth. Recently I received a Kindle E-Reader and was able to download all of your books, lectures, morning walks, etc. I also have hundreds of your lectures downloaded on an iPod to hear you. It is so ecstatic to carry all the wealth of your presence with me.

One devotee hypothesized that actually all the technology that has been invented from planes, internet, iPods, E-readers to phones, etc. was done for you and for your divine appearance within this world to facilitate the spread of this transcendental knowledge to every town and village throughout this planet. Just as Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu always appear with their divine associates you incarnated with the instruments of *saṅkīrtana* so they could be employed by you for the spread of this divine knowledge throughout this material energy. Now this can truly be spread to every living entity through these forms of medias. It is truly an interesting idea and I do believe this may be a fact as there is no reason why this is not possible by your power; showing what you have done and that which has never been done before.

When I drive the car and I listen nonstop to over a hundred lectures on MP3 I am transported to Vaikuṅṭha by your mercy and am able to associate directly with you. I feel it is non-different from the many morning walks in Vṛndāvana or sitting by your side in Māyāpur as you have incarnated within this sound media which is non-different from your divine self. Therefore how can it be a material invention, when you and your divine sound vibration are non-different? These are truly words emanating from your lotus mouth! I can sit in this mundane chamber of a car yet not want to exit due to the transcendental airplane you have created which transports me to a magical realm. I greedily drink in your ecstatic words as the mundane world passes me

by and I smile as I feel your presence which is so powerful and clear.

Therefore Kali-yuga is a special time with all of its faults as I can feel, hear and see your presence twenty-four hours a day with all of your mystic powers that have allowed all of your transcendental paraphernalia to be invented by the will of the Supreme Lord to assist you in your divine mission to disseminate this divine sound everywhere. It is truly an amazing experience to see what you have done. What pure mercy it is to have been born to have your association these last thirty-nine years.

I don't know how many more breaths I have left in this world but I pray that up to my last breath I may be in your powerful and divine association with me hearing, seeing, chanting and feeling your presence as you have so mercifully allowed us to be by your bringing all of your paraphernalia with you on your divine appearance.

You once wrote a letter to me, "Do not waste any time, but work always to please Kṛṣṇa within your heart. He is witnessing everything. He only wants us to constantly remember Him. Is it very difficult?" (Letter from Śrīla Prabhupāda, August 21, 1975)

Your divine words of inspiration have given us the opportunity to always remember Kṛṣṇa. Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for everything; as everyday I thank you for your help that I may twenty-four hours a day remember you and everything you have given us. I will remember you and your instructions as that is the only important thing in my life.

All glories to your divine appearance within this world.

Your eternal servant,

Śravaṇānanda Dāsa

Śrīla Dāsa

“Separation makes the heart grow fonder.”

Rupa Gosvāmī offers an intriguing gloss to this timeless adage in his treatise on the dynamics of love, *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (Śṛṅgāra-prakaraṇa 3):

na vinā vipralambhena sambhogaḥ puṣṭim aśnute

Na vinā, “not without.” A double negative in Sanskrit becomes doubly emphatic: “Without (an intervening) separation between two lovers, their meeting cannot enjoy fulfillment.” According to Indian classical dramatics (*Nāṭya-śāstra*), separation is required, not only to heighten the suspense, but to increase mutual attachment and ultimately bring both lovers, hero and heroine, closer together. Thus a drama typically concludes in an ecstatic reunion. *Mādhuryeṇa samarpayet*. Everything should end on a happy note.

The lesson herein is profound: separation is not only inevitable, but it plays an integral role in the consummation of love itself. Love is tested and enhanced by service in separation. However, if in the course of such separation differences and distances become irreconcilable and there arise impassable obstacles—unremitting, unrelenting estrangement—the play will end as a tragedy. We can cite Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, and there are so many real-life examples as well. Our own personal experience may also attest to this truth.

Herein lies my particular quandary: Thirty-three years have now passed since Śrīla Prabhupāda’s physical disappearance. As I wake up every Nandotsava morning—after an elaborate Janmāṣṭamī celebration that goes on late into the previous evening—I find myself overcome with great ambivalence: I do not know whether to feel overjoyed or saddened. Theoretically, I understand that on the spiritual platform (*brahma-bhūta prasannātmā*), there is no question of separation or lamentation. But on the platform of relationship, my heart and my head seem to be at odds with one another, and on these Vaiṣṇava *tithi* days in particular.

There are two most important days in the life of every disciple. First and foremost, there is the birthday of the spiritual master. This day is a most joyous and auspicious occasion when we celebrate the divine appearance of our beloved *gurudeva* coming into this world. It is a rare opportunity to serve, remember, glorify and appreciate all the wonderful gifts, blessings, and copious benefits that we have received. The fault of repeating oneself, being

self-conscious or appearing sentimental is conspicuously absent on this day. We find it hard to find the words to fully express our hearts, nor are we able to thank Śrīla Prabhupāda enough for all he sacrificed and has bestowed upon us.

Inevitably, as it should come to pass, the second most important day is to observe the disappearance day of our *gurudeva*. These are inherently sober and heart-wrenching moments, when the pain of separation weighs heavily in our hearts and minds; and in the reverie of deep remembrance of our beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda, we cannot tolerate his physical absence from the field of our vision. It is especially through the reminiscences of our dear godbrothers and godsisters—who were far more blessed than we were to have Śrīla Prabhupāda’s personal association—that we feel that loss most intensely. At such times, we alternately experience bereavement or joyful feelings of vicarious reunion—sometimes, even both feelings at the same time.

*nāham tu sakhyo bhajato 'pi jantūn
bhajāmy amiṣām anuvṛtti-vṛttaye
yathādhano labdha-dhane vinaṣṭe
tac-cintayānyan nibhṛto na veda*

Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Gopī-gīta*: “But the reason I do not immediately reciprocate the affection of living beings even when they worship Me, O *gopīs*, is that I want to intensify their loving devotion. They then become like a poor man who has gained some wealth and then lost it, and who thus becomes so anxious about it that he can think of nothing else.” (SB 10.32.20)

At such poignant moments, we miss Śrīla Prabhupāda’s association acutely. We are once again reminded that it is his instructions and service which keep us alive in this world and that it is he alone who provides the real meaning to our otherwise paltry existence. Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura has given us the words to voice these deep-seated feelings:

*śrī-rūpa-mañjarī-pada, sei mora sampada,
sei mora bhajana-pūjana
sei mora prāṇa-dhana, sei mora ābharaṇa,
sei mora jīvanera jīvana
tuyā adarśana-ahi, garale jāralo dehī,
ciro-dīna tāpita jīvana
hā hā rūpa koro doyā, deho more pada-chāyā,
narottama loilo śaraṇa*

Śrīla Prabhupāda... “Your lotus feet are my real treasure, my source of devotional service and my object of worship. They give my life meaning and they are the life of my life.”

“Your absence from my vision is like a dose of strong poison, and I will suffer till the end of my life.”

With each succeeding year, my memories of Śrīla Prabhupāda gradually fade; yet my feelings for him in separation grow stronger. Therein lies my future hope and continued reason for sustaining my life.

As Śrīla Prabhupāda prayed in his 1936 Vyāsa-pūjā offering to his guru mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī:

“Personally, I have no hope for any direct service for the coming crores of births of the sojourn of my life, but I am confident that some day or other I shall be delivered from this mire of delusion in which I am at present so deeply sunk. Therefore let me with all my earnestness pray at the lotus feet of my divine master...”

I do not know Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, I pray to the Almighty to grant me this simple recollection that I am eternally connected with Śrīla Prabhupāda and that as long as I can feel some small sentiment towards him, I know that I still have some hope of attaining his mercy. Because by his mercy, Kṛṣṇa’s mercy becomes easily obtainable, *yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādaḥ* (*Gurvaṣṭakam* 8).

I remain forever grateful and eternally indebted.

Begging to regain my position as a humble servant of your servants,

Śrīla Dāsa
(Oakland, CA)

Vaikuṅṭha Mūrti Devī Dāsī

I would like to thank Śrīla Prabhupāda for all the excellent friends I have—my godsisters and godbrothers—and for the wonderful gift of my son and daughter. I only know these lovely individuals due to the fact that Śrīla Prabhupāda crossed the ocean and came to deliver us. If he hadn't, I would be alone, floundering, still afraid of all the horrors in the world.

Because of Śrīla Prabhupāda, I now know about Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and have gotten to know and love Their dear servants.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda. I love you and your disciples.

Your servant,

Vaikuṅṭha Mūrti Devī Dāsī

Kāla Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet.

Like Lord Rāmacandra, you entered the forest to rid the world of the disturbances created by the demons who were intent on upsetting all activities meant for spiritual upliftment. Unlike Lord Rāmacandra, you set out on your own, or so it seemed at first.

As I gradually, slowly, and almost reluctantly emerge from the turmoil of my lusty tendencies, I begin to see that you were never alone but you brought with you the spiritual world to which you belong. Everyone was there and you were so eager to introduce us to them all.

You spoke not in abstracts but in clear definition; a clarity which is evident in your wonderful books for anyone seeking relief from mental disturbances. When we become peaceful through the soothing vibrations of your divine words, we gradually regain our appreciation for that nectar of devotion.

Lord Rāmacandra had Lakṣmaṇa at his side, Lord Kṛṣṇa had Arjuna, and Lord Caitanya came with Lord Nityānanda. But you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, came alone simply on the strength of your spiritual master's request.

Like some Kamikaze warrior, you were willing to die carrying out that order. The order of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta was your life's mission. In that determined unswerving frame of mind you set the example that this is the way to serve the *guru-paramparā*.

You set the example in each of your moves, each of your words and each of your books. In that example you fulfilled every directive Lord Kṛṣṇa gave to Arjuna and through Arjuna to each of us in this forest of turmoil of how to get out of this entanglement of birth, death, old age, and disease.

More than that however, you showed us how to help free others from their suffering.

It is not possible to save someone drowning by jumping in the water if we don't know how to swim. Your example showed us how, even if we can't swim, we can jump in and help others out, just by staying firmly attached to you.

You are and always will be our lifeline to the spiritual realm, our connection to the *paramparā*, our hope for getting to know all about the spiritual world, our spiritual father, our spiritual master, our inspiration, our hope for mankind.

You have given us everything needed to be truly happy.
Thank you for everything. Thank you for your coming to help me.

Your servant eternally,

Kāla Dāsa

Kaulinī Devī Dāsī

Bg. 2.29, purport:

The easiest process for understanding the subject matter of self, however, is to accept the statements of the *Bhagavad-gītā* spoken by the greatest authority, Lord Kṛṣṇa, without being deviated by other theories. But it also requires a great deal of penance and sacrifice, either in this life or in the previous ones, before one is able to accept Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Kṛṣṇa can, however, be known as such by the causeless mercy of the pure devotee and by no other way.

Śrīla Prabhupāda THANK YOU for your causeless mercy. You are that pure devotee. I hope to someday please you by my insignificant service. You are always there for me without fail and this life has no meaning without you.

Eternally grateful,

Your aspiring servant,

Kaulinī Devī Dāsī

Ariṣṭahe Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

When I visited Śrīdhāma Māyāpur in 1976, I remember seeing your shoes inside the temple room beside the entrance door. You were taking *darśana* of the Deities or maybe you were giving lecture, I don't remember. I only remember your shoes standing there. Such a beautiful memory. It came to me recently when I was chanting.

I also remember touching your lotuslike feet when you were taking *darśana* of Rādhā-Mādhava. I don't know if I was offending you, or if you became transcendently angry. You did not say anything. Your lotuslike feet were soft and more cooling than moonbeams, I was offering *daṇḍavats* to two moons shining before me. The devotees surrounding you were looking down at me, but they did not say anything either, compassionate as they were.

Then I went into your room twice, first in Māyāpur, then in Vṛndāvana. How fortunate I was to have that brief association with you! It saved me. When I hesitated to enter, you invited me with a movement of your hand so that I could receive your mercy. It was inconceivable, sitting in front you, and I was full of passion and ignorance, still your glance of mercy reached me, blessed me, and never left me. You tolerated me, and fanned that little spark of good that only you could see and feel. Thank you.

I don't know how many lifetimes I have to endure in this material realm until the beautiful personification of *bhakti* will embrace me, touch my soul and allow me to place the effulgent dust of her lotuslike feet upon my head, and accept me as her servant, never to be lost again in loneliness and fear.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I don't really know who you are and who I am, I only know my extremely fallen condition and your causeless mercy upon me reflecting on your butter soft heart and compassionate nature. Thank you once again.

You have lit a candle which will never die.

You are illuminating ISKCON.

You are illuminating the whole universe.

You are illuminating your disciples.

You are illuminating the darkness of ignorance.

You are the effulgent sun of transcendental knowledge.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

The association of devotees is igniting my spiritual life like a small fire burning in the deep woods of Kali-yuga.

Before, my life was a fruitless tree, now it has become a stepping stone toward the door of liberation.

By your grace, Śrīla Prabhupāda, this is taking place.

Your heart is like a golden lotus flower sprinkled with drops of ecstasy, or it is like an island in the midst of the war field of sense gratification.

When I hear your words vibrating through my ears I can enter there, and the waves of material desires, ready to swallow me, will die on its shores.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

I was sleeping in someone's else lap, but you woke me up.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Now it is time to end this offering, it is getting late in my life. I have to prepare myself to welcome the afterlife. May faith destroy fear and the holy name transform my heart.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Please forgive me and let me become useful for your preaching mission, if you please so desire.

Your lowly servant,

Ariṣṭahe Dāsa

Bhima Dāsa

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you and your instructions are the force that keeps ISKCON together. Your instructions are the safe and sure way for all devotees who want to cross over the ocean of material existence. If we follow your instructions without adding or subtracting anything, then the result is assured.

Our difficulties in following your instructions are due to our past conditioning, and only by your mercy can we hope to be steady.

Your instructions are certainly rooted in the path laid out by the previous *ācāryas*, and we can have full faith in those instructions by being true to the *paramparā*. Your application of the previous *ācāryas'* instructions according to time, place, and circumstance is perfect, a fact proved by the result.

One instruction stands out in my mind more than others, and that is your request to your followers to distribute your books. This one activity, you said, is the way to really please you. So, why is there resistance in our minds to following this important instruction? If we could take to heart this one instruction and carefully implement it, the whole world would change for the better.

This world is becoming more and more intolerable, with pollution and demoniac leaders who aren't able to help themselves, what to speak of the poor people. Your instructions are like a big sword that can cut through the onslaught of *māyā*. However, we need the strength to lift that sword, strength that comes through detachment from material desires. Plus, we need to keep the sword sharp by intense devotional practices. In this way we can be successful in our fight with *māyā*.

It may sound over-simplified, but I truly believe that all we need to do is distribute your books as much as possible, and that Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu will take care of the rest.

LIFE IS MEANT TO PLEASE YOU

This life is meant to please you;
If you're glad, we will be too.
Your instructions are grease on the wheels,
But Māyā's so close on our heels,
We only guess how the spiritual feels.

Mahāprabhu's mercy is great;
Without it, sealed is our fate.
Please help us not to take late.

"Books are the basis," you said.
We need to get that in our head
So Kṛṣṇa nectar can be read.
Help us get out the lead.

As you can see, a poet I'm not,
But it's try to please you or I rot.
Such a bracing life is my lot.
Only your mercy can untie the knot.

Your worthless servant,

Bhīma Dāsa

Dīna Śaraṇā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, disciple of the illustrious saint and scholar His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, exalted member of the disciplic succession of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the six Gosvāmīs, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, great saint the end of whose glories cannot be reached though sung by millions for millennia...

Please accept my prostrated obeisances!

Your inconceivable mercy transcends all the regions of the cosmic manifestation and pierces through the deepest layers of material existence.

In the light of your glory and the glory of your disciples,
my dear godbrothers and -sisters,
imbedded as I am in ignorance,
devoid of love of God,
and being deeply fallen,

I realize my ignorance and wonder by which turn of good fortune
was I allowed to have sufficient presence of mind to perceive the urgency
of the moment and the presence of Your Divine Grace
...now some forty years ago.

This good fortune can be due only to the causeless mercy of the Lord and His pure devotee—you, my beloved spiritual master, whose love illuminates my heart and soul.

By opening my eyes with the torch of knowledge, your books have become the gateway through which you are allowing me a glimpse into the reality of the nectar of devotion.

May I be allowed to serve you by serving your mission and its members,
and may I thus become eligible to receive your divine grace.

Your most fallen servant,

Dīna Śaraṇā Devī Dāsī

Jagad-vīra Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

I have concluded that the most valuable gift that you gave us, the undeserving lost souls of Kali-yuga, was your transcendental association. Before you left India in 1965, many souls were touched by your association. And after you arrived in the West in 1965, you gave that association to many more fortunate inhabitants of this planet. Your transcendental association is invaluable as you are the undisputed captain of the ship for the lost souls of this age.

So how do we get your association now, thirty-four years after your disappearance? I think that the best ways are to associate with those who are following your instructions and by reading your books. You have said, “There is nothing new to be said. Everything is in my books. Therefore, if you want to know me, read my books.” By reading your books daily, we can feel your transcendental presence and therefore make progress to the ultimate destination. In your books the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is explained fully.

When you arrived in the USA on September 17, 1965, you practically had no money or support from any big organizations. But you carried a very valuable cargo—two hundred sets of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* with your Bhaktivedanta purports. You said: “Books are the basis,” and you demonstrated this completely. And as soon as some sincere souls started coming, you revived your *Back to Godhead* magazine. “*Back to Godhead* is the backbone of our society,” you said. Even though you didn’t bring a *mṛdaṅga* drum with you on the *Jaladuta*, you brought the *bṛhad-mṛdaṅga*—the big drum that could be heard from a much greater distance. I remember the first book I got was a paperback abridged *Bhagavad-gītā*. It was purple. I kept that book for several years. But when I joined the traveling *saṅkīrtana* party, I left it at the Melbourne temple. When I returned, the book was missing. I hope some devotee is keeping it nicely.

Books are the basis. When the books are being read and distributed, the atmosphere is Vṛndāvana and the guests that come to the temple are swept away by the waves of the ocean of transcendental bliss.

I am now writing this small offering in Okinawa, Japan. We have been experiencing many earthquakes recently and there is also trouble at the Fukushima nuclear plant, so we decided to move here. I was thinking that maybe these earthquakes should wake people up and shake them out of

māyā. We have to distribute more of your books and help the conditioned souls understand that there is a better way to live. A more simple way that does not exploit material nature for sense gratification.

When you returned from Japan to Kolkata in August 1970, you said: “I have seen Japan, which is highly advanced in machines and technology. Yet there is no real happiness there.” Many people are now in great distress and are uncertain what will happen next. As Kṛṣṇa said to the 20,800 kings who had been defeated by Jarāsandha, “I can see that human beings’ lack of self-restraint, which arises from their intoxication with opulence and power, simply leads to madness.”

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for your transcendental association and your divine instructions.

We are praying for your mercy so that we can become your servants life after life.

Your aspiring servant,

Jaḡad-vīra Dāsa

Karṇapūra Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Please accept my humble obeisances.

I know there is a place that I belong,
From here I will say "So long,"
My stay in matter I must no longer prolong.
To your feet I will race headlong,
To this place only the pure throng,
The dust of your feet will take me to
The place where every word is a song.
In that place I will really be able to live long.
Take me to that place where I will do no wrong.
To get to this place I must be strong.
To get to this place it may seem like it will take long.
To get to this place is a commitment lifelong.
To get to this place my faith I must not misplace.
All of my sins I must erase.
For material things I must stop the chase.
My love for matter I must displace.
To do this your words will be the mace.
My false identity I must replace.
To stay in matter is a disgrace.
How will it be possible to make this place my new base?
It will only be by Your Divine Grace.
Śrīla Prabhupāda, your words I must embrace.
Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have set the pace.
You have taught us that there is some place.
That we can go to get out of this rat race.
You have brought us to a whole new place.
You have built a staircase
That will take us out of this material space.
Material desires will be gone without a trace.
Just by looking upon your lotus face.

Against all obstacles I will brace.
Lest my bad habits I retrace.
Thank you for hearing my case.
All glories to you Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your unworthy servant,

Karṇapūra Dāsa

Kṣetrajña Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you who are *kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha*, very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta once said that if someone has life (*prāṇa*), then he can preach: *prāṇa āche yār, sei hetu pracār*. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta was well-known for considering preaching to be the most important activity for his devotees.

From the statements of your own godbrother... “What we have done is like digging a tank (*pukur*) for bathing or washing cloth as compared to your filling an entire ocean.” The results of your preaching are seen so far and wide. Objectively (judging from the results), your intimate connection to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta can only be understood as being the most intimate and that his full mercy was imparted unto to you for your preaching activities.

When you disappeared from our direct view in 1977, we, your disciples, were seemingly left without our protective spiritual father, just as the devotees in Vṛndāvana were left in a piteous condition when Lord Kṛṣṇa left Vṛndāvana for Mathurā. But you also once said, “I will live forever in my books.” So the way that devotees say that Lord Kṛṣṇa was present by His absence to the residents of Vṛndāvana, we (your disciples and granddisciples) must feel your full presence in your books. You also said, “My books will be the lawbooks for mankind,” to be studied and quoted as authoritative in all circumstances we may encounter.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your mercy is without limit. Anyone who simply remembers you is lifted from the material entanglement and is on the path back home, back to Godhead. So boldly I pray to you that one day I may be counted as one of your worthy servants in your mission to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness to all the conditioned souls in the material universes.

Your unworthy servant,

Kṣetrajña Dāsa

Kulāṅganā Devī Dāsī

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

I pay my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda who is very dear to Kṛṣṇa and whose lotus feet are my shelter.

Nārada Muni said: “The real interest of the living entity is to get out of the nescience that causes him to endure repeated birth and death. Unless one renders devotional service unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead Vāsudeva, one cannot possibly become completely detached from the material world.”

I remember that before I met you, my life was full of ignorance and without any goal. By your causeless mercy, although I do not deserve anything, you gave me a chance to be engaged in pure devotional service which is the only remedy to develop love of God and be freed from birth, death, disease and old age. You said, “Life is wonderful, death is horrible.”

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please help me, give me strength and inspiration to continue my service to your lotus feet.

Your fallen servant,

Kulāṅganā Devī Dāsī
(London, England)

Madhusevita Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances. All glories to your Vyāsa-pūjā.

This year's offering is the latest song I composed, which is to be part of an album made for your glorification. The name of the album is *In Praise of My Spiritual Master*, and this particular song is called "Tompkins Square Dhām."

As you are well aware, I am less than a mediocre disciple, and the same is true for my being a musician and writer. Nonetheless, I have confidence in your compassionate heart and in that uniquely beautiful quality of yours: the acceptance of service even from the most undeserving souls. I hope you will be pleased with this effort.

Your humble disciple and servant,

Madhusevita Dāsa

TOMPKINS SQUARE DHĀM

Rubber slippers—lotus feet
Walking down the Bowery.
All the bums are giving way
To the sweet angelic saint.
All those who catch sight of him
Become suddenly serene.
His compassion puts to rest
Birth, old age, disease, and death.

Lower East Side,
A place of transcendental life.
Lower East Side,
Where revolution is divine.

Then he goes down to the park,
Starts to chant beneath the tree.
Low-class, high-class, we don't mind:
This vibration makes all free.
Sweetest *vande 'ham śrī-gurūn,*

Which attracts even the goons.
Puerto Ricans, hippies, blacks
are submerged in Holy Names.

Tompkins Square Park,
Because of Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Tompkins Square Park,
You've now become a Holy Dhām.
His radiant blissful smile
Then captures all their hearts.
The hippies dance in bliss
To Prabhupāda's beat.
Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

He took the lowest beings
And gave them matchless gifts.
"Stay high forever, please,
But free of LSD."
Compassionately kind
And patient all the while.
No one compares to him;
To Kṛṣṇa he's most dear.

Jaya Prabhupāda!
You gave us transcendental life.
Jaya Prabhupāda!
Now love of God is in our hearts.
No boundaries anymore:
Your mercy's everywhere.
That chanting in the park
Has reached everyone's heart.
Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

Mahādevī Devī Dāsī

“The lotus feet of our Śrīla Prabhupāda are the only way by which we can attain pure devotional service.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my head at your lotus feet as I attempt to glorify you in the early morning hours of Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma while peacocks and parrots are singing, amongst monkeys stealing and swinging, between cows strolling along, devotees chanting *nāma* and yes, Prabhupāda, the big bell is ringing on the hour and half in your Vṛndāvana ISKCON *dhāma*.

Prabhupāda, you must know that proverb from the West,
“When the going gets tough, the tough get going”
The part they left out was “the tough get going with Kṛṣṇa”
You have given us everything we need to see Kṛṣṇa
in the disguise, the lies, false highs and the whys of this material world.
Depending on you, this *bhakti* process,
Only way, only way, only way.
“We bow down to your lotus feet with great awe and reverence.”
The devotees in your ISKCON Vṛndāvana,
are sincerely trying to please you, Prabhupāda
I am filled with awe and reverence for them as they take care of you
in your sublime *samādhi* where you still are,
in your clean and serene home where you still reside,
on your *vyāsāsana* from where you still speak
and with such meticulous attention
to your self-installed deity on the altar.
We find it simply wonderful that
you are the only *ācārya* who installed a deity of himself
while still alive
and that self-same munificent form of you is here in Vṛndāvana
with the most compassionate and merciful
Gaura-Nitāi
Along with the most charming and all-knowing
Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma
And the most beautiful and benevolent
Rādhā-Śyāma
your eternal Associates.
Your devotee family in Vṛndāvana ISKCON

are engaged in so much service to please you, Śrīla Prabhupāda Prabhupāda, I see you in these sincere devotees.

They are bowing down before you
and I am bowing down to them
with great awe and reverence.

“By your grace, Śrīla Prabhupāda, one can cross over the ocean of material suffering and obtain the mercy of Kṛṣṇa.”

No intoxication, no gambling, no illicit sex and no meat

When some heard this, their reply was “an impossible feat!”

Yet you inspired the dumb to study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and speak eloquently

You encouraged the lame to walk hundreds of miles

on *saṅkīrtana*, *harināma*, Pada-yātrā and Vraja-maṇḍala-parikramā

You churned and turned impossible hippies, techies, yuppies, and preppies into intelligent, productive, and happy devotees.

You then bestowed upon these “impossible” devotees

devotional service in Vṛndāvana and Māyāpur *dhāmas*

Impossible evolved way beyond possible!

“My only wish is to have my consciousness purified by the words emanating from your lotus mouth.”

We promised you minimum 16 and the basic 4

This I must do, even when my senses abhor

May my mouth and heart offer full *guru-praṇāma*

while hitting the floor

which is a little more difficult these days

Every morning at 8 a.m. in the temple,

devotees hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*

and every evening at 5 p.m. in your Vṛndāvana home,

or on the transcendental radio,

your devotees hear *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*

wherein Lord Kṛṣṇa says,

“For one who sees Me everywhere

and sees everything in Me

I am never lost

Nor is he ever lost to Me.” (Bg. 6.30)

I’m praying to see you, Prabhupāda

in everything, in everyone, and in every situation

I know you are guiding me

and finding me,

especially when I get lost.

“Attachment to your lotus feet, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is the perfection which fulfills all desires.”

Prabhupāda, as I do *japa-parikramā* around

your Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Temple,

I hear you humbly requesting

“To maintain what I have given you.”

Particularly your ISKCONs, your *gośālās*, your properties

your schools and your *Govinda’s* around the world.

Maintaining what you have established is our life and soul

and conscientiously improving

as you would like.

Your Vṛndāvana ISKCON devotees are doing this

and we pray you are pleased.

The Lords are magnificently splendid every day

Your *tamāla* tree in the courtyard sways with the 24 hours *kīrtana*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, *Bhagavad-gītā*, and new *bhakta* classes, as well as

book distribution, *prasāda* distribution

and Śrīmatī Tulasī-devī is looking green and happy.

Kṛṣṇa’s kitchens and bakeries are always fired up

and the *mālā-devīs* are steadily adorning Their Lordships

The famously quiet, clean MVT and restaurant

as well as the Kṛṣṇa Balarāma Guesthouse and restaurant

are thriving with devotees and guests getting to know each other

and discussing Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Prabhupāda, I’m grateful that you have given us

the “Hare Kṛṣṇa look”—neckbeads, beadbag and *tilaka*

Guests are inspired just by seeing us,

your dancing white elephants...

and we are inspired to see each other

The new devotee-friendly Balarāma Hall

is regularly offering cultural presentations for you, Prabhupāda

and for the added pleasure of the assembled devotees.

The grounds are cleaned everyday

as well as the hearts of your devotees.

I often wonder when I see and hear life around me

what you would think or say, Prabhupāda

I feel you must be pleased

with the industrious and effective management team

in your Vr̄ndavana ISKCON and MVT,
as these devotees are so dedicated to you.

Please allow me to serve them
and be of some use for you too.

Your 24 hours *kīrtaneers* are so totally
breaking open the storehouse of KṚṢṂA-NĀMA
while devotees and guests drown
in that tsunami of mercy.

*“Prabhupāda, you open our darkened eyes and fill our hearts with
transcendental knowledge.”*

The confusion, delusion and illusion
of the three-fold miseries

can be overwhelming for me

and I take shelter in speaking with you and Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma

You consistently guide me to take full dose of the *mahā*-medicine

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare

Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

You also give me effective prescriptions
in your *NOD, Bg, KB, SB, CC*.

O Prabhupāda, you are clearly explaining
everything we need to know
in your eternal books.

You are always telling us,

“If you want to know me, then read my books.”

“You are our lord, birth after birth.”

As you know, Śrīla Prabhupāda

Many devotees are coming to Vr̄ndāvana
to leave their bodies.

So many of your disciples have left us already

We are all queued up.

The care-givers at your Vr̄ndāvana ISKCON

always have your *bhajan*s playing

and we tell the devotees who are dying that you are with them,

Now and forever.

“From you, ecstatic prema emanates, by you—ignorance is destroyed.”

In the twelve short years

you were with us, Prabhupāda

We were completely mesmerized

by the continual flow of your loving exchanges

with one and all.

Now, thousands and thousands of devotees and guests
are pouring into your ISKCON all over the world
to get Kṛṣṇa's mercy in numerous ways!

No other ācārya has created such a miracle!

"The Vedic scriptures sing of your character."

The perfect answer for any spiritual question

The solution to most any problem

can be found in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books,

the cream of the *Vedas*

and in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Vedic knowledge is further elaborated

in seeing and hearing from you on your morning walks,

in your room conversations or public lectures.

Devotees also become enlivened and enlightened

to see your personal mannerisms, aristocratic gestures,

or even watching you pour the flowing water

from a silver cup into your lotus mouth.

The Vedic scriptures must have been singing

when you orchestrated global Ratha-yātrās!

We have been on TV many times

to describe how you have established *rathas*

all over the world!

People are amazed to hear how the

Japanese, Europeans, Africans, Spanish, Italians

Everyone all over the world sing 'Jaya Jagannātha!'

Because of you, Prabhupāda, your spotless and pure character

*"Our Śrīla Prabhupāda is an ocean of mercy, the friend of the poor, and
lord and master of the devotees."*

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are expert at engaging

in loving exchanges with your devotees.

You have so many wonderful devotees, Śrīla Prabhupāda

Once upon a time,

Kṛṣṇa arranged for us to organize

the astonishing *prasāda* cookie marathons

in your New Dwarka.

Devotees were in ecstasy to sell, eat and distribute

Oatmeal raisin, Peanut butter, and Carob chip chewy cookies

especially after seeing

Śrī Śrī Rukmiṇī and Dvārakādhiśa enjoy
 Their huge plate of cookies each morning
 For five years, the initials of this yummy *prasāda*
 could be heard all over Watseka Avenue....
 “Hey Mādhavī, pick up minimum 20 dozen Pbs
 and lets double up on the Ors n Ccs...
 Let’s give more to the manager; he’s hooked!”
 Devotees were seeing that Prabhupāda was truly a friend to everyone,
 as countless souls were getting the nectar of *prasāda*!
 Prabhupāda, you call *prasāda*, “the secret weapon”
 There were customers coming back for
 more ‘n’ more ‘n’ more!
 “Well, miss, I bought some Oatmeal raisin
 and then Peanut butter cookies just yesterday
 at the supermarket
 but they don’t taste like your cookies
 I can’t describe it
 They look similar
 but the taste is veeerrrrry different, actually indescribable!
 Could you give me another dozen or so? Of all three kinds?
 And here comes my neighbor...
 She wants five dozen for her party tonight!”
 When the devotees figured out the deal of the day,
 the New Dwarka Bakery could barely keep up!
 Thousands of dollars daily with major profit
 were pouring into your BBT, Prabhupāda.
 It was astounding to see the people of Los Angeles
 getting addicted to cookie *prasāda*
 Prabhupāda, from your bakery to the temple
 and in 30 *saṅkīrtana* vehicles,
 the scent of cookie *prasāda* was everywhere.
 Prabhupāda, you must have been chuckling.
 “O Śrīla Prabhupāda, please be merciful unto us. Please give us the shade
 of your lotus feet.”
 O Prabhupāda, please take my heart and soul
 and help me cross over this material consciousness
 into pure devotional service
 You told me before, and twice in two dreams
 “I am always with you. Do not be fearful.”

Yet, I forget and get fearful.
 You constantly remind me and comfort me.
 Please bless me that I can share
 even just a little of your love with others.
 “O Prabhupāda, we want to spread your fame all over the three worlds!”
 “You will show your love for me by how you cooperate to keep this
 institution together, after I am gone.”
 Śrīla Prabhupāda, we pray to experience your eternal presence
 within us and all around us
 May we serve you together forever
 to spread your countless glories
 all over the three worlds.
 I pray to serve your Vṛndāvana ISKCON
 til my last breath,
 Did you know Prabhupāda
 that it’s become a “cool thing to do”
 To come to the “angrazie temple” for the Hare Kṛṣṇa kīrtana?
 This must give you so much joy to see and hear.
 “Śrīla Prabhupāda, please help us take shelter of your lotus feet.”
 Prabhupāda, please keep my mind, heart, and senses at your lotus feet
 Let me be happy to gently push others to you
 and gratefully aspire to be servant of the servant
 without desire for fame, adoration or distinction.
 In this way, I can try to see you everywhere
 Śāstra-cakṣuḥ, by your divine grace.
 Prabhupāda, I pray you will never be lost to me
 And I pray I will never get too lost where you give up on me.
 Please Prabhupāda, don’t give up on me.
 Please use me as you see to do
 To push on your mission with Vṛndāvana ISKCON
 I’m begging you, Śrīla Prabhupāda
 Please allow me, please help me to be

Your humble and grateful,

Mahādevī Devī Dāsī

Mahākṣa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

Namo namaḥ. In remembrance of the auspicious day of your appearance I am sending this meagre offering, for alas, I have proven to be maybe your least successful disciple. Many years ago I went off in search of a golden rhinoceros, and sadly I still did not get one. Being far too proud to come back without one, I am still camping out here in the jungle with the natives, in the hope that maybe by chance a golden rhinoceros might drop dead, or someone else might kill one for me, and leave it behind. In any case there is no chance of coming back now without one. Although I am supposed to be doing the service, there is no chance of any success without being empowered by Your Divine Grace. So I'm praying that you will help me to get one so I can have more association with my beloved godbrothers and godsisters. Their association, I consider your most valuable gift amongst so many.

Your worthless servant,

Mahākṣa Dāsa
(London, England)

Mañidhara Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Please accept my most humble obeisances to your lotus feet.

All glories to Your Divine Grace!

Day after day, I hear your transcendental voice bringing reality into this perfectly bizarre world. Every day I offer you my *dañḍavats* while trying to regain sanity in this ocean of insanity we are drowning.

Even closest friends, while abandoning the shelter of your instructions, can mutate into unrecognizable forms quickly. There are still islands in your movement where you can be found. There are still *sañkīrtana* vans leaving ecstatic preaching centers and there are still wonderful *brahmacāris* and *grhasthas* distributing your books.

For us, as for the rest of the world, these books are the shelter in times where arrogance of the conditioned souls is reaching levels where it can be safely said that the time for receiving the reaction for their impudence is near.

Studying your life and your preaching travels day by day, I follow your path all over the world. The more detailed your preaching policies become revealed, the more one can learn to understand how unique your position is.

Like shadows, your imitators follow your majestic personality. Like shadows, they imitate your preaching, but the results speak for themselves. Only mediocrity prevails, and the days where the power of initiation was proven by the power of the initiate to spread your glories by means of *harināma* and book distribution are becoming a memory. Retreating into remote locations, the chanters of the holy name will never discover its truly sweet taste relished by those who cry out in despair of the holy name—seeking help while submerged in the ocean of conditioned souls in an ongoing attempt to rescue them.

You gave rules and you gave orders. Abandoning them or modifying them is deadly. But as usual, the conditioned souls want the Kingdom of God without God, and so even an attempt of an ISKCON without you can be occasionally noticed. But nothing will last without your blessings.

Forever your voice will sound, forever it is preserved in your books. The more the insanity increases, the more the sober ones will seek shelter in your books and instructions. And so by *māyā's* mercy the preaching can only increase. More destruction is needed, more of *māyā's* beatings are required in order to get us where we belong—at your lotus feet.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for the sacrifice you have made to save us. Please, despite all my conditioning, allow me always to understand the

closeness of your lotus feet. Reaching gradually the end of my *gṛhasthā-āśrama*, I can only beg you to allow me to still spend my remaining days in this body fully absorbed in the preaching field. Please allow me to be your *saṅkīrtana* man life after life.

Your unworthy servant,

Maṇidhara Dāsa

Manonātha Dāsa

Dear venerable Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances unto your lotus feet.

Here I am again as every year to write a Vyāsa-pūjā offering to submit to your lotus feet. Your feet are lotus-like because they are pure. No contamination can even approach you. And while writing I am smiling out of happiness, a feeling similar to a victory. I feel victorious because if I am still writing means you are accepting me as a servant. And this is a relief and a joy.

I feel like I am situated in the aristocracy of spiritualism. The best philosophy, the best books, the best spiritual master. The best of everything. As a kid I was dreaming about having the best in life and felt despondent when, as years were going by, nothing really big happened.

And one day, the most blessed and auspicious day, the most joyous day, as if by magic, you, Śrī Abhay Charan Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, came in my life and everything happened. Just like this, in one single day my whole existence changed. In my dark life all the lights went on, in my black and white life all the colors manifested themselves. Such a pristine knowledge, such a purity of action, such a great spiritual master.

Knowledge and service. By the cultivation of knowledge one gets liberation from material desires. By service one gets the mercy and therefore pure devotional service.

The life of a devotee is a life of studies and service. By reading your books everything becomes revealed. But serving you transcendental happiness is experienced.

The nature of the soul is to serve, not to be served. This is common experience even in material life, that a father is happier by giving something to the son than to get something from him. Better to be a servant than a lord.

As Śrīla Gurudeva is the representative of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara, the Deities of Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma, on earth, it has certainly been a great privilege and pleasure to have dedicated my life to your service. In 1976 I was seated at your holy feet when you said, "Those who are my disciples should preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. This is the best service. Somehow or other to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the others."

Thanks, thanks, thanks for having come into my life. Nothing better could have happened.

I want to continue serving you in this capacity, as a preacher. Please bless me so that this is what I'll do up the last breath. This is what I want to do and I know this is what will please you the most.

Śrī A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Mahārāja Prabhupāda *kī jaya!*
Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya!*
Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya!*

Your humble disciple and servant,

Manonātha Dāsa

SOJOURN TO LOVE—FINDING ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

A human being is meant by God
To use human life to show
That the soul's presence upon this earth
Is to have the human being know
The soul's relationship with God
Is really life's primary goal

But the distractions after birth
Are many, many fold
The soul on its journey
Faces odds it could not know
Until this innate desire rises above
All other common goals

A devoted person reaches out
Seeking in a world of sin and crime
To find some answers
For a loving spiritual relationship
Beyond all material facts and time

The soul's eternity is sought
To its own self be true
In the midst of roaring ignorance
Where does the soul find this truth?
Where to place one's trust and love?

In the entire world where can one find
A person so rare, so sweet, so kind?
To share a love divine
A love of the purest kind
A spiritual teacher must be found

But where does one begin to look?
The only place is within one's heart
And begins by opening your books

From which a true seeker of pure love
Can turn inward to the spiritual world

Oh Kṛṣṇa, master of my heart
Oh, Lord of love divine
You were present in my heart
All of this time

But without a teacher, guide and friend
To open up the door
I was lost and could not find the source
Of this love that is so pure.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your expert words
Became inscribed upon my heart
As I began to read each line
Where love is written with such care
That this is what I had lost
Brought back to me by one so dear

Oh, Divine Spiritual Master
Friend of seekers of my kind
How wonderful it is to know
The inner secrets of God's love
Upon this world of souls

Whose suffering is this loss of love?
So confidential and so sweet
Yet so satisfying to the heart
That one can enter deep
Simply by placing one's head at your lotus feet

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda
There is no way to thank you
For allowing me to come
From out of the world of darkness
Into the ocean of enlightenment
And pure love

Your causeless mercy given me
Has melted my heart of steel
And bound me to your lotus feet
Where all true love is real

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

Padyāvali Devī Dāsī

With fond remembrances of my sister Rudrāṅī Devī Dāsī (ACBSP) who
passed away in 2006.

Phalinī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my fallen obeisances. All glories to your undaunted determination to serve your guru mahārāja and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, despite the troubles that have been experienced by you due to having accepted so many disciples.

You are an ocean of mercy. One proof of the fact that you are an ocean of mercy is that after almost forty years, you have still not given up on me.

I am a fool and fools can be very bold sometimes in their behavior. Therefore, as a fool, I am boldly presuming to ask that you kindly continue to keep me somehow or other among the particles of dust surrounding your lotus feet. Please, please don't kick me away.

Still hoping and aspiring to serve you in some small way in this lifetime, I beg to remain,

Your insignificant daughter,

Phalinī Devī Dāsī

Racitāmbarā Devī Dāsī

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

You are eternally in the spiritual world, playing with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, the *gopīs* and *gopas*, and taking part in Their daily activities.

As Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's most confidential servitor, you are an integral part of Their eternal pastimes. Yet, you are always reaching out to us, fingers stretching long and wide to touch each one of us, pleading gently with us to take hold of your soft hand and together we can pull aside the gossamer curtain.

There is really only the spiritual world, but yet we are separated by the thin veil of our material consciousness. You have done everything to help us become Kṛṣṇa conscious, but the final surrender is up to us. You have written countless books in glorification of the Lord and His devotees, we have only to read them. You have taught us patiently to chant the holy names of the Lord without offence, we have only to chant them, 16 rounds every day, on our *japa* beads. You have given us a glimpse of the pastimes of Lord Caitanya by inundating our little world with sweet *bhajanās*, fired-up *kīrtanās* and ecstatic dancing. Oh, Śrīla Prabhupāda, make us dance, make us dance, make us dance! ... we have only to join in to feel the ecstasy.

You have instructed us how to follow the Four Regulative Principles of Freedom (what did we know before you found us?), we have only to follow them. You have given us Deity worship, breathtaking forms of the Lord all around the world, in temples and even in our own homes, and Śrīmatī Tulasī-devī, the mother of devotion. We have only to care for Them and worship Them. You have blessed us with the global association of devotees, dedicated to serving the Lord and you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. We have only to associate with them, share *prasāda* together, speak *kṛṣṇa-kathā* with them.

You have freely given us the holy *dhāmas*, the very places where Lord Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda actually trod the ground with Their soft lotus feet, and you have added the dear dust of your lotus feet also. Śrīla Prabhupāda, we have only to visit these holy places and take the dust respectfully on our heads, to swim in the holy waters and to hear the pastimes.

You have patiently, so patiently, taught us from the *vyāsāsana*, the seat of Vyāsa, how to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees and how to love them? We have only to love and serve them. You have given us very special children, sent

to us with their own missions—we have only to train them and love them, as you have trained and loved us, and they will lead us back home.

All this and so much more, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is how you are holding out your loving hands to us. We have only to reach out to you by following what you have so magnanimously given us, and together we will pull aside the gossamer curtain and again be fully in the spiritual world with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and you! Back home, back to Godhead, *kī jaya!*

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I love you eternally.

Your small servant,

Racitāmbarā Devī Dāsī

Rājendra-nandana Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances, and feeble attempt to glorify Your Divine Grace. All glories to you. All glories to you!

The duty of a disciple is to submissively serve and inquire from his spiritual master how one can please his guru and engage in the devotional service of Śrī Śrī Pañca-tattva, and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava.

tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā

Without your example and instructions there would be no value to my life. Only by your mercy do I understand the value of this human life and do I have any sincere desire to become Kṛṣṇa conscious. (Bg. 4.34)

*kaumāra ācaret prājñō dharmān bhāgavatān iha
durlabhaṁ mānuṣam janma tad apy adhruvam arthadam*

(SB 7.6.1)

My desire to become Kṛṣṇa conscious, and measure up as a disciple that you can use as an instrument for the Lord's pleasure keeps bringing me to Śrīdhāma Māyāpur. It is here that my aspirations and heartfelt dreams of somehow assisting you in the *saṅkīrtana* movement come alive. I owe you so much. I owe you everything! As I finish a two-and-half-month visit here in the *dhāma*, I'm reflecting on how your mercy upon me has manifest every day and ever-increasingly. If not for you I would have no clue of the most merciful Lord Caitanya and his holy *dhāma*.

In the spiritual world there are no modes of nature; only what we bring here as baggage. Because of the *dhāma's* merciful nature and the potency of the devotional services you engage us in, these modes quickly dissipate.

*mām ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatīyātān brahma-bhūyāya kalpate*

(Bg. 14.26)

As you know, every day I pray to you to become qualified to act and speak in an empowered way to encourage others in devotional service. This being your movement's international headquarters and because so many devotees come here, there are so many opportunities to preach. In years past I would try to arrange as many classes and nectar-sharing times as possible. This year I simply expressed to you, Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja, and Śrī Narasimhadeva my yearning

to be fit and empowered to repeat your words of transcendental knowledge. By your grace I've gotten more chances for preaching and counseling than ever before. The happiness of being your instrument to inspire others is a joy beyond all others.

yaṁ labdhvā cāparam lābham manyate nādhikam tataḥ

(Bg. 6.22)

When you see a disciple desire to embrace your mood of compassion and kindness and to the best of their ability preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I know you are very pleased. It is your pleasure that is the cause of our tasting such enlivenment in preaching. Such activities and experiences, if selflessly motivated, are not of this world.

mahātmānas tu mām pārtha daivīm prakṛtim āśritāḥ

(Bg. 9.13)

Even though I am anything but a *mahātmā* and have very little realization, I know you are Gaurāṅga's dear eternal associate, and acting as your servants, you are bringing us into your world of eternal blissful service.

With the pure association of some of your disciples and followers here, many times a day I'm reminding myself that I'm lower and more insignificant than all your other devotees, that they are more respectable than I, and are worthy of service. For one so fallen and arrogant as myself, it takes a long time for the realization and practical application of Lord Caitanya's instruction:

*tṛṇād api sunīcena tarora iva sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena kīrtaniyaḥ sadā hariḥ*

I beg for your gift of this realization because then I can begin to purely serve the holy names. I know everything is in, and comes from pure *sevā* to the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. By my own endeavors and strength I can only fall short, but you have Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa bound up by your pure love and service, and you can give Their service to anyone you desire.

*yogyatā-vicāre, kichu nāhi pāi,
tomāra karuṇā-sāra
karuṇā nā hoile, kāndiyā kāndiyā,
prāṇa nā rākhibo āra*

(*Gurudeva*, verse 4)

I repeatedly beg for your tolerance, patience and forgiveness for my many, many offenses. Trying my best to use my words, thoughts, and actions in your service I am simply waiting for your mercy.

Eternally yours to do with as you see fit.

Your aspiring servant,

Rājendra-nandana Dāsa

Rāmanātha-sukha Dāsa

*om apavitraḥ pavitro vā sarvāvasthām gato 'pi vā
yaḥ smaret puṇḍarikākṣarṁ sa bāhyābhyantaraḥ śuciḥ*

“Whether one is unpurified or purified or has even passed through all conditions and stages of life, if one remembers the Supreme Lord, who is beautified by lotus eyes, he becomes purified both outwardly and inwardly.”
(*Garuḍa Purāṇa*)

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

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāñī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

*om bhur bhuvaḥ svaḥ tat savitur vareṇyam
bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt*

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I begin my offering this year with a prayer of purification:

*om apavitraḥ pavitro vā sarvāvasthām gato 'pi vā
yaḥ smaret puṇḍarikākṣarṁ sa bāhyābhyantaraḥ śuciḥ*

Even if one is impure, if they can somehow or other remember the lotus-eyed Lord they become purified both inwardly and outwardly. If not for this *mantra*, I do not feel I could begin to write about your glories as I am a very impure disciple whose stone-like heart is still filled with material desire. I have no good qualifications, my faults are many.

That is why I also include the *brahma-gāyatrī-mantra* to start my offering...

*om bhur bhuvaḥ svaḥ tat savitur vareṇyam
bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yo naḥ pracodayāt*

I chant Gāyatrī for purity and clarity of thought. Śrīmatī Gāyatrī Devī and

Sarasvatī Devī are the same energetic expansion of *guru-tattva* as manifest through Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. I think of you, my guru, when I chant my Gāyatrī as you most perfectly represent the purity and clarity of Śrīmatī Rādhikā-Sarasvatī Devī as *guru*. She embodies the highest truth... the “truth” of *guru-tattva*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have been so very merciful to this fallen soul by having me again engaged in your preaching mission. I am now cooking *prasādam* at the *Govinda’s* restaurant in Stockholm (Sweden). This service is very important for me as it is connecting me in a very meaningful way to you and your ISKCON society. I know that perhaps 95% of my godbrothers and godsisters are no longer engaged in ISKCON. This is very painful for me and I too have at times been alienated from the organization you started. Yet I find regardless of my circumstances, in or out of ISKCON, I can never give up the practices of *sādhana-bhakti*. By your mercy I have become infected with a desire to always serve your many devotees and followers who are sincerely engaged in your ISKCON *saṅkīrtana* mission. If I can render some service and assist them, then only will my life have any meaning.

But I admit it has not been easy. I sometimes hear bogus propaganda about what it means to be a *guru*. The topic of *guru-tattva* has been a subject that has increasingly been part of my meditation. One of my realizations is that *Śrī Gurvaṣṭakam* by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura contains the essence of understanding *guru-tattva*. This is why you wanted your disciples to chant these eight beautiful prayers every day at *maṅgala-ārati* in order that we can go deeper and deeper in our realizations of the truth of *guru*. As long as the devotees follow your formula for the morning program, all will be auspicious, all will be *maṅgala*. Realizations flood the devotees’ consciousness during the *brahma-muhūrta*, the time of day most conducive for spiritual realization. This continues to be my experience as I daily perform *maṅgala-ārati* and chant to my Deities Śrī Śrī Gopīśvara and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara. The fundamentals of Kṛṣṇa consciousness worked when you were with us, they work now, and in the future these fundamentals of advancement will still need to be understood and followed.

Aspiring to become a Prabhupādānuga automatically means aspiring to become a Rūpānuga devotee. As you say in the preface of *The Nectar of Instruction*, “The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is conducted under the supervision of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.” Following in your footsteps will lead the disciple to full Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa consciousness as exemplified by Rūpa Gosvāmī. But imitating you will have the exact opposite effect and destroy the *bhakti-latā-bīja*. Imitation of you is a kind of Māyāvāda philosophical contamination

that entered into your ISKCON society immediately after you departed for the spiritual world in 1977. The “gurus” at that time wanted to become you in the same way that Māyāvādīs want to become Kṛṣṇa. This is *nirviśeṣa* philosophy, impersonalism filled with malice and envy. The very philosophy you came to destroy nearly destroyed your mission. There was a period of ten years that followed your passing when many of your dedicated disciples left ISKCON because of this Māyāvāda influence. Now in 2011, there seems to be a general understanding of those earlier mistakes and the gurus in ISKCON are much more careful to follow in your footsteps and not imitate you. But *guru-tattva* remains a mystery, especially when considering how *guru-tattva* manifests through Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Few devotees dare talk on this esoteric topic.

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, there is one direct instruction you gave me in February 1975 at the Atlanta temple that relates to my understanding of *guru-tattva*. It was then by your grace, the grace of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and the grace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu that I received brahminical initiation. After the fire sacrifice performed by Satsvarūpa Mahārāja, the six of us who were receiving *brāhmaṇa* initiation were taken to your personal quarters to be instructed on the chanting of the Gāyatrī mantra. I entered your room, offered my obeisances, and sat down next to you. No one else was there, just you and my fallen self. You very calmly and patiently showed me how to chant on my fingers and then we chanted together the entire seven lines of Gāyatrī. I remember feeling how humble and dignified you were to be teaching one by one your newly initiated *brāhmaṇas* on the importance of Gāyatrī. Since those were the only direct instructions I ever received from you, I have meditated on the meaning of Gāyatrī ever since. It is my personal conviction that the complete *guru-tattva* manifests in the sound vibration of the Gāyatrī mantra. Another realization is that Gāyatrī Devī as Sarasvatī Devī embodies the highest truth. She enlightened Lord Brahmā at the beginning of creation and she will enlighten anyone today or in the future who approaches her with devotion. In other words, the full *guru-tattva* is present within the Gāyatrī mantra. But chanting the Gāyatrī mantra successfully is not so simple; we must be purified by our daily *sādhana* in order to fully receive the benefits of Śrīmatī Gāyatrī-Sarasvatī Devī.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, by Your Divine Grace I am doing another service at the Hare Krishna Center in Stockholm that also relates to understanding *guru-tattva*. I have re-established and taken responsibility for a weekly *tulasī-pūjā* before the regular Sunday Feast program. This is important since the worship of Tulasī Mahārāṇī had been conspicuous by its absence for over twenty-five

years at the Hare Krishna Center. Now I can see the congregational devotees chanting and dancing to Tulasī Devī with enthusiasm, trying to understand her mercy more and more. The practice and experience of worshiping Tulasī Mahārāṇī is essential for any devotee, young or old. She embodies the highest truth... the “truth” of *guru-tattva*. As Bhakti Devī she will guide and protect her devotees in all aspects of devotional service, *vaidhī* as well as *rāgānuga-bhakti*. It is not, as some devotees falsely proclaim, that you did not teach your disciples anything about *rāgānuga-bhakti*. If we are receptive to Tulasī Devī’s mystical voice, *rāgānuga-bhakti* is taught to us every time we sing her prayers and do *ārati* for her. The blessings of *tulasī-pūjā* are there for all devotees for all time.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this auspicious day of your appearance I pray that you please continue to allow me the privilege of devotional service. Please allow me to continue serving your many sincere devotees and followers. Please help me understand what it means to be a Prabhupādānuga. Please help me see you when I offer *tulasī-pūjā*. Please reveal yourself when I chant my Gāyatrī mantras and *Śrī Gurvaṣṭakam*. And please, please, never kick this fallen servant of yours from the protection of your glorious lotus feet. That would be much too painful to bear... your mercy is all that I am made of.

Your fallen and foolish disciple,

Rāmanātha-sukha Dāsa
(Stockholm, Sweden)

Tamohara Dāsa

“T’was then when the Hurdy Gurdy man came singing songs of love
T’was then when the Hurdy Gurdy man came singing songs...”
T’was then when Śrīla Prabhupāda was sent to us from above,
Lord Nityānanda’s grace, down, for us, from above.
Down for us in all power and humility,
Then when he came singing us songs of a splendid reality.
We soon were rising, singing, sweeping, weeping
His delivering voice ringing above,
“*Jīva jāgo!*”
Sighing, smiling, crying, roaring,
Servants now of a true devotee’s love.
Chanting, cooking, cleaning, reading
Gāyatri, *prasād*, mid-morning rounds
Done sometimes on the nod!
But not often, and less often later...
Once we got an inkling of what really matters.

Caitanya-maṅgala, circa 1500 A.D. by Śrīla Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura Gosvāmī, a contemporary and Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava historian/biographer of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu *bole*:

*yadi pāpī chāḍi dharmā dūre deśe yāya
mora senāpati-bhakta yāibe tathāya*

“If some sinful people escape (His *saṅkīrtana* movement) and giving up religious principles go to far off countries, then My *senāpati-bhakta* (great general amongst the devotees), will come at that time to give them Kṛṣṇa consciousness.”

“The temple is a place not for eating and sleeping, but as a base from which we send out our soldiers to fight with *māyā*.” (Śrīla Prabhupāda’s letter, 3/8/1973)

“Down through all eternity, the crying of humanity...”

“Oh! Help them, Lord Kṛṣṇa! Please help us, Śrīla Prabhupāda!”

“Books!” he emphasized, the transcendental bombs;

To blast them to kingdom come, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Blast them well, our Prabhupāda!
 Pull us up from hell, make us come alive!
 The competition cooperation
 Lead us to; the liberation of the nations!
 Parking lots, city streets, malls, wherever people gather,
 To eat, to cross the street, door to door, office to office,
 Whatever street you're on doesn't matter.
 Bang the Kṛṣṇa gong!
 Airports, sneakers on cold concrete,
 Sagging shoulder,
 The heavy book bag holder.
 Late night *prasād*
 A young life gladly striven
 In the service of God.
 Actually it was often good fun to meet the people of the world.
 Banners unfurled,
Śāstra held affectionately in hand
 Distributing books like walking hot sand
 At the beach, on fire!
 And when you found some time to talk,
 Empowered now by grace,
 You sure knew how to preach!
 NOTHING EVER got me "higher,"
 Faster, farther, better, than
Saṅkīrtana!

Śrīla Prabhupāda, Los Angeles, December 9, 1973: "(...) Soul is immortal. Soul is eternal. These things are described in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. In the beginning, this is the beginning lesson: *dehino 'smin yathā dehe kaumāram* (Bg. 2.13). This is the beginning of spiritual understanding."

What have you done, Śrīla Prabhupāda, on the grand scale of humanity? How successful has been the preaching in the mind of the common Western "modern" man? Beyond the worldwide movement and millions of devotees, and millions more to come, I mean?

Source: Newsweek.com

- fully 25 percent according to a 2008 Harris poll, say they accept the concept of transmigration of the soul,
- 2008 Pew Forum survey, 65 percent of us believe that "many religions can lead to eternal life,"

– 37 percent of even white evangelical Christians believe that other paths can also lead to God!

– 30 percent of Americans call themselves “spiritual, not religious,” according to a 2009 Newsweek poll, up from 24 percent in 2005,

– Stephen Prothero, Professor of Religion at Boston University, has framed the American propensity for “religion” as “very much in the spirit of Hinduism.” So agnostic are we about the ultimate fates of our bodies that we’re burning them like Hindus after death... agrees Diana Eck, Professor of Comparative Religion at Harvard. So let us all say “Om.”

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Have thus liberated hundreds of millions of sleeping persons
Into life re-awakening knowledge of their eternal deathless spiritual body.
Decimating the material fraud,
Revealing their lies with superlative reason
Worldwide, Kṛṣṇa was an obscure name,
The “eighth incarnation of Viṣṇu.”
But it is you, Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Who manifest Lord Kṛṣṇa’s fame so well.
Now His name is known everywhere,
Every town and village!
Everywhere in India, “Oh yes! They are knowing it very well,”
Who is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and even who is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu!
Now here we are, many years later
Yet it is eternity
And we are still here with you
And we feel and know you are also with us
And for this, we are eternally grateful.
We, your tried and true soldiers,
Are at your service, our servant of God,
Great General and Eternal Commander A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla
Prabhupāda.

Tamohara Dāsa Vānaprastha

Tattvavit Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my obeisances at your lotus feet, on this hundred-and-fifteenth anniversary of your transcendental birth.

You are the subject of a forthcoming book: *The Living Theology of Kṛṣṇa Bhakti*. Written for scholars, this was Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami's doctoral dissertation. It discusses your theological contributions. It is his last contribution, and Oxford University Press in New York will publish it, probably in 2012. Recently, I edited it under Garuḍa Prabhu's supervision.

Goswami presents you as a theologian in the traditional system preferred by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura:

*bhagavān—'sambandha', bhakti—'abhidheya' haya
prema—'prayojana', vede tina-vastu kaya*

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the central point of all relationships, acting in devotional service to Him is one's real occupation, and the attainment of love of Godhead is the ultimate goal of life. These three subjects are described in Vedic literature." (Cc. Madhya 6.178)

Thus the main chapters are "Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead: *Sambandha*" and "Bhakti—Devotional Service: *Abhidheya*." The author's accidental demise, in 2002, precluded him from writing the last chapter. So Garuḍa writes about *prema* and *prayojana* in the afterword, and he also introduces the book.

Theology and philosophy stand in a relation to the history of ideas in its cultural and social setting. This interplay demands, according to Goswami, that the theology you "crafted is contextualized in the light of its contemporary setting." Of course, your theology "is supposed to be the normative system of thought crafted some five centuries earlier by Caitanya's *gosvāmin* followers." This was the scholarly consensus and also your own opinion, but Goswami dares to disagree. Why?

He makes for you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, "no maverick claim of doctrinal inventiveness. Vedānta traditions eschew the notion of theological originality. Nevertheless, that the basic Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava system of thought enshrined five centuries ago can still be spoken of as normative is to be credited not only to the resilient craft of its original chief architects but to their descendants as

resourceful preservationists. And preservation is rarely a passive receptivity. Appropriation within a commentarial tradition ‘is a creative retaining and shaping of a content that is made one’s own,’” writes Eliot Deutsch in *Interpreting Across Boundaries*. In your case, engaging “the text as part of a larger project of cultural transmission is to mine its rich repository of customs, values, and so on, so that it may now produce a living theology in the West and around the world.”

Once, in Vṛndāvana, in 1977, Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami read aloud to you a few paragraphs I had written about you. (The reading is in the Vedabase.) I had written an article about you for the parents of devotees. It appeared in the newsletter for parents published that summer by the temple in Manhattan, and you received a copy. The newsletter invited parents to the Ratha-yātrā parade, before which they would eat lunch and hear Harvey Cox—one of the preeminent theologians in the United States, a professor at the Harvard Divinity School—address them about the raging cult controversy.

We—your disciples—were most fortunate to be with you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the foremost transmitter of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* to the Western world. Thank you for the opportunity to follow and present your teachings. Goswami’s book tells scholars and religionists about the “theological” Prabhupāda on their own terms, in his spunky scholarly voice.

Your servant,

Tattvavit Dāsa

Yādavendra Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet on your Vyāsa-pūjā day, 2011.

Book distribution is my ultimate shelter because you are rating book distribution as such a high grade preaching activity. When I distribute books I know that, as a preacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I am not at all wasting my time. I know I am getting the highest return in all respects on my investment of time and energy. Book distribution literally benefits everyone, all around and reaches furthest. Actually there is no better activity and occupation than to distribute your well presented books AND those of your talented and faithful disciples.

In his book *Śuddha-bhakti-cintāmaṇi*, His Holiness Śivarāma Swami directs the attention of the reader to a very excellent passage of your *Nectar of Devotion* which I would like to quote on the occasion:

(...) The symptoms of ecstatic love appear in different forms and degrees. If one's heart is highly elevated, grave and magnanimous, or if one's heart is rough and crude, different symptoms of ecstatic love will appear, influenced by the condition of the heart. Actually, people cannot generally understand such different qualities of mentality, but when one's heart is very soft or gentle, these symptoms become very easily visible, and one can understand them very clearly. The heart of one who is highly elevated and grave is compared to gold. If one's heart is very soft and gentle, his heart is compared to a cotton swab. When there is an ecstatic sensation within the mind, the golden heart or grave heart is not agitated, but the soft heart immediately becomes agitated.

To offer another example, a grave, magnanimous heart is compared to a great city, and a soft heart to an insignificant cottage. There may be many lights, or even great elephants in the big city, but no one will take particular notice of them. But when such lights or elephants are seen near a small cottage, everyone can distinctly point them out.

A hard heart is compared to a lightning bolt, to gold and to shellac. The lightning bolt is very strong and never becomes soft. Similarly, the hearts of those who are engaged in severe austerities and penances do not become very easily softened. The golden heart becomes melted at high temperature, as in ecstatic love. And the shellac heart is very easily melted in slight temperature.

A soft heart is compared to honey, to butter and to nectar. And

the condition of the mind is compared to sunshine. As honey and butter become melted even in slight sunshine, soft hearted persons become easily melted. Nectar, however, is by its nature always liquid. And the hearts of those who are in pure ecstatic love with Kṛṣṇa are by nature always liquified, just like nectar.

A pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa is always specifically qualified with nectarean qualifications and sometimes with the qualifications of butter and honey. On the whole, the heart in any of the different conditions mentioned above can be melted under certain circumstances, just as a hard diamond is sometimes melted by a combination of certain chemicals. In the *Dāna-keli-kaumudī* it is stated, “When love develops in the heart of a devotee, he cannot check the transformation of his sentiments. His heart is just like the ocean at the rising of the moon, when the ebb tide cannot be checked: immediately there must be movement of high waves.” Although in its natural state the ocean is always grave and unfathomable, when the moon rises, nothing can check the ocean’s agitation. Similarly, those who are pure devotees cannot on any account check the movement of their feelings within. (*Nectar of Devotion*, chapter 31, Additional Symptoms)

I am indebted to His Holiness Śivarāma Swami for the hint and thank him very much for it.

As far as letters are concerned, I received only one single letter from Your Divine Grace dated 2nd May 1977, through the agency of His Holiness Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja, who was relaying your own words. I have laminated it and stuck it on the wall. The most important instruction contained therein is that in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, there is no difference between study and management. You also made the point that there is so much management to look to. And how true that statement is!

At that time, I was temple commander in Vṛndāvana and in my own letter I had complained that I wanted to avoid the commotion, retire from management and that I wanted to exclusively study your books.

More and more I realize and appreciate this oneness of management and study and I thank you for vibrating all these liberating mantras and words of Kṛṣṇa conscious wisdom for our eternal benefit. Due to his vast experience in and understanding of human psychology, the expert spiritual master vibrates exactly what the foolish disciple needs to hear and thus breaks down the obstacles on his path of advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I remember how, on a morning walk, you closed a dripping tap. Besides being touched by your lotus hand this tap had nothing to do with the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. But despite your busy schedule, you took the

trouble to tighten it and stop the waste. We may take inspiration from your every single word and action because your intelligence is perfect and you are absolutely in control of your senses. This is due to your full surrender to the Supreme Personality of Godhead's plan.

This is directly confirmed in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (2.58):

“One who is able to withdraw his senses from sense objects, as the tortoise draws its limbs within the shell, is firmly fixed in perfect consciousness.”

It is conversely confirmed in verse 2.66:

“One who is not connected with the Supreme (in Kṛṣṇa consciousness) can have neither transcendental intelligence nor a steady mind, without which there is no possibility of peace. And how can there be any happiness without peace?”

You showcase the highest quality of human being.

Because you observe Krishna everywhere your vision is one. Your vision is not departmented. You do not think this is my India and this is your America. You see one world in need of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In devotional service, I have a tendency to run myself to the ground, and when I am down I stay down for a little while. Or in other words, I have a tendency to buckle under the heaviness of devotional service. This is unwanted and represents a disturbance. Better balance myself and find the long distance, enduring pace and suitable environment. Whatever the case may be, I therefore pray:

“O Śrīla Prabhupāda, eternal master, please grant me the wish to always and uninterruptedly remain Kṛṣṇa consciously very productive under the shelter of your holy lotus feet.”

Your aspiring servant,

Yādavendra Dāsa
(Brisbane, Australia)

Sukhāvahā Devī Dāśī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I bow my head with reverence and gratitude at your lotus feet. How did I receive such a boon to have you as my spiritual master? What great fortune to be a part of the society you created that sprouted from the seed of *bhakti* growing in your heart.

In reflecting how to glorify you this year I thought about some of the things that you have taught me most recently. I looked at the embellishment “ŚRĪLA” and here is what I saw:

When I looked at the ‘S’ I immediately thought of two qualities you imbibe: Simple and Straightforward. Your simplicity showed up as a fearless and pure openness, with nothing to hide—a beaming smile coming from your heart.

I looked at the ‘R’ and immediately thought of Respect. Your humility had you respecting everyone alike. Even when you chastised devotees it was out of the deepest respect for their soul. You were calling our souls out of sleeping ignorance—please wake up—come to consciousness and see the beautiful Kṛṣṇa. This respectful consciousness of honoring everyone: man, woman and child, as well as animals and insects, pervaded all your exchanges.

Looking at the letter ‘I’, Integrity immediately came to my mind. Yours is an introspective integrity that clearly matches your straightforwardness, always being responsible and transparent, paying attention to all details in business as well as your personal exchanges. Your heartfelt service attitude was always perfectly aligned and in integrity with Kṛṣṇa’s will.

The ‘L’ could stand for nothing but Love. Who would sacrifice their own life to come to a foreign place with no money? Only the deepest love could motivate that heart. Thank you for your love, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Your love was always empowering, assisting each devotee as a spirit soul to open their heart and blossom into the beautiful servant they were destined to be.

And the ‘A’, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is for Appreciation—you always appreciated even the smallest attempts at Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Your genuine gratitude gave us hope and enthused us in the midst of austere conditions. Your appreciation of our tiny services inspired us to continue on the path of *bhakti* no matter how difficult.

These are only a few of the qualities that you have shown us through your example: Simplicity, Respect, Integrity, Love, and Appreciation. I pray to follow in your footsteps and be an instrument of your will. Please continue to teach me your ways, as I practice integrating these qualities in my day-to-day life.

Gratefully begging to remain the servant of your servants,

Sukhāvahā Devī Dāsī

Tridaṇḍī Dāsa

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmine
namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my most humble and respectful obeisances at your divine lotus feet.

*krte yad dhyāyato viṣṇum tretāyān yajato makhaiḥ
dvāpare paricaryāyām kalau tad dhari-kīrtanāt*

(SB 12.3.52)

“The whole process of human civilization should be to acquire love of God. Our love is now distributed in so many things. And that is misdistributed. The whole thing was to be targeted to the Supreme Lord. I was to love God, but instead of loving God, my love is distributed in so many things. And that is a misdirected civilization.”

Beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda.

You are the very life of your great spiritual movement, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness—ISKCON.

Extraordinarily empowered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His intimate associates, you have spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness so far and so wide to literally light up the deep night of Kali-yuga and actually dispel the dark shadows of ignorance.

How would it be possible for anyone not to see it?

Your teaching and instructions, alive and vibrant in your books and in the lives of your faithful followers, are resounding in every nook and corner of the world affecting the consciousness of zillions of conditioned souls and thus paving their way back home back to Godhead.

Who else, if not Your Divine Grace, has de facto ignited in this era such a great “consciousness revolution” that it is quickly consuming the dark dangerous trapping forest of this material existence like a wildfire.

You are incomparable.

Anyone, gifted with genuine sincerity, has to acknowledge this obvious truth.

It is evident that Your Divine Grace has so much pure love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His intimate associates, that you have attracted the Supreme Attractive.

This very word, “love,” is so much abused in this world that its real significance is now actually lost. Everyone wants to love and to be loved but no one really knows how to.

Our whole love propensity is misdirected.

Śrīla Prabhupāda:

“How it is misdirected? Suppose if I do not love God, if I love my wife, my children, my countrymen, what is the wrong there? Oh, there is great wrong. That you do not know. That is most unscientific. Without loving God, if I want to love my wife, that love is not perfect. Therefore so-called love is disrupted by divorce and so many things because that is not perfect love. We do not know what is perfect love and how to conduct it. That is the defect of our civilization. Which we are accepting as love, that is simply a desire for sense gratification. That is not love. Love is different thing. So because... Why the love is defective in the material world? Because it is not properly discharged. We have to understand that thing.

How it is not properly discharged? Just like you love your body. Nobody can deny. Everyone loves his body. All right, what do you want to do? I want to maintain my body nicely. Then what is the means of maintaining your body very nicely? Now, I have to take nice ‘vitaminous’ foodstuff and supply to the stomach, and then there is assimilation, secretion of different blood or different, I mean to say, humor and so on. The physiological condition is going on. The main position is that you have to give proper foodstuff to this body.

Now, how to supply the foodstuff to the body? The main source of supplying is this mouth. Now we have got several holes in this body, especially nine holes, big holes. Just like these two eyes, they are holes. The ears, they are holes. The mouth is one hole. And the evacuating process is another hole. This navel is another hole. There are nine holes in this body. Now, if somebody says that “I have to put foodstuff within the body...” Just like in medical treatment, sometimes, when one cannot take foodstuff from the mouth, foodstuff is injected from the rectum or somewhere else artificially. But that is not the system of supplying the foodstuff. The real process of supplying the foodstuff is through the mouth. If somebody says, “Oh, there are nine holes. You can put the foodstuff any hole,” no, that will not do. You have to supply the foodstuff through the mouth.

Similarly, if you have to love, you have to love through God. Otherwise, love is not possible. That is all artificial love. Just like supplying

foodstuff through the rectum is most artificial and troublesome thing, similarly, without loving God, if I want to love anybody, that is a false manifestation.”

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, as Your Divine Grace has several times mentioned, your ISKCON movement, populated by many sincere souls, is the greatest boon to humanity at large and its presence in this world is indisputably the most needed. You have said that it is based on love and trust and these words “love and trust,” previously misunderstood by most of us, have now acquired a whole new meaning. For ISKCON, love and trust is necessary as food is necessary to maintain the body.

But who can deny that real love and trust amongst us can only exist if we properly direct our love and trust toward you, Śrīla Prabhupāda?

Most beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda, if due to some undeserved mercy we have been able to awaken our real love for you, we should please you by inspiring whoever we meet to direct his loving propensity toward Your Divine Grace and thus become part of your great plan meant to deliver pure love of Kṛṣṇa to the whole world.

Just like if we want to feed the body we have to do it through the mouth, similarly, if we (all of us) want to love ISKCON, or anybody in ISKCON or anyone in general, we have to love through you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, or else love for us is not possible. Otherwise it would only be artificial love. Just like supplying foodstuff through the wrong hole would be a most artificial and troublesome thing. A false manifestation.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, this ISKCON movement rests on you like pearls on a string. Please let all of your pearl-like devotees never forget that with your presence holding all of them together, this ISKCON will be like a wonderful pearl necklace pleasantly adorning Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s form, but also that without your constant company every thing and every one of us will be scattered and lost thus losing its significance.

Dear Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, You are the Supreme Lords and anyone’s power of remembrance is under Your control. We humbly beg You to please never let us forget Oṃ Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṃsa Parivrājakācārya Aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda, His Divine Grace’s instructions and pastimes. Life after life.

Aspiring to be your eternal servant,

Tridaṇḍī Dāsa
(Italy)

Ādikartā Dāsa

A REAL POET LIKE KARṆAPŪRA

can make the head spin and the heart to swoon
to read his words is a transcendental boon
especially his description of the *rāsa* night's full moon
I'm no poet I'd be the first to admit
I can only juggle words so that they fit
So please accept this poem from a dry old man
I hope it has a tiny taste after forty years of *saṅkīrtan*
Śrīla Viśvanātha has said *sākṣād dharitvena*
you are to be worshipped as the divine dictator.
Matsya saved the *Vedas* when the world was all water
You saved them too when it was flooded with sin
It is said that Varuṇa's daughters were bewildered with love
and got the chance to be *gopīs* in Kṛṣṇa's abode above
whether *gopīs*, or *gopas*, trees or birds,
you've given us a place that the wise soul prefers
Kūrma was a pivot on which the ocean was churned
First came the poison, and then the nectar was earned
you are the basis of all that we do
if we keep churning the heart, the nectar will flow
our eternal forms will soon manifest
when these mortal frames are laid to rest

Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva protected His saintly little son
and foiled Hiraṇyakaśipu's plan to see the cows and *brāhmaṇas* done
you established farms to protect mother cow
and taught us to be *brāhmaṇas* that stick to their vow
Varāha's form was that of a boar
who picked up the Earth when it could take no more
in its darkest hour you did just the same
you plucked us from the dirt of Kali's domain

Paraśurāma was a very fierce form of the Lord
who created lakes of blood when he wielded his sword
you cut to pieces the scientists' claim
that life came from matter, a thought insane

Their blood was poisoned by atheistic doubts
but you gave them the necessary clout
and sprinkled their blood all about
to be eaten by those crows who are plagued by doubt

Lord Rāma was an ideal monarch
who taught the importance of *eka-patnī-vrata*
you also taught us to be true to our vows
society is doomed in a world that divorce allows
He engaged monkeys in subduing the ten-headed one
and even spiders to help build that bridge
you accepted anyone to help you defeat the forces of sin
following your words alone gives us the will to win
Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma charm us with Their ways
by hearing of Them our hearts are drawn
your pastimes too, have the same effect
for by hearing about you respect is born
Kṛṣṇa also performed inconceivable feats
and seeing your life is where faith and reason meets
As Lord Buddha personified respect to all creatures
your respect for life was a most endearing feature
when a tiny little insect was flapping in your room
you had it removed to escape its doom
Kalki is ferocious at the end of Kali-yuga
your instructions also can be similarly viewed
your divine sword of knowledge knows no defeat
for those bowed humbly at your lotus feet

Finally there is just one more incarnation
your comparison to Him will cause no dissention
Gaurāṅga is the name, and giving love His game
even to animals that could only roar and bark
the divine nectar of love he surely did impart
So to us animals that with love you have infused
we offer our hearts for you only to be used
Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta's adage was "with love let us be paid"
so let the world's byways similarly be paved
with lovers of Śrīla Prabhupāda's divine ways
Of course you never left

for one with proper vision is never bereft
for the medicine for all of man's ills
is to take the nectar of your infallible pills
and to serve you with love for all you have done
and try with heart and soul to be a worthy son

Ādikartā Dāsa

Ambarīṣa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my fallen obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to your spiritual mission and loving service to Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga.

It is 5 a.m.

I am chanting *japa* in my father-in-law's room at the hospice where he lies dying of kidney failure, 81 years old. Your sweet voice is singing the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* in the familiar tune on a continuous loop, day and night. *Pavitra* garlands worn by Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva, surround my father-in-law's head which is decorated with *tilaka*; the bed is strewn with flowers from the Deities in Alachua. Ganges water is sprinkled around his dying body, and Nṛsiṃha oil is rubbed on his forehead.

Devotees come and go at all hours of the day and night, chanting, bringing *prasāda* for the family, holding my father-in-law's hand, and giving him the loving attention he deserves. Ramaṇya Prabhu, the *pūjārī* from the temple, reads the *Bhagavad-gītā* and is prepared to carry out whatever ceremony is needed during the transition. He has been there for many hours and days.

During my father-in-law's long illness and deterioration, my wife Svāhā would read your *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and feed him *prasāda* while devotees visited frequently. His appreciation of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, devotees, and you, grew on a daily basis. Now, by your unimaginable mercy, love of his family, and compassion of your disciples, he is receiving a send-off I can only hope for.

Fast forward five days.

Dhruba Bhattacharyya has passed away. He lies peacefully amongst garlands and *tulasī* beads. A picture of Śrīla Prabhupāda is on his chest, *tulasī* leaves are between his lips, and *tilaka* is on his forehead. His body will be prepared by Ramaṇya Prabhu. We will feed the Vaiṣṇavas, and his *śrāddha* ceremony will take place at the temple. Everything is auspicious and blessed.

The Gainesville funeral home, which has seen many devotees and family members pass through, gives us the space and time to carry out a Kṛṣṇa conscious ceremony before cremation. The family members say their final farewell, and although very sad, they are at the same time satisfied that all that can be done has been done for his spiritual well-being. How this has happened is a testament to your sacrifice, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

There are countless stories like this from devotees around the world. Parents, even those who were inimical towards you and Hare Kṛṣṇa, have been shown love and mercy by the Supreme Lord in their final days. They

have started or advanced on their spiritual journey due to Your Divine Grace.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have taught us how to live and you have taught us how to die. While much of the world goes forward in ignorance of their precarious position, you have asked us to face the reality of this temporary place of suffering, and our own mortality. We know there is a better place with a better Master. We have become mature and responsible for our own lives and the loved ones around us. When they are ready, we are there to teach according to your instruction.

By your books and words, the whole world can be delivered if they become willing. Sometimes it is only the face of death which creates this willingness. Even then your mercy is available and actively seeking engagement. Your dynamic and living preaching is a force which is ever increasing. Your fame is being spread all over the three worlds every day.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for flooding the world with the unlimited love of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The inundation continues to overwhelm even those who are merely appreciative, peripherally engaged or casually interested. Like the sunshine, your light reaches into the dark recesses of this material world, freely available to even those who are blind.

Your magnanimity is eclipsed only by your love and compassion as ambassador of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi in the Western world, and founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Please keep this unqualified and struggling disciple in your loving service eternally. May I someday be worthy of the affection you have shown to all of us. Please keep me willing and open to your mercy so that I may hopefully also pass from this world surrounded by your love.

Ambarīṣa Dāsa

Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

All glories to you on your most auspicious appearance day and on every day. You appeared just after Lord Kṛṣṇa, when all the devotees celebrate past midnight into your appearance day. Thus your appearance is the auspicious fruit of the most famous and celebrated appearance of our sweet Lord Kṛṣṇa.

It's been thirty-four years since you left us physically, but you are still with us spiritually. You always will be, just as Kṛṣṇa is always present when we think of Him, serve Him, and chant His holy names.

You are still the most popular, most quoted guru in the world, and will be for the duration of this Golden Age of Lord Caitanya. As you said, your books are your highest ecstasies and they are enlightening fortunate souls all over the world. You told us that if we read your books and cooperate with each other, everything would go on nicely after your departure to Kṛṣṇaloka.

At your Utah Vedic style temple run by Cāru Prabhu and Vaibhavī Devī, the Holi Festival of Colors was held with over 50,000 people attending, many for the first time. They were very fortunate to hear the holy names constantly on three stages all weekend long. They were dancing and chanting blissfully, so much so that it was contagious. I know this pleases you and the Lord. And to think this all started with you doing *kīrtana* near that fortunate tree in Tompkins Square Park in New York, which you called the most important city in the world. That's why you started your worldwide mission to save the world there. It is said that if you can make it there, you can make it anywhere—and you did, spreading love of God everywhere around the world.

With the help of modern technology and the Internet, your glories are being spread all over the world. Now more and more devotees are taking shelter of you and devoting their lives to Kṛṣṇa. More and more are making Vyāsa-pūjā offerings to you. I'm grateful to all who are involved in making this great service to you available to us. Glorifying you pleases Kṛṣṇa.

We are so fortunate to have your lectures, letters, conversations, and books to benefit from. They help us perfect our lives and join you in the end. That end is the beginning of real life. Memories of you, as recounted by your disciples, are being spread wider and wider through the Internet and therefore enliven more and more devotees. Your activities are all-attractive because you are a pure servant of our all-attractive Lord.

Your pictures with your amazing smile and effulgence are being shared, and people are amazed at how an 'older man' can be so attractive. It's because you are not an ordinary 'older man' at all: you are always young because you

are 100% Kṛṣṇa conscious and therefore purity personified. By living the Kṛṣṇa conscious lifestyle, you have shown us, as our *ācārya*, how to perfect our lives and be blessed instead of being wasted. You never wasted anything because everything, especially our lives, belongs to Kṛṣṇa.

You set out to save the world at a ripe old age, when most people are already retired. Your most vigorous spreading of love of God, traveling practically non-stop around the world, began late but didn't stop until your mission was complete. You amazed us all with your energy and enthusiasm to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness tirelessly.

Even during your last year, you showed your total Kṛṣṇa consciousness and courage that were just amazing. At that time I had the good fortune to serve you in Mumbai, Rishikesh, and Vṛndāvana. You went to Vṛndāvana to leave your body and did so bravely, without fear, totally dependent on Kṛṣṇa.

You fasted for weeks on end, and when Upendra asked you how you could go on without eating, you said: "I am living proof that the soul is not dependent on the body for subsistence; but rather the body is dependent on the soul." I was amazed again. I was amazed again because I (only twenty-three years old at the time) could barely stand by the end of the day after having fasted for Nirjalā Ekādaśī.

I fanned you with the *cāmara* whisk every morning in your garden and in the courtyard of the temple. Although it was hard to fan you for so long, I felt that Kṛṣṇa was giving me the strength to do it because He wants His pure devotee worshipped more than Himself. I was getting too proud though, thinking I was the best *cāmara* fanner around with my fancy motions. One day, as you were chanting with your eyes closed, a fly landed above your lip. I was uncertain about what to do. I tried to get rid of the fly with my finger without touching you, to no avail. That fly was persistent and couldn't be deterred from getting your mercy. Then you opened your eyes and told me, "You are fanning around the world, but you can't get the fly off my face!" My world fell apart. All my fancy motions were a big show, but devotional service is supposed to be practical. Then you told me to give you the *cāmara* and demonstrated how to do it by brushing it right across your face. Shortly thereafter that fly returned to relish the nectar of your lotus lips and I proceeded to swish the *cāmara* across your face. You then charmingly nodded your head in approval. I breathed a sigh of relief.

Although your body was deteriorating rapidly, the *kavirāja* was amazed how you were still holding on for our benefit. You kept translating books throughout the nights and afternoons until the very end. We were holding the dictaphone near your mouth while you were translating.

When a new book came out, you asked us to get your reading glasses, prop you up, and turn up the lights. You pored over the books, which had beautiful pictures and high quality printing, with tears in your eyes. Although the skin was hanging from your arms, you sat up straight pointing towards the sky and talked about Kṛṣṇa consciousness with great energy and enthusiasm. We were amazed by Your Divine Grace again and again and appreciated you more and more.

You wrote in the preface to *Kṛṣṇa, The Supreme Personality of Godhead* that simply by reading it, love of God will fructify. You had us read your books to you in your garden. A devotee asked you why you liked hearing your own books. You replied that Kṛṣṇa wrote the books through you. Even Lord Caitanya liked hearing Kṛṣṇa's pastimes from His intimate disciples. You showed us time and again that Kṛṣṇa is ever fresh.

When Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara Mahārāja came and told you about the scientific program they had just held in Mumbai, you were very pleased and said, "Actually I appeared in this world for two reasons: to establish that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and to defeat the rascal scientists." Before you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, no one was saying that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Before you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the rascal scientists were revered more than God by too many. You took their big bang and evolving monkey theories apart with logic and sometimes, humor. You loved to talk to professors, scientists and world leaders about Kṛṣṇa consciousness and were always the topmost host. Everyone enjoyed your *darśanas* and left your presence with your mercy. Whether they accepted Kṛṣṇa consciousness totally or not, they left with a great appreciation and admiration for you.

Every year more and more devotees are appreciating you more and more. We are realizing the greatness of your sacrifice and that by spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world, you gave the society the greatest contribution possible. You should receive the Nobel Peace Prize for all you've done and are still doing through your books that give the formula for peace.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, this year I have produced a CD called *Supersoul* and I have dedicated it to you. All the songs were inspired by you and came to me by reading your books. There is a song called the *Swami Song* that is about you. I hope you and Kṛṣṇa like it. It is available on the Internet and I sing the songs and *kīrtana* as often as I can. George Harrison said that you were the best musician he had ever heard. That's a great compliment (especially because it's coming from a Beatle) and it's also very true. Living entities all over the world are getting purified by hearing the transcendental sound of your voice. Just recently my good mother, Joan, passed away while hearing

your *bhajan*s, *Śikṣāṣṭakam*, and the prayers to the six Gosvāmīs. We also read the whole *Beyond Birth and Death* to her an hour before her passing. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

You are the guru of gurus and your books are the basis of our teachings, the highest philosophy in the world. Without your books we would have nothing and our lives would be vain.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for all you did and still do. You are still the number one guru. You are the most popular, the most followed, and the most famous guru in this Golden Age of Lord Caitanya.

All glories to you, the *jagad-guru*! All glories to Lords Śrī Nitāi and Gaurāṅga! All glories to Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and all glories to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara!

Hoping this meets you well and happy in Kṛṣṇa consciousness,

Your eternal servant,

Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita Dāsa

Kṣīracora Devī Dāsī

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances on this glorious occasion of your appearance day.

I am so deeply honoured and grateful to have been accepted by you as your disciple, although I have no qualification.

In this past year, I have been blessed with the association of a handful of wonderful devotees, and cannot thank you enough for your hand in allowing me to savour the nectar of their company. I remember you saying that 90% of our advancement was through our association, and I thank you for this priceless gift, despite my multitudes of offenses.

Although in my fallen condition, my conviction is often weak, and my contribution small, please know that in my heart of hearts, my desire is to please you, and to assist you in your mission of serving Lord Caitanya by spreading love of God throughout the world.

I pray that by your divine grace and with your blessing, I may some day come to the position of pure love, and thereby be of some genuine assistance to you in your service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and the world.

With much affection and gratitude, now and always,
Your daughter and aspiring servant,

Kṣīracora Devī Dāsī

Mahā-puṇya Devī Dāsī

ALL GLORIES TO HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPĀDA, OUR BELOVED SPIRITUAL MASTER FOR THE NEXT 10,000 YEARS!

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa having taken refuge at His lotus feet. Our respectful obeisances unto you, O servant of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and spreading it in the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.”

*saṁsāra-dāvānala-liḍha-loka-
trāṇāya kārūṇya ghanāghanatvam
prāptasya kalyāṇa-guṇārṇavasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

“Sir, you have brought the mercy of the Supreme Lord, therefore, we are indebted to you as you have come to liberate us, so we offer you our respectful obeisances.”

When His Divine Grace dances in front of the Supreme Lord, his figure floats and looks like a beautiful bird dancing gently. O beloved Master! Please allow that these conditioned souls aspire to wish to know the beautiful light of knowledge emanating from your lotus sweet lips, that our ungodly daily activities someday get purified because lust, envy, ignorance, greed, and gluttony go along with us everywhere.

I beg you to please pardon this ignorant and insignificant creature who counts on the pristine refuge provided by a small speck of dust from your divine lotus feet.

Only through the constant chanting of the transcendental *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare will our lives be purified, after thousands of years.

You put glorious devotional service into our hands to preach your holy glory and that of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Only with your divine guidance, maybe someday we will get rid of all material attachments and manage to be able to happily meet with you forever in the spiritual world, Kṛṣṇaloka. That is my greatest desire, and while we continue in this material body full of ignorance, allow us to continue preaching your holy words.

*tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Ask questions in a submissive mood and render service. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you, because they have seen the truth.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.34)

With this verse, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is giving us the perfect guide for our spiritual advancement and the self-realized soul to which He refers to is only you, Your Divine Grace, and our mission is to commit ourselves and to always try to follow your steps.

Thank you for allowing this humble creature the opportunity to continue with this wonderful service, even in a small part, so in that way, you feel pleased.

Thank you for coming to this material world and allowing the wonderful opportunity to look at you, admire you, and try to learn to love you and listen to your divine teachings, follow your instructions and learn about some of your transcendental pastimes when you were in Mexico City.

Millions of times, in millions of lives again, no matter how many, I sincerely hope to be trying to preach, sing and praise your holy glory, because you were sent here by Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, to save these souls lost in worldly cares, delivering to us the divine word of God.

Someone who lacks valuable words, wisdom and merits refers to the most exalted personality of all time.

The most insignificant among your sheep,

Mahā-puṇya Devī Dāsī
(Celaya, Guanajuato in Mexico)

Mahākṣa Dāsa

MERCY SHIP

You came into my life from oh so far,
Riding through my mind in Subhadrā's car,
Without a single purpose but to save the world.
Your song has more power than all the missiles they have hurled.
All the holy men came to show the way.
Many people listened to what they had to say.
Some of them insane, some just went to other things,
Not knowing the difference between soldiers and kings.
They wanted to steal my mind, take away my land,
A trade for a philosophy no one can understand.
They prey on people's greed, take advantage of their fear.
They say anything the people want to hear.
Tricks, treachery, cheap words, and smiling nods,
Are needed to convince the ignorant they are gods.
Crime, poverty, death, gods exposed as fools,
Tossed around like ants into giant whirlpools.
But you did not come to advertize your name.
You had no pressing needs to strive for selfish fame.
You have what you are given, and to me you bring,
Matchless Gifts, if I would only dance and sing.
You have gone back to Vṛndāvana, left me all alone,
On these streets of Armageddon, weary to the bone.
Yet you leave your loving lifeline, waiting for my grip.
Through these dreadful waters, you guide the Mercy Ship.

Mahākṣa Dāsa

Paradhyeya Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this glorious day of your appearance, please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to your lotus feet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have saved me from the unimaginable calamity of eternal birth and death in this material world. You have opened my eyes with the torchlight of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and thus you have turned my world upside down so that now I can see the Absolute Truth everywhere I look. Every decision I make is based on only one question: is it favorable for the advancement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness or not? My mind and intelligence are forever bound to the determination to do first what is pleasing to the spiritual master. Some might consider this a slavish mentality, but I consider it to be the path of liberation from slavery to matter.

The spiritual master holds the key to spiritual liberation and the guarantee of a permanent return to the eternal land of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are that special friend of the Supreme Personality of Godhead whom He has given a license to bring back as many souls as you can to play with Him eternally. Because you already have your permanent residence in Goloka Vṛndāvana, you may accommodate as many souls as you like there, and bring them into Kṛṣṇa's pastimes for His pleasure.

Although I am fallen, I am remembering you, my glorious spiritual master, but I do not know if I will pass your rigid test of unalloyed devotion to deserve the supreme reward. I think that since I am so brutish, so dull, so weak of faith, and inclined to procrastination that there is little hope for me. In spite of these defects I am becoming more and more confident in your ever well-wishing glance of mercy upon this fallen soul whose success will be secured by taking shelter under your lotus feet.

Oh glorious spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, may your fame be spread throughout the three worlds!

Your insignificant servant,

Paradhyeya Dāsa

Rāmānanda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet which are shelter for all those seeking relief from the miseries of this material world.

We are a small gathering of devotees on a remote island in this ocean of material existence. Great *ācāryas* like yourself, dear master, and the others in our line along with senior disciples of Your Divine Grace at present can spread the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu with great potency just like bright spotlights shining Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the hearts of the conditioned souls. Neophyte devotees like ourselves may, so to speak, have only enough spiritual power to light up a Christmas tree bulb. Yet despite our insignificance, as long as we are connected to the electric power line of the disciplic succession we remain illuminated and able to make a contribution in some small way.

Our hope is that combined together in time we can shine sufficient light that you may also take note of our sincere endeavor and cast your merciful glance in our direction. Just as Queen Kuntī prays, *hy edhante tava vīkṣitaiḥ*: the Supreme Lord's mere glance certainly causes everything it touches to flourish brilliantly, so also we pray you cast your glance upon us. In this way let us flourish upon the execution of your order and let the whole world be delivered.

Your eternal and most appreciative servant,

Rāmānanda Dāsa
(Hawaii)

Raṅjita Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

All glories to you, servant of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī and preacher of the teachings of Lord Caitanya. You are the embodiment of *bhakti*. Your purity and dedication are cent percent, and this is how you made it look so easy. Within ten years there were over 100 centers worldwide with regular programs. There was massive book distribution, opulent Deity worship, thousands of followers, preaching programs at colleges, *prasādam* distribution, etc. You made it sound so easy—just chant sixteen rounds and follow the four regulative principles. But we see that so many cannot follow. So it is not just an external process of mechanical actions and reactions. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is explained:

ye yathā mām prapadyante tāms tathaiva bhajāmy aham
"As they surrender unto Me, I reward them accordingly." Also:
teṣāṁ satata-yuktānām bhajatām prīti-pūrvakam
dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ taṁ 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."

The real surrender is the love that one has for Kṛṣṇa. Your love for Kṛṣṇa is what made it seem easy. This is often overlooked. The visible manifestation of this love was the hard work required to translate and publish your books, and the management of your ISKCON society. In these endeavors you maintained a strict daily schedule of translating, giving class, preaching to guests, answering your mail, and so on. Your schedule of morning walks, massage and regular meals was also important as an example to us of how to keep the body healthy and active.

As your followers, we try to examine what you have done and how you have done it. While we try to follow in your footsteps, we can forget that our real goal is to develop our love for Kṛṣṇa. The method for achieving this goal is service to you, our eternal guru. On this Vyāsa-pūjā day we ask ourselves, "What have we done for you lately?" In my case the answer is always, "Not enough." And as the years go on it feels like the answer is "even less."

I can try to chronicle some of the wonderful service being done by other followers in the hope that it will inspire me and others in service and thereby develop love for you and Kṛṣṇa.

ISKCON is alive and still preaching. Locally in Florida we are now holding six Ratha-yātrā festivals every year. In many places around the world the youth of ISKCON are involved in chanting the holy name and are inspired to perform 24-hour *kīrtanas*. They are keen to develop a taste for the holy name, and to share it with others. *Back to Godhead* magazine is beautiful—the writing is informative, eloquent and forceful. The ISKCON centers section shows that there are now over 80 temples, farms and centers in India alone, and at least fifteen of them have large impressive buildings, most built since 1977. There is not enough space in the magazine to list all of the centers around the world, so for some continents a partial list is published. Some temple programs are being broadcast on the internet 24 hours daily. The Temple of the Vedic Planetarium is rising in Māyāpur. This year during the critical foundation construction, the Ganges did not flood, allowing much structural work to be completed on time and under budget. The GBC is maintaining the vision of a society working cooperatively worldwide to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Whatever their detractors may say, there is a sincere effort to fulfill your desires in a Kali-yuga that encourages quarrelsome wrangling, amplified by the instant communication of the cyberworld. This list is nowhere near complete, but also one has to note that book distribution continues steadily with Indian temples now taking the lead.

The other day I received a call from an elderly devotee, a Gujarati man who has been living in the USA for many years and had your *darśana* when you were here. He was purchasing some copies of the *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* in the Tamil language for local congregation members. He also said that he was very excited that he was going to retire soon from his occupation and devote his life full-time to distributing your books. He said that because this was your greatest desire, this was all he wanted to do. I thought that here is a person who has been waiting long years to fully engage in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

I saw a parallel in that you waited so many years to come to the West to fulfill your spiritual master's order. Once you came, Kṛṣṇa made so many arrangements for your success. Who can know the plan of Kṛṣṇa? If Kṛṣṇa sees that here is a surrendered soul, what things may such a soul achieve for the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement? Your example is the hope for all devotees.

Many years ago one of the first ISKCON preaching parties in South Africa traveled all over the country and held programs in many of the Indian communities. In one of the most remote towns in the country, Louis Trichardt,

on the northernmost border, the devotees held *kīrtana*. One gentleman in the audience was so enlivened that he came up on the stage and started playing the drum. After playing the drum and chanting with the devotees for a short time, he died then and there on the stage, ostensibly of a heart attack. Here was a soul waiting who knows how many lifetimes for your mercy to re-enter the spiritual world.

On this auspicious day I pray to you that all of us may remember your love and find a way to increase our determination to serve your lotus feet. Please bless our humble efforts. This is our only way to develop love for Kṛṣṇa. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your humble servant,

Raṅjita Dāsa

Ratha-yātrā Dāsa

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
caḥsur 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 you.”

My dearest spiritual master, A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda,

Not only was I born in the darkest ignorance, I was born in a world that I wanted no part of, I was frustrated and in distress wondering, “Is this all there is?” You came to me and gave me the highest truth. I found a *Back to Godhead* on my doorstep, which I’d read and then ordered your *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* along with *japa-mālā* beads for chanting the *mahā-mantra*, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. I joined your ISKCON and became your disciple six months later.

Your army of book distributors took me in and trained me to give the highest purist knowledge to everyone I met, every day we tried to please you. You were our father working just as hard to translate and publish your books. What amazed me was your kind personal association, which I will never forget, washing your feet, receiving Gāyatrī mantra/thread, repeating each word you gave to me, giving my obeisances. One day fanning you while you were chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, you went into trance, allowing me to experience your ecstatic *prema* that was emanating from you. Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s love that you felt became my goal in life.

I am still the lowest of all your disciples, yet you allow me to be in your ISKCON. All I can do is follow your instructions, as you said to me: “Chant sixteen rounds and follow the four regulative principles, please distribute this knowledge.” Now getting old (56 years), I’m frail, not much of a mind left, alone and free, you gave me the key to success—book distribution—which I will do for you until my body and mind cannot do it anymore! I only ask to be born again and again to distribute your books for the next ten thousand years, *jagad-guru*, Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya*.

*Sincerely yours forever,
Your most fallen disciple,*

Ratha-yātrā Dāsa

Sāmapriyā Devī Dāsī

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

"I am not a *brāhmaṇa*, I am not a *kṣatriya*, I am not a *vaiśya* or a *sūdra*. Nor am I a *brahmacārī*, a householder, a *vānaprastha* or a *sannyāsī*. I identify Myself only as the servant of the servant of the servant of the lotus feet of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the maintainer of the *gopīs*. He is like an ocean of nectar, and He is the cause of universal transcendental bliss. He is always existing with brilliance." (CC *Madhya*, 13.80)

My dear revered and beloved spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are a most exalted *paramahansa* sailing gracefully through the material world. You are untouched by the chaos created by the modes of nature, which are in constant flux. You wield the material energy like the conductor of a grand symphony orchestra, and with complete control you use it to serve Kṛṣṇa in every way, at your command.

No one can know the profound meanings of the characteristics or activities of a Vaiṣṇava, for he cannot be materially designated.

Are you a *brāhmaṇa*?

You are the teacher, of the world, the undisturbed *ācārya*, delivering the king of knowledge, the science of Kṛṣṇa.

"O Chief of the Kuru dynasty, the Vedic wisdom became manifested from the mouth of the *virāṭ*, the gigantic form. Those who are inclined to the Vedic knowledge are called *brāhmaṇas*, and they are the natural teachers and spiritual masters of all the orders of society." (SB 3.6.30)

"Peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, tolerance, honesty, knowledge, wisdom and religiousness—these are the natural qualities by which the *brāhmaṇas* work." (Bg. 18.42)

Though you are in possession of all of these qualities, they become feeble in the presence of your sublime character. No material designation, which only serves to limit your transcendental qualities, can be used to describe you. Therefore, how can you be a *brāhmaṇa*? You are the topmost sublime person,

you are the servant of Kṛṣṇa.

Are you a *kṣatriya*?

You are the most competent and revered commander in Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* army, having organized the great tsunami of transcendental literature to spread throughout the world. You sent your troops armed with yoga, to loosen *māyā*'s grip on thousands of conditioned souls drowning in her wake. You are the Lord's champion and will be glorified for all time.

"Heroism, power, determination, resourcefulness, courage in battle, generosity and leadership are the natural qualities of work of the *kṣatriyas*." (Bg. 18.43)

Though all these qualities become glorified in your person, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are not a *kṣatriya*. How can you be designated by any material means? You are the topmost sublime person, and the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa.

"Farming, cow protection and business are the natural work for the *vaiśyas*, and for the *sūdras* there is labor and service to others." (Bg. 18.44)

Are you a *vaiśya*, Śrīla Prabhupāda?

You established farm communities all over the world and your followers continue to do so upon your order to establish *varṇāśrama*. You established the BBT, the pulse of your *brhad-mṛdaṅga*. Your books are sold daily in thousands all over the world, translated into more than sixty languages. This is Kṛṣṇa's business and you are His CEO. You were noted by CNN, as one of the top ten famous people of the world who launched a "career," after the age of fifty.

You started *gośālās* in many of your major centers and thousands of cows under the banner of your name are being protected.

You have performed all this devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. But, you are not a *vaiśya*. You are Kṛṣṇa's dearest servant and remain always beyond any material calculation.

"Thereafter, service was manifested from the legs of the Personality of Godhead for the sake of perfecting the religious function. Situated on the legs are the *sūdras*, who satisfy the Lord by service." (SB 3.6.33)

How could one possibly call you a *sūdra*, Śrīla Prabhupāda, when you are the greatest of all human beings? But you taught us that no work was beneath a devotee to perform for the service of Kṛṣṇa. In *bhakti-yoga* the foundational principle is one's service attitude.

We can see that though you are in possession of all the good qualities of all the *varṇas* no one can call you a *brāhmaṇa*, a *kṣatriya*, a *vaiśya* or a *sūdra*. You are transcendental to all of these designations and your qualities cannot be put into mundane terms.

Can you be categorized by any of the *āśramas*? Are you a *brahmacārī*?

Prahlāda Mahārāja said: “One who is sufficiently intelligent should use the human form of body from the very beginning of life—in other words, from the tender age of childhood—to practice the activities of devotional service, giving up all other engagements. The human body is most rarely achieved, and although temporary like other bodies, it is meaningful because in human life one can perform devotional service. Even a slight amount of sincere devotional service can give one complete perfection.” (SB 7.6.1)

In the purport to SB 7.6.9 you said:

“(…) From the very beginning, a *brahmacārī* is trained to sacrifice everything for the benefit of the guru. A *brahmacārī* is advised to go begging alms door to door, addressing all women as mother, and whatever he collects goes to the benefit of the guru. In this way he learns how to control his senses and sacrifice everything for the guru.”

You shared with us your youthful desires to perform the grand Ratha-yātrā festival through the streets of Calcutta. As a result of that childhood aspiration you established Ratha-yātrā festivals in all the major cities of the world.

All your work, sacrifices and endeavors were dutifully performed on the order of your spiritual master and you presented everything as a humble offering to his lotus feet. You never took credit for any of it, but made it known that nothing could have been done were it not for his causeless mercy. Are these not the symptoms of a *brahmacārī*?

“A *gṛhastha* must associate again and again with saintly persons, and with great respect he must hear the nectar of the activities of the Supreme Lord and His incarnations as these activities are described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other Purāṇas. Thus one should gradually become detached from affection for his wife and children, exactly like a man awakening from a dream.” (SB 7.14.3-4)

How can you be a *gṛhastha*, Śrīla Prabhupāda?

You took the *sannyāsa* order of life and gave up your family of wife, sons and daughters. But who are we, Śrīla Prabhupāda? We are not only

your disciples who have given ourselves as best we could for all of these years, to your service and your glorious mission. We are your eternal sons and daughters and we are fully dependent upon you. We look to you for everything, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for guidance and knowledge and encouragement and the Absolute Truth. We look to you for the goal of our lives and pure love for Kṛṣṇa. You are not a gr̥hastha but we are your dependent children and have no other shelter. We are your family and this has become our identity having given up everything else.

Are you a vānaprastha, Śrīla Prabhupāda?

“A vānaprastha should prepare a thatched cottage or take shelter of a cave in a mountain only to keep the sacred fire, but he should personally practice enduring snowfall, wind, fire, rain and the shining of the sun.” (SB 7.12.20)

“Being very thoughtful, a vānaprastha should remain in the forest for twelve years, eight years, four years, two years or at least one year. He should behave in such a way that he will not be disturbed or troubled by too much austerity.” (SB 7.12.22)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you came to the Western world on the *Jaladuta* enduring great suffering on the order of your spiritual master to give the fallen conditioned souls a chance to become free. Places like New York City and San Francisco are like unto great jungles with many dangerous wild animals disguised as human beings. Driven by a profound determination to serve Lord Caitanya, you fearlessly entered these capitol cities of Mayadesh. You willingly endured snow, rain, subways and the uncontrolled senses of subhuman beings. All this you endured from 1965 to 1977—12 years. In this time you gave us all life and established Kṛṣṇa within our hearts creating a world religion from the Bowery to Siberia. All glories to your magnanimous efforts and their spectacular results. You are truly the savior of the fallen. All glories to Lord Caitanya’s mercy upon us all. Thank you, thank you, thank you! Śrīla Prabhupāda!

Śrī Nārada Muni said: “A person able to cultivate spiritual knowledge should renounce all material connections, and merely keeping the body inhabitable, he should travel from one place to another, passing only one night in each village. In this way, without dependence in regard to the needs of the body, the sannyāsī should travel all over the world.” (SB 7.13.1)

Surely you must be a *sannyāsī*.

You encircled the globe of the earth fourteen times preaching tirelessly and establishing the movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Crossing the ocean, you had your 70th birthday at sea. This astounding feat was only the beginning of what was to be the foundation of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. You inaugurated a movement of hope and truth which lifted the lives of the unfulfilled youth of America and later the world. But what *sannyāsī* was known to ever cross the ocean? This was unheard of thus far in Vedic culture.

You accepted women into your society and trained them as preachers, to distribute your books of transcendental knowledge side by side with their godbrothers. In the service of your divine mission you accepted all souls and engaged them in devotional service of the Lord.

“A *sannyāsī* must not present allurements of material benefits to gather many disciples, nor should he unnecessarily read many books or give discourses as a means of livelihood. He must never attempt to increase material opulences unnecessarily.” (SB 7.13.8)

How did you attract us, Śrīla Prabhupāda? You did not offer material benefits and riches. No. You asked us to come and join you, to sleep on the floor with no furniture, and eat on the floor with no utensils. You asked us to rise early in the morning, and to live very simply, getting along with each other. You asked us to partake in the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and go out daily to chant the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and distribute your books. In doing that we had to learn to withstand the taunts of the envious, as we approached souls on the streets, in the airports, bus and train stations and state fairs around the world. Wherever people gathered we distributed your transcendental books and our only payment was that you would be pleased with our endeavors.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are transcendental to all material designations and though the qualities of all the *varṇas* and *āśramas* can be found glorified in your character, you are indeed none of these. You are the servant of the servant of the servant of the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the maintainer of the *gopīs*. I pray to remain your servant knowing that as my only identity. For you are everything to me and I identify with nothing but you.

Your eternal daughter,

Sāmapriyā Devī Dāsī

Sanat-kumāra Dāsa Adhikārī

All glories to Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṅga.

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, let me offer my most humble obeisances at the dust of your lotus feet.

It is said in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*diṣṭyā me bhagavān dṛṣṭo durdarśo yo 'kṛtātmanām
diṣṭyā pāda-rajah sprṣtam śīrṣṇā me bhavataḥ śivam*

“It is my good fortune that I have been able to see you, for you cannot easily be seen by persons who have not subdued the mind or controlled the senses. I am all the more fortunate to have touched with my head the blessed dust of your feet.” (SB 3.22.6)

Your Divine Grace wrote in the purport of the above mentioned verse:

“The perfection of transcendental life can be achieved simply by touching the holy dust of the lotus feet of a holy man. In the *Bhāgavatam* it is said, *mahat-pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekam*, which means to be blessed by the holy dust of the lotus feet of a *mahat*, a great devotee. As stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, *mahātmānas tu*: those who are great souls are under the spell of the spiritual energy, and their symptom is that they fully engage in Kṛṣṇa consciousness for the service of the Lord. Therefore they are called *mahat*. Unless one is fortunate enough to have the dust of the lotus feet of a *mahātmā* on one's head, there is no possibility of perfection in spiritual life.” (SB 3.22.6, purport)

Your purport is confirmed by Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura:

“The lotus feet water of a Vaiṣṇava gives divine strength for obtaining devotional love. Nothing is more powerful than this. The dust of the Vaiṣṇavas upon my head is the only adornment required at the end of life.” (Ṭhākura Vaiṣṇava-pada)

Please let us understand the great fortune we all have got to meet you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Our humble prayer is that we may be attracted to learn to listen. You have told us that this was your qualification to receive initiation from your *gurudeva*:

*diṣṭyā tvayānuśiṣṭo 'ham kṛtās cānugraho mahān
apāvṛtaiḥ kaṇa-randhraiḥ juṣṭā diṣṭyośatīḥ girāḥ*

“I have fortunately been instructed by you, and thus great favor has been bestowed upon me. I thank God that I have listened with open ears to your pure words.” (SB 3.22.7)

Falling at your feet, we beg you—let us by your blessings develop the above mood. When will we all understand that great favor that *vidhi* or destiny has granted us to be able to come under your shelter? You have very kindly given us instruction in so many ways, by your books, lectures, letters and conversations.

Please break our stone-like hearts so that we are able to understand your instructions and manifest them within, as you wrote in *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*:

“Thus Sanātana Gosvāmī prayed for the Lord’s confirmation that His teachings would actually evolve in his heart by His Grace. Otherwise Sanātana knew that there was no possibility of his being able to describe the Lord’s teachings. The purport of this is that the *ācāryas* (spiritual masters) are authorized by higher authorities. Instruction alone cannot make one an expert. Unless one is blessed by the spiritual master, or the *ācārya*, such teachings cannot become fully manifest. Therefore one should seek the mercy of the spiritual master so that the instructions of the spiritual master can develop within oneself. After receiving the prayers of Sanātana Gosvāmī, Lord Caitanya placed His feet on the head of Sanātana and gave him His benedictions so that all His instructions would develop fully.” (chapter forty)

As individuals we think we were very fortunate to have been able to meet you at such a young age. Now in our old age we have a hard time controlling the mind and the senses. Nevertheless, we really desire to progress and reach the supreme abode of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, where Your Divine Grace is serving Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Govinda-jī. Therefore we have founded ‘Centro Cultural Radha Govinda-jī.’

Your servant,

Sanat-kumāra Dāsa Adhikārī

Sarvopama Dāsa

Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I really need your help now. I'm convinced that chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa in public is the most effective way to carry forward your mission. It's not just a theory anymore. Yesterday my wife, Svayaṁ Rāseśvarī Devī Dāsī (LOK), and I were both a little tired after we'd been out for a few hours and we were still a couple of kilometers from the temple. We both agreed to take a rickshaw back, and when we got back to the temple, the rickshaw wallah stopped me when I tried to pay him, and said it was *sevā*.

He wouldn't accept any rupees and that really convinced me. It's one thing when shopkeepers give us free things, or print our calling cards up for us or do dental work but it's altogether another thing when a rickshaw wallah gives us a free ride.

So Śrīla Prabhupāda, I'm really convinced that *harināma-saṅkīrtana* is the best way for us to attract attention and show people how happy the chanting can make everyone. The problem is that I still get the impression a lot of people think I'm being foolish and are even annoyed by my insistence that this is a good way to go. It seems as if there's a lot of resistance to the chanting of the holy name. Sometimes I jokingly say I've got both the mad cow disease and Alzheimer's. Maybe it's true though. Maybe now that I'm a senior citizen I'm just a bother. It seems to me that with the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* there's zero risk and highest possible yield.

When we chant, we get the best possible return on our investment of time and energy. It may well be that it's too late but I'm going keep trying to popularize this chanting or die trying.

Please help me, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I'm probably just a trouble maker but I have this hunch that there may be something to this public chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra and I'm going to go out and do it every day from now on. That's my personal promise to you.

Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Sarvopama Dāsa

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA: THE BONA FIDE SPIRITUAL MASTER

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace, without whom, the entire Western world (and much of India) would be ignorant as to the actual qualifications of a bona fide guru. On your appearance day, therefore, I would like to ponder the definition of a legitimate spiritual preceptor, thus revealing how you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, embody these characteristics more than anyone in recent history.

*tad-vijñānārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet
samt-pāṇiḥ śrotṛiyam brahma-niṣṭham*

“In order to obtain knowledge of the Absolute Truth, one should, or must (*evābhigacchet*), approach a true guru, carrying firewood for sacrifice. The qualification of such a guru is that he is well versed in the *Vedas* (*śrotṛiyam*) and absorbed in the Absolute Truth (*brahma-jñāna*).” (*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.12)

This Vedic verse tells us much about the bona fide spiritual master. First of all, by using the word *evābhigacchet*, which is in the imperative case, we are told that it is mandatory to accept a guru. That is to say, acceptance of a bona fide perfected master is not optional but rather an essential part of spiritual life.

In Vedic times, the disciple would assist the guru in performing Vedic rituals and complex fire *yajñas*, and so the verse mentions “carrying wood for sacrifice.” In modern times, such sacrifices are no longer the prescribed means of self-realization. Rather, the *saṅkīrtana-yajña*, or congregational chanting and spreading the word of Kṛṣṇa, has replaced Vedic rituals, and a true disciple thus aids his guru in the *saṅkīrtana* mission. You have made this clear throughout your books.

But the most important part of the Upaniṣadic verse quoted above is that it reveals two defining characteristics of the bona fide spiritual master: *śrotṛiyam* and *brahma-niṣṭham*. *Śrotṛiyam* refers to being accomplished in the chanting of Vedic mantras, or *śruti*. In ancient times, one became accomplished in this art by sitting at the feet of a master. There was no other way to properly learn Vedic mantras. In other words, *śrotṛiyam* refers to the principle of disciplic succession—one learns spiritual science at the feet of a master, who necessarily learned at the feet of his own master, ad infinitum. Thus, one

practices Vedic spirituality as part of a lineage, not independently. The same truth is stated directly in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.2): “This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession (*paramparā*).” It is no wonder, therefore, that one of your main teachings may be paraphrased as follows, “One who claims to be one’s own guru has a fool for a disciple.”

The other quality is *brahma-niṣṭham*, which refers to one who is “steady” or “fixed” in transcendence due to total absorption. The operative word here is “absorption.” Clearly, a guru is not someone who has a part-time interest in spirituality. God engulfs his life, and because of this total immersion, he is brimming with the spiritual world; his very being is an effusion of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, enabling him to convey or communicate transcendental subjects by his teachings but no less by his presence and example. Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, anyone who has been in your personal presence—either directly, or through your disciples or books or mission—knows how these sentences describe you if they describe anyone!

Just as the true guru is someone whose essence reverberates spiritual science, there are those who should *not* be honored as guru, even if they represent themselves as such. Your teachings—reflecting Vedic knowledge—are clear on this, warning fledgling devotees who might easily be deceived by such persons. Actually, the preponderance of false gurus, especially in India, has led to a certain apathy in regard to guru-disciple relationships. Even so, the logic behind such apathy is clearly wanting. To reject gurus as a category, or as a philosophical necessity, because of impostors, is tantamount to rejecting money because of the circulation of counterfeit bills. Not all bills are really money—not everyone who claims to be a guru is actually a spiritual master. But that doesn’t mean that there aren’t any real spiritual masters. Only those who belong to the proper lineages and who are totally immersed in God—as mentioned above—are genuine spiritual masters. These are people through whom one can actually see God and learn about Him. It is you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

What is a disciple’s duty to such a guru? While the *Bhagavad-gītā* gives certain rudimentary instructions in this regard, other texts in the Vedic tradition serve to augment them. For example, the traditional *Manu-saṁhitā* tells us that the disciple should revere and serve the bona fide teacher with heart and soul (12.83). In addition, he should not argue with him (4.179-80) and always occupy a lower seat (2.198). He should never mock his teacher, nor should he abandon him, unless there is an extreme situation wherein the guru himself abandons his spiritual practices (2.199 and 11.60). A true disciple will not associate with his teacher’s opponents (3.153) and such a disciple will also

quickly dismiss himself from the company of those who mock him (2.200). Finally, Manu tells us that the guru is responsible for his disciples' karma, meaning that all reactions to their disciples' previous activities are absorbed by them and burned to ashes (8.316-18).

My prayer on this auspicious day, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is that I might imbibe Manu's prescription for a sincere disciple, taking into my life the duties and practices described above. Without doubt, you are such a disciple for your beloved Guru Mahārāja—Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—and your life, personal example, and teaching exist, no doubt, as a prototype for the rest of us. Clearly, then, there is but one way to be a perfect disciple—it is simply to be you. But *you* are you—and, if our personalistic philosophy is to hold any sway, *we* cannot be you. We can only be ourselves. Nonetheless, we can attempt *to follow your example*, to pray for a spark of your enthusiasm, determination, purity, and love. If I can keep that prayer in my life, day-to-day, I believe I will have achieved what you want for me and for all of your disciples, which is nothing less than pure love for Kṛṣṇa.

Satyārāja Dāsa (Steven J. Rosen)
(New York)

Śyāmalāl Dāsa

My dearmost Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Today, it is your most auspicious day—your Vyāsa-pūjā, and we are going to rejoice this day in your honour, because you are the most perfect Vaiṣṇava and representative of Śrīla Vyāsadeva.

In this material world so many people claim that they have a guru and don't need another one. Some claim that they have a living Bhagavān. But you have taught us who is the genuine bona fide guru, and Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Your instruction is that we should present Kṛṣṇa consciousness not as a religion but a science of God-realization, to convince people in the world that it is not just a kind of blind faith. It is to understand that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Absolute Truth.

I am extremely fortunate to be one of your disciples, and a member of your great spiritual movement, which is ISKCON.

By your instruction, mercy, and blessing, I am able to travel to different parts of the world to preach to Indian communities. Here in South Africa, the Indian communities say that they are so fortunate to have met Swamiji, shook hands with Swami Prabhupāda, and attended his gripping lectures, *kirtans*, and programs. By giving them your *darśana*, you ensured their good fortune. This showed the world that your ISKCON society is the only institution that is doing real welfare work across the globe. ISKCON encourages devotees from different countries and nationalities to live and work harmoniously with each other. Whether it is the housewife, the worker, or the CEO or president of a huge corporation, everyone is encouraged to spread the holy name literally to 'every town and village,' as ordained by Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu more than five hundred years ago.

"In the age of Kali, intelligent persons perform congregational chanting to worship the incarnation of Godhead who constantly sings the names of Kṛṣṇa. Although His complexion is not blackish, He is Kṛṣṇa Himself. He is accompanied by His associates, servants, weapons and confidential companions." (*Caitanya-bhāgavata, Antya-līlā*, 4. 126)

Once you said that, "I am successful in my teaching works because I have not deviated one inch from my spiritual master's instruction. This is my only qualification. So if you simply remain pure, your preaching will have effect." (*Śrīla Prabhupāda Śikṣāmrta*, p. 1865)

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this most auspicious day, I humbly beg

for your mercy to please bless me so that I won't fall into *māyā's* trap and deviate from your teachings.

You said that your guru mahārāja used to say that this material world is not fit for a gentleman. I wanted to be a gentleman.

Your servant,

Śyāmalāl Dāsa
(Durban, South Africa)

Śikhi Māhiti Dāsa

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

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

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

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

prema-bhakti jāhā hoite, avidyā vināśa jāte

“From him ecstatic *prema* emanates; by him ignorance is destroyed.”

Dear Gurudeva,

The past year I have been meditating on your quality of “all-attractive.” You are attractive to all the living entities because you are fully absorbed in loving Kṛṣṇa. Thus, all who come in contact with you are enchanted. I’ve read books written by your first disciples, Mukunda Goswami and Hayagrīva Prabhu. They give insight into how they and their peers were snared by your devotional net.

We think that it is the philosophy that is the biggest contributor to keeping us enthused for Kṛṣṇa’s service. But, it is actually our attraction to just seeing your approving smile. I came to your service in 1974 without meeting you personally. Your disciples were so happily engaged in giving their body, mind, and soul to fulfilling your desires. I could taste the sweetness of that loving relationship between you and them from the moment I entered the temple for the first time. There is nothing like it in the three worlds. The living conditions of the temple in 1974 were austere. But, we were not distracted by them because we were absorbed in fulfilling your desires. This relationship between the disciple and guru is the perfection of life.

This is apparent in the first group of disciples who took your shelter. They had nothing but the opportunity to tend to your personal needs and assist

your missionary work. The devotees could barely understand what you were saying because of your accent. You had to read from Māyāvādī books in order to lecture. You were in the Bowery of New York. All that was available was the opportunity to please you. And what did you desire? That they become Kṛṣṇa conscious by chanting the *mahā-mantra* and take this to every town and village in the world.

Many other gurus were in America not offering this unmotivated service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. They taught that we are all God. They had beautiful ashrams in the countryside, no financial hardship, and the respectable members of society were coming. But, in those ashrams there was no loving relationship between the guru and disciple. Why should there be? They said that the absolute is void and we have to merge with it. Where is the question of service to anyone? As a result, many of these ashrams have faded with time. Our nature is to serve. If we don't serve Kṛṣṇa, then we have to serve His external energy.

Your mission on the other hand is continuing to grow. The Temple of Vedic Planetarium is rising in Śrīdhāma Māyāpur. Twelve thousand devotees from all over the world attended the Gaura-pūrṇimā festival in Māyāpur this year. Loving service of your lotus feet is still attracting the whole world. It is just a question of your current followers showcasing this rare and unique opportunity worldwide.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving me the opportunity to be engaged in your service. I pray that I can continue to be engaged and, that I am able to render this service purely. In this way, I will be able to attract the non-devotees to your pure devotional service and they will finally find the happiness they are searching for.

Your servant,

Śikhi Māhiti Dāsa

Śrīniketana Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to your divine appearance day. It is an occasion for us to contemplate more deeply the significance of your descent into this material world. You came to fulfill the order of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the disciplic succession to spread the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa all over the world. Your descent had already been predicted.

Those of us who had the good fortune to be present on this planet at the same time as you, and those who had the even more incredible fortune to meet you and be accepted by you as disciples, can only pray to be always allowed to remain at your lotus feet. You imparted to them the knowledge of the soul.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.1.10) you explain the process of *avaroha-panthā* (receiving knowledge through the bonafide disciplic succession):

“For advancement of material knowledge there is need for personal ability and researching aptitude, but in case of spiritual knowledge all progress depends more or less on the mercy of the spiritual master. The spiritual master must be satisfied with the disciple; only then is the knowledge automatically manifest before the student of spiritual science. The spiritual master reasonably explains everything to the disciple on the authorities of Vedic wisdom. The disciple can receive such teachings not exactly intellectually, but by submissive inquiries and a service attitude.”

We Kali-yuga creatures do not possess much intellectual power, speaking capacity, great memories or ability to perform sacrifice. All these qualities are lacking. Rather we are physically and mentally lazy, greedy for gross and subtle sense gratification and are consequently always disturbed in mind. Instead of having accepted Kṛṣṇa as our master we have accepted to follow the dictates of our mind and senses.

You have brought ISKCON and along with it devotional service to this planet. Thus you have been able to capture so many suffering conditioned souls by the sweetness of this process of *bhakti-yoga*. Actually, over the years, this process has become our life and soul. We can not imagine being without it. No way we could sustain our life. Thus our prayer to you is please bless us to hang in there until our final breath.

As long as we keep to your lotus feet through the instructions you imparted in your transcendental books, lectures and conversations we feel safe. Kali-yuga is an ocean of faults and it is getting worse day by day. As all

these calamities unfold in front of our very eyes we realize more and more that this material world is no place for a gentleman. Because you made us gentlemen, we don't want to remain here any longer than required.

Please Śrīla Prabhupāda, let us develop an attitude of service as mentioned in the purport quoted above. Thus we hope that one day we will be again in your physical association in Goloka Vṛndāvana happily serving you.

Your aspiring servant,

Śrīniketana Dāsa

Svākṣa Dāsa and Pṛśnigarbha Devī Dāsī

To our wonderful and blessed Śrīla Prabhupāda,

This is Svākṣa Dāsa and Pṛśnigarbha Dāsī, again, thanking you for a wonderful start to a new life. You gave us the wealth of the *Vedas*, the jewels of culture and knowledge. Not a day goes by that we do not appreciate and use this wealth.

We feel a part of all cultures because you have given us the source. All happiness and joy in our lives is due to your blessings. We humbly say thank you and pray to please you, someday.

Your disciples,

Svākṣa Dāsa and Pṛśnigarbha Devī Dāsī

Vaiyāsaki Dāsa and Kaiśorī Devī Dāśī

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

You are the pure representative of Lord Caitanya and you have so kindly given His sacred mission into our hands. We must meet that challenge to continue to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Here is the report of my preaching today.

I'm writing from Tokyo, where the people are embroiled in a nuclear crisis after an earthquake and tsunami destroyed six nuclear reactors in North East Japan. Our trip had already been arranged before the earthquake and tsunami caused the nuclear plants to discharge heavy amounts of radiation. The Tokyo organizers wrote to us saying that all the programs were cancelled because Japan was in mourning for the 28,000 people that were either dead or missing. There was no need for us to come. My friends also warned that us this was not the right time to go preach in Japan.

However, we remembered your personal example, so bold and fearless in preaching. My wife and I were adamant. This was actually the best time to share Lord Caitanya's mercy with the Japanese people. Being very technologically advanced, the Japanese were in the illusion that material advancement would shelter them from all difficulties.

Then, all of a sudden, Mother Bhūmi hit them with an earthquake and tsunami that completely changed everything for Japan. Every person in the country was gripped with fear. Many devotees also fled the scene. Suddenly, we were no longer welcome to preach.

How was I to communicate that this was the best time to preach? I knew that now the Japanese people would begin to realize that all their dreams could be smashed at a moment's notice. Technology could not protect them. I was convinced that the mercy of Lord Caitanya's *saṅkīrtana* mission was the only means to save them.

I spoke to the temple president and reminded him that Hiraṇyakaśipu tried to harm Śrī Prahlāda in so many ways, but Kṛṣṇa always protected him. So would Śrī Kṛṣṇa not protect His devotees who were taking the risk to preach on His behalf to the Japanese people in their hour of desperate need?

Moreover, I explained that Śrī Kṛṣṇa knew there would be a nuclear

disaster in Japan. He is fully cognizant of past, present, and future, so He arranged for His preachers to be there when they were most needed.

I also pointed out that other missions were flying in to help. If the ISKCON devotees were flying out to save themselves, this would be a giant step backwards for the Japanese preaching mission. People would not see devotees as heroes, but as cowards. They would not see devotees taking shelter of Kṛṣṇa, they would see them trying to shelter their material bodies.

How can devotees say they are representing guru and Gaurāṅga if they refused to stay and preach? The result will be that the general public, and even younger devotees, will lose faith in the so-called senior devotees. I knew that our preaching mission in Japan would be ruined if we cancelled our trip. So we continued to preach to the Japanese leaders until the day arrived for our flight to Tokyo.

Our faith in your instructions, Śrīla Prabhupāda, has been rewarded by the outstanding reception we are receiving here. We have encouraged and enlivened so many people, judging by their reactions to our *kīrtanas* and classes. Every day we are doing programs and people tell us, “You have touched our heart,” “You have given us life,” etc. One woman volunteered to hire a hall to promote a memorial *kīrtana* and recite the twelfth chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* as an *āśīrvāda*, a blessing, for the 28,000 people who perished in the tsunami.

In this way, we feel encouraged that Lord Caitanya has allowed us to carry His banner in this stricken country. My thoughts turned to an American saying, “When the going gets tough, the tough get going.” So we have passed this one test by ranking preaching above safety.

But all is not rosy. Every day there are earthquakes, after-shocks, and tremors. We have never experienced anything like this. So now we have practical realization that Mother Bhūmi is alive and she is restless. If we don’t honor and respect her she can finish us all with one tsunami.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, we are well aware that the final test, at the time of death, will be far more difficult than preaching in Japan. We therefore pray that we may always be put into situations where we have no choice but to take shelter of your mercy. Please continue to bless us.

Your eternal servants,

Vaiyāsaki Dāsa and Kaiśorī Devī Dāśī

Medhāvī Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

You are the most wonderful guide, friend, and well-wisher of everyone. You offered and continue to offer the best information and advice to all, simply we must accept it.

There are so many different types of upheavals all over the world. Presently we see many civil wars, earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis, etc. People are hankering for peace and harmony. But as you quoted in one of your first *Back to Godhead* articles, “They want the Kingdom of heaven without its king, the kingdom of God without God and they cannot have it.” You yourself added,

“... All our plans will come to ship-wreck on the rock of human selfishness unless we turn to God. Back to Godhead that is the chief need....”

You presented in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, with true eloquence, the Peace Formula.

*bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ sarva-loka-maheśvaram
suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ jñātvā māṁ śāntim ṛcchati*

“A person in full consciousness of Me, knowing Me to be the ultimate beneficiary of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Lord of all planets and demigods, and the benefactor and well-wisher of all living entities, attains peace from the pangs of material miseries.” (Bg. 5.29)

In the purport, you say, “... Under the spell of illusion, living entities are trying to be lords of all they survey, but actually they are dominated by the material energy of the Lord. The Lord is the master of the material energy and the conditioned souls are under the stringent rules of material nature. Unless one understands these bare facts, it is not possible to achieve peace in the world, either individually or collectively.” But materialistic persons believe that with one or two more adjustments in their plans, everything will be fine and wonderful.

ādhibhautika, *ādhidāivika*, and *ādhyātmika* miseries are overwhelming everyone everywhere. They say that Lord Kṛṣṇa is a myth but they are searching for happiness where “happiness is just a myth” and where “there is danger at every step.” *Paदाṁ padaṁ yad vipadāṁ na teṣāṁ*.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, we had no idea of this information while we loitered on the streets of various cities wasting our time. Please allow me to better appreciate what you have given and offer it to others.

Your forgetful servant,

Medhāvī Dāsa

Pyārī Mohana Dāsa and Jīvanauśadhi Devī Dāśī

*nama om̐ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, having taken shelter at His lotus feet. Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.”

*bhavad-vidhā bhāgavatās tīrtha-bhūtāḥ svayaṁ vibho
tīrthī-kurvanti tīrthāni svāntaḥ-sthena gadā-bhṛtā*

“My Lord, devotees like your good self are verily holy places personified. Because you carry the Personality of Godhead within your heart, you turn all places into places of pilgrimage.” (SB 1.13.10)

The Lord resides in everyone’s heart, but not everyone turns all places into places of pilgrimage. Bewildered living entities who are engaged in all sorts of fruitive activities directed toward the temporary satisfaction of the senses, pollute the atmosphere. But pure devotees, who are in constant contact with the Lord, only act for the pleasure of their beloved and purify everything they come in contact with. You are fully conscious of the fact that Kṛṣṇa is in your heart and you are following His dictations out of pure love, therefore you are His unadulterated representative and a place of pilgrimage. The Lord and His devotee are tightly connected through love.

*sādhavo hṛdayaṁ mahyaṁ sādḥūnāṁ hṛdayaṁ tv aham
mad-anyaṭ te na jānanti nāhaṁ tebhya manāg api*

“The pure devotee is always within the core of My heart, and I am always in the heart of the pure devotee. My devotees do not know anything else but Me, and I do not know anyone else but them.” (SB 9.4.68)

It is through these pure devotees that we can experience all the benefits to

be achieved from the personal association of Kṛṣṇa. Through your books, lectures, morning walks, letters and *darśanas*, you worked tirelessly just to redirect the attention of all suffering living entities back toward Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the heart. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the transparent medium of the Lord in the heart, and your deep love for Kṛṣṇa seems to have induced you to share some of your personal ecstasies in your Bhaktivedanta purports.

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

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

We ask you to be kind to us, although you are always kind even without our asking. Separating you from being kind is like trying to separate sweetness from sugar or liquidity from water. We could have never imagined the depth of your compassion and we are forever grateful. Your kindness humbles us and melts our stone-like hearts. It therefore behooves us to take advantage of your merciful association and attempt to assist you in every possible endeavor to share your love and kindness with the whole world.

Praying to be of assistance to you,

Your indebted servants,

Pyārī Mohana Dāsa and Jīvanauśadhi Devī Dāsī

Śubhāngī Devī Dāśī

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

I am an unfaithful disciple, always forgetting you, day by day, hour by hour. When will I start connecting myself? I make myself so busy each day, so, no real time to write even an offering for you. Yet, today there would finally be a deadline (a chance to connect!), set for the offering, meaning to sit down in all silence and write, as it is Your glorious 115th appearance day, a day for me, no, for the whole world to rejoice!

What happened once I started? Something amazing! I liked to think of your qualities so much and got into such an exalted mood, that I suddenly wished:

If only there would be your Vyāsa-pūjā every day for me!

By writing about your glories, my negative, lethargic, depressive, complaining and criticizing nature would change into that of a grateful, humble and simply happy one, rendering me into such a happy and so satisfied person. My days, no, my entire life would be saved. My mind would start dancing by the compassion and love I feel for you, my Gurudeva—*nāce āmār man...* and in my eyes—the mirror of the soul—my soul's original '*sac-cid-ānanda*' nature could be gloriously reflected without any hindrance. Through my eyes it could be shining forth, turning them into two golden suns. Enveloped entirely by this golden brilliance of love for my *gurudeva* and being loved by my *gurudeva* too, I would float gratefully through life's ups and downs with that constant broad smile on my face which extends from one ear to the other, singing the Lord's names constantly. And as the Lord's names are not different from Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, and as Lord Kṛṣṇa is all-attractive, His names lovingly sung would then—in the same way—attract the hearts of so many suffering people and wake up their sleeping souls in love—making them really happy. When they are then shining in the same golden brilliance of love of guru and Godhead, then I would like to bring these numerous chanting *jīvas* with their awakened *sac-cid-ānanda* soul to You as a tiny, tiny token of my appreciation for You. With a very broad smile I would feel immense pride to be able to present them to a great swan-like leader like you.

You are the magician who was able to change the face of the world from sad to happy, from cruelly non-veg to cow-protecting, from hopelessness to joyful certainty, from aimlessness to a bright goal in life and from impersonal, void beings to personal, all-loving, forgiving devotees dipped into the ocean of love of Godhead, *kṛṣṇa-prema*, by You. Your nectar-filled books and your

exemplary behaviour, the all-praisable representative of the most benevolent, most merciful, compassionate *sañkīrtana* mission of Lord Caitanya.

Now how can we take up and continue your task of changing the face of the world before Bhūmi-devī will again be overburdened by the increase of sinful activities? In some corners of the world, the people are already certain and are looking to us with great expectation, that our International Society for Krishna Consciousness, the gurus and devotees, we, you and me, will bring about a change to the life of mankind, an end to inner suffering, and impersonalism.

We have the holy name and experience its power. We have the know-how of managing most difficult situations, of righteous leadership, warfare to justice and peace, education for cooperation, attainment of higher goals and of avoiding exploitation of nature resulting in natural catastrophes. Lord Caitanya showed us even how to get rain or how to change rascals into humans. We are the living examples for this inner reformation.

And how can we bring about this change of face for the world, to make the world a better place to live in? For this, Śrīla Prabhupāda, please push us with our nose into following in your footsteps. Please turn us into forgiving, tolerant, loving beings to surprise the people by our exemplary behaviour. They have given up hope in goodness, selflessness, fairness and justice. Not only have they given up faith in finding characters of the mode of goodness, but also in living in places of goodness—close to godliness. We can show them how to get out of the cycle of birth and death.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please empower us to subdue our false ego and defeat our anger, lust and greed so that we become revolutionary preachers.

Humbly begging for forgiveness of any Vaiṣṇava *aparādha*, knowingly or unknowingly committed, and for the impersonal dealings with my close ones, I aspire to become a good representative of your books, and hence an authentic preacher.

Your aspiring servant,

Śubhāṅgī Devī Dāsī
(Māyāpur/Germany)

Prabhupāda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Lord Rṣabhadeva has clearly advised: *“If a blind man is walking down the wrong path, how can a gentleman allow him to continue on his way to danger? How can he approve this method? No wise or kind man can allow this.”* (SB 5.5.17) Later on, at the dawn of the present Kali-yuga, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally explained to Arjuna that such an unfortunate character, who always *“strives in the wrong direction”* (Bg. 18.32), is one whose intelligence is spoiled by the abominable mode of ignorance. If the person encountering such a fallen soul is saintly, is truly wise and kind and a *“gentleman”* in the most profound sense of the term, he or she would not bear to see such a wretched conditioned soul blindly proceed toward ever more hellish life. He is aware of how the lost person’s senses are driving him down, down, down. He knows that his *“enjoyment”* consists of nothing more than chewing the chewed, or even chewing thorns, just like the stupid camel.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are undoubtedly the epitome of this kind, wise *“Bhaktivedanta”* traversing the earth and distributing your transcendental literature for no other reason than to provoke a *“revolution in the impious lives of this world’s misdirected civilization”* (SB 1.5.11). You are still mass-distributing Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s inconceivably great, His immense mercy—yet personally, individually as well, one Kali-yuga *“mercy-case”* at a time.

So there is no question but that *“only he (you) could lead them.”* Neither is there any question but that I was one of *“them,”* saved by Your Divine Grace, tenderly administered while magnificently accomplished.

Although I must frankly confess that I still have a very long way to go, nonetheless I have full faith you have saved me. You have kindly, wisely and so mercifully pulled me up from the bottomless pit in which you found me falling headlong.

You were moved by your own great, unfathomable Vaiṣṇava compassion. You were simply unable to tolerate the awful spectacle of my pathetically miserable condition. But whereas others would turn (me) away, you literally begged me to join your initial, fledgling following. You feelingly urged me to take full shelter of your Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. No one else could do this for me—and you couldn’t do otherwise, bound, as you were and are, by compassion.

I therefore pray to Your Divine Grace and I cry out to Lord Kṛṣṇa to

please allow me to utilize whatever tiny ability bestowed, or to share whatever correct perspective I now possess (only by your mercy!) in the service of your ongoing mission—of mercy.

Your eternal servant,

Prabhupāda Dāsa Brahmācārī

Baḍa Haridāsa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to you!

You have said that you always felt that your spiritual master was with you. Your every word, thought and breath was dedicated to serving your spiritual master, so naturally he was always guiding you. Your level of love and devotion is unmatched. I certainly have no such love, and yet you are so kind to me.

My most precious moments are when I feel you with me; watching, guiding, correcting and encouraging. I feel your presence in the *kīrtana*, in your books and when I am trying to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others. I see your presence in the daring and courageous acts of your followers. I feel your presence when I see newcomers to Kṛṣṇa consciousness take pleasure in the *kīrtana*, *prasāda* and philosophy. When I see young devotees develop deep and powerful realizations of *bhakti*, I know your mercy is at work. When I hear how you have appeared in dreams to many seekers who have not personally met you, I know you have not left us.

You loved your spiritual master so much and I can't imagine how transcendently proud of you he must be. You were also proud of your disciples: their love, sacrifice, desire to serve, and accomplishments.

On this day of your divine appearance, I pray that your intense compassion for the conditioned souls, your love for guru and Kṛṣṇa, your profound humility and courage will enter deeply in my heart. I pray that your divine presence will transform me into a disciple who will also make you proud that I am yours.

Begging to become your sincere servant,

Baḍa Haridāsa Dāsa

Jagannātheśvarī Devī Dāśī

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

You descended from the topmost planet down to this earth and suddenly appeared before our vision shining like the sun. Full of purpose and with unfaltering steps, you gently led us by the hand out of the darkness of our ignorance and passion into the clear light of our perfect knowledge. You lovingly and patiently trained us to become servants of Kṛṣṇa.

Then just as suddenly again, after giving us a few short years of the intense bliss of your transcendental association, you disappeared from our vision, to return from whence you came. Was it all a dream? Or was it reality and everything else a dream? Only when we are reunited with you for eternity will we realise by your mercy what is reality and what is dream.

Until then, please continue to appear in our dreams and guide us back to the real eternal shelter of your lotus feet.

Your insignificant servant, hankering for your association,

Jagannātheśvarī Devī Dāśī

Jalāṭala Devī Dāśī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī, and to you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the representative of the all-powerful Lord Kṛṣṇa who has, out of His kindness to the fallen souls, made your preaching successful all over the world.

Just a few months ago we went to Kenya for the opening of a new temple in Mombasa. In Kenya there are three temples Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombasa. I was amazed to see how many flowers were growing everywhere in this beautiful country. At the opening of the temple in Mombasa, the Deities of Sītā, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, and Hanumān were installed. A large crowd of devotees attended the festival. It was amazing to see how preaching was going on in this far off African country. I understood that this was all going on by your unlimited kindness and your desire to spread Lord Caitanya's movement.

Last year the during the book distribution marathon, I was distributing books and a family came with their children. I sold a *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* to them. However, their little daughter who was not more than five years old wanted your *Kṛṣṇa book*. Her parents were not interested in buying the book for her because she was so small. The little girl started to cry loudly and they carried her away. After some time, they brought her back and she was crying even louder. Her parents said that they took her to the gift shop and told her she could have something else, but she only wanted that *Kṛṣṇa book*.

I told her parents, "Just see, your daughter is crying for Kṛṣṇa and nothing else." I explained that even though their daughter was too young to read, they could read to her. Finally they agreed and as soon as the little girl got the book in her hand she stopped crying and had a big smile on her face. I could understand by this incident that the soul is hankering for your books. Your books are so powerful.

Whatever we do to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness is done by your mercy and without your mercy we are in a dark well.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this auspicious day we pray to your lotus feet that we can continue your service birth after birth.

Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Your servant,

Jalāṭala Devī Dāśī

Mahā-bhāgavata Devī Dāsī

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances, all glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the saviour of us all.

Even though I never met you personally, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I miss you.

I am turning seventy this year. The same age you were when you left the transcendental abode of Vṛndāvana, boarded a cargo ship and made your way to America. A lone *sādhu* with a single purpose. Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Thank you for your books and the *mahā-mantra*, the foundation of all of our lives. Thank you for the association of the devotees, thank you for my service and my realizations. In a rich country we were settling for a beggar's portion. Thank you for this matchless gift.

I will be going to India soon and am anxious to go into your room and lay my head on the foot of your bed. My prayer is that I learn to conduct myself in such a way that no one will doubt your message. I pray that you are pleased with our small preaching center and I pray that I will learn to mind my own business. Your smile is enough for me, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

I am still trying to learn the fundamental teaching of 'I am not this body,' I know that when I realize this seemingly simple thing, all my material desires will be finished.

Please forgive my countless offences and accept my humble obeisances again and again.

Coming from the heart of your useless servant,

Mahā-bhāgavata Devī Dāsī

Ugreśa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn iti nāmīne
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

“I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, having taken shelter of His lotus feet. Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanya and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.”

On this auspicious day of your appearance, I wish to glorify you as the savior of my soul, and deliverer of my heart to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. You came among us, ‘*mlecchas*’ and ‘*yavanas*,’ not caring for our bad habits, to show us the highest goal of life, love of God. You were caring and kind, showing by your example how to be clean ‘*suci*’ and how to relish the remnants of the Lord’s food, ‘*prasādam*.’

Although you told us about the relationship between your physical (*vapuḥ*) and spiritual (*vāṇī*) presence, I miss your glance, I miss your laugh, I miss the smell of sandalwood on your body as you walked with head held high to greet the Deities. How can I squeeze this nectar from your books?

Sometimes I sit and wonder what gave me the privilege to be in your presence, and even to be counted among your disciples. I pray by your continued mercy, to be qualified as you would want me to be, to love Kṛṣṇa, and dedicate my whole being to this process of *bhakti-yoga*, as you taught us.

You mentioned there was one moon in the sky, and millions of stars, but that one moon... “could dissipate the whole darkness of night.” Help me Śrīla Prabhupāda to be your moon.

And if I have to come back to this material world, I beg that you be patient with me, so I can finish up my business in *māyā*’s domain, and join you, and your *līlā* in the spiritual world.

*namo mahā-vadānyāya kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya- nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ*

“O most munificent incarnation! You are Kṛṣṇa Himself appearing as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You have assumed the golden color of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and You are widely distributing pure love of Kṛṣṇa. We offer our respectful obeisances unto You.”

*namo brahmaṇya-devāya go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca
jagad-dhitāya kṛṣṇāya govindāya namo namaḥ*

“My Lord, You are the well-wisher of the cows and the *brāhmaṇas*, and You are the well-wisher of the entire human society and the world.”

You have shown me true love of God, and given me the key to the spiritual world, thank you.

Your eternal servant,

Ugreśa Dāsa

Vasanta das

“I offer my humble obeisances to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, having taken shelter of His lotus feet.”

The advent of a pure soul in the world is not an ordinary thing; especially in this Age of Darkness. In previous ages, when the level of piety, kindness and spiritual knowledge were greater (by an order of magnitude) than now, pure souls and ascetics were the norm, not the exception.

Your advent has completely changed the Western world, and has had much impact on the Eastern world as well. Lord Śrī Caitanya predicted that the holy name of Kṛṣṇa would be heard in every town and village. By your tireless efforts this has come to pass. *Harināma* is now chanted from Sydney to Hollywood to Moscow, all due to your influence.

You carried the order of your guru, Om Viṣṇupāda Paramahaṁsa Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda on your head and acted fearlessly in spite of countless obstacles. Anyone else would have ‘called it a day’ and retired.

You accepted thousands of disciples regardless of birth, background or education, and instilled a sense of purpose and full dedication to Mahāprabhu’s mission. Various other swamis were offering bits of mantras or some magic tricks, but you offered the loving association of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. You reminded us all that this material world which contains unlimited suns, moons, and planets is but one fourth of the Kingdom of God.

I had the opportunity to get your direct association only on a few occasions. For this I am so ever grateful. I pray that I may become worthy as a messenger for your mission.

Nitāi-Gaurāṅga!

Vasanta Dāsa

Arjuna Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmilitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ
mūkaṁ karoti vācālaṁ paṅguṁ laṅghayate girim
yat-kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande śrī-guruṁ dīna-tāraṇam*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto my spiritual master, the deliverer of the fallen souls. His mercy turns the dumb into eloquent speakers and enables the lame to cross mountains.

*nāma-śreṣṭhaṁ manum api śacī-putram atra svarūpaṁ
rūpaṁ tasyāgrajam uru-purim māthurim goṣṭhavāṭim
rādha-kuṇḍaṁ giri-varam aho rādhikā-mādhavāśāṁ
prāpto yasya prathita-kṛpayā śrī-guruṁ taṁ nato 'smi*

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

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

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

*aṁśo bhagavato 'smy ahaṁ sadā dāso 'smi sarvathā
tat-kṛpāpekṣako nityaṁ tat-preṣṭha-sāt karomi svam*

I am a tiny part and parcel of the Supreme Lord and I am always and in every way His eternal servant. As I am always hoping for His mercy and kindness, I offer myself to His most dear servitor, my spiritual master.

*rādhā-sammukha-saṁsaktim sakhī-saṅga-nivāsinīm
tvām ahaṁ satataṁ vande mādhavāśraya-vigrahām*

O spiritual master, I continually offer my obeisances unto you, who are always in the presence of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and very much devoted to Her. You always reside in the association of Her confidantes, the *gopīs*, and you are the abode of loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa.

When we read the excellent *Bhaktisiddhānta Vaibhava* by His Holiness Bhakti Vikāsa Mahārāja, it is so inspiring to see how strictly and faithfully you followed in your guru mahārāja’s footsteps, but at the same time you were so much more merciful and lenient than him, as he would not even allow his disciples to read the sections of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that described Śrī Rādhā-tattva too explicitly.

*bhavantam evānucaran nirantaraḥ
praśānta-niḥśeṣa-mano-rathāntaraḥ
kadāham aikāntika-nitya-kiṅkaraḥ
praharṣayisyāmi sanātha-jīvitam*

“By serving You constantly, one is freed from all material desires and is completely pacified. When shall I engage as Your permanent eternal servant and always feel joyful to have such a fitting master?” (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 1.206)

Our only hope is that step by step you inspire us to follow as faithfully in your glorious footsteps. *Māyā* is always waiting for us to make a mistake so as to victimize us once again. Our recurring offenses are most often our disrespect towards devotees. How unfortunate we are that we like to listen to gossip about Vaiṣṇavas, and thus indulge in *sādhu-nindā*.

In his commentary of *Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, Ādi-khaṇḍa* 7.43, your guru mahārāja Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja Prabhupāda nicely explains who are devotees,

“Although pure living entities and conditioned living entities are by nature both devotees of the Lord, the consciousness of the former has been awakened so they can feel the love of their eternal worshipable sac-

cid-ānanda Lord Viṣṇu, while the latter are under the control of *māyā* and cannot do so. When the conditioned state is overcome, or when all *anarthas* are destroyed, a living entity under the shelter of service to Lord Viṣṇu can remain pure even while residing in this material world. At that time he is called a *mahā-bhāgavata*. The *madhyama-bhāgavata* is a pure servant of the *mahā-bhāgavata*. Unless the *kaniṣṭha-bhāgavata* reaches the stage of *madhyama-bhāgavata*, he remains the servant of the *madhyama-bhāgavata* even though he is serving a *mahā-bhāgavata*. Since the *kaniṣṭha-bhāgavata* desires his own spiritual progress and is traveling on the eternal perfect path to *Vaikuṅṭha*, he is superior to the conditioned souls who are desirous of material enjoyment and liberation. But he has faith only in Viṣṇu as the transcendental Absolute Truth, and this realization qualifies him as a *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*. When one attains the level of *kaniṣṭha-adhikāra*, he can understand that his spiritual master is situated as a *madhyama-adhikārī*. But when he attains the level of *madhyama-adhikāra*, he can accept his spiritual master as a *mahā-bhāgavata* and qualify himself to become a pure devotee. The *mahā-bhāgavatas* have no engagement other than the service of Lord Hari and His devotees. Being attached to objects not related to Kṛṣṇa, ordinary conditioned souls engage in the service of the external world due to their impure intelligence. When such persons advance to the level of *kaniṣṭha-adhikāra*, they dovetail the fruits of their activities with the Lord and thus cultivate mixed devotional service. In the eternal nature of the living entities there is an eternal propensity called *hari-bhakti*. As a foolish conditioned soul is attracted to material objects, a pure living entity situated in devotional service, his constitutional propensity, is similarly attracted to the Lord. In the opinion of some unfortunate persons, “Even devotional service, the eternal propensity of the living entities, is a mundane, perverted, abominable, illusory propensity.” Those who argue, or the foolish persons who are expert in material consideration, cannot realize the pure form of devotional service, which is eternally full of knowledge and bliss and which is the goal of the liberated, self-satisfied, swanlike personalities; rather they accept devotional service, which is the eternally perfect transcendental propensity of the living entities, as a mental concoction. Due to this misconception ordinary people consider the eternal attraction of Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the crest jewel of learned scholars, for Kṛṣṇa as material illusion, or *moha*. Keeping in mind the transcendental happiness derived from serving the Lord, the author at this juncture uses the word *moha*, illusion, for the

understanding of ordinary people. It is natural for the eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa to serve Kṛṣṇa with love and ecstasy. In other words, the living entity in his constitutional position eternally worships Kṛṣṇa as his natural propensity. The conditioned soul with the mood for enjoyment cannot realize Kṛṣṇa's love in this material world, but Kṛṣṇa who attracts the self-satisfied souls, unknowingly attracts the hearts of His servants, who have renounced material enjoyment, whose consciousness is awakened, and who are knowers of the Absolute Truth. This is what is meant by Kṛṣṇa attracting His servants who are under the shelter of śānta-rasa. The servants who are under the shelter of śānta-rasa, like the cows, sticks, horn, and flute of Vraja, although not situated in dāsya-rasa, unknowingly serve Kṛṣṇa, while externally appearing less-intelligent."

In your supreme Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.3.31, purport) we read, "*Bhakti, bhagavān* and *bhakta* do not belong to the material world."

In your nectarean *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Ādi-līlā* 1.32, we read, "Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoys by manifesting Himself as the spiritual masters, the devotees, the diverse energies, the incarnations and the plenary portions. They are all six in one."

And in the purport to verse 34, you explain, "The initiating and instructing spiritual masters are equal and identical manifestations of Kṛṣṇa, although they have different dealings."

Again in verse 47: *śikṣā-guruke ta' jāni kṛṣṇera svarūpa/ antaryāmi, bhakta-śreṣṭha*,—*ei dui rūpa*: "There is no difference between the shelter-giving Supreme Lord and the initiating and instructing spiritual masters. If one foolishly discriminates between them, he commits an offense in the discharge of devotional service. The initiating spiritual master is a personal manifestation of Śrīla Madana-mohana *vigraha*, whereas the instructing spiritual master is a personal representative of Śrīla Govindadeva *vigraha*."

In your wonderful *Krishna book*, chapter 57 (The Killing of Satrājīt and Śatadhanvā), you write, "It is the injunction of the *śāstras* that one who is *guru-druha*, who has rebelled against a superior person, must be punished in proportion to the severity of the offense."

Dear Guru Mahārāja, please punish me for my constant *vaiṣṇava-aparādhas* and thus purify me so as to be able to again attain permanent shelter in the service to your lotus feet.

Begging to remain your servant,

Arjuna Dāsa

Bhagavān Ācārya Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. I am woefully unqualified to properly glorify you, but here is my attempt.

You accepted me as your disciple, taught me the goal of life and the formula for happiness.

You gave me my life's mission, to spread the knowledge of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the best of my ability.

Everything necessary to succeed in life, you have explained in your books.

Now I understand that the love we all seek can only be found in Kṛṣṇa. And by achieving love for Kṛṣṇa, one automatically loves all life, as all life comes from Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you taught us how to get closer to Kṛṣṇa by chanting the *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, *Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa*, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. In fact, the very essence of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is the congregational chanting of the *mahā-mantra*, which you personally performed, thus attracting your first disciples.

By regularly chanting with feeling, studying your books and following the regulative principles, anyone can put an end to the cycle of repeated birth and death.

But alas, my age-old enemy, lust, stands ready to knock me down time after time. When will I give up this 'chewing the chewed'?

I am ever hopeful that by your well-wishes and Kṛṣṇa's infinite mercy, I will some day develop love for Kṛṣṇa.

My obeisances to you again and again.

Bhagavān Ācārya Dāsa

Āśālatā Devī Dāśī

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti namine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances on to your lotus feet again and again on this auspicious day.

Thank you for making us Kṛṣṇa conscious; making us understand the meaning of life; and showing us the path home—back to Godhead. Without you we would have lost our way.

You gave us Kṛṣṇa consciousness which is sweet like sugar candy. It does not matter which way we lick it, it is sweet all around. Whether chanting, *kīrtana*, book distribution, doing *ārati*, reading books, eating *prasāda*, celebrating festivals or serving the Deities—it is all sweet. Without you introducing Kṛṣṇa consciousness to us, we would not have had this nectar.

I am proud of being part of your ISKCON family. You have made this whole globe as one family; wherever we go the ISKCON *mṛdaṅga* is going on.

Your lotus feet have travelled the globe fourteen times; isn't it a miracle? This miracle is done only by you. Only you could do it. You wrote so many books. This is not an ordinary human feat, but you are divinely empowered. It is nectar to read and distribute your books.

Because you are so pure; your purity is still making ISKCON grow more and more. Only you are *jagad-guru*, Śrīla Prabhupāda!

At such a mature age, you came at an age when people normally retire. You took the job to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness with nothing in your hands but sincerity and the order of your guru and Kṛṣṇa's blessings. What a wonderful guru of ours and what a wonderful disciple of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

I am so fortunate to have you as my guru.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you planted the seed of ISKCON and raised it with so many austerities, difficulties, and hardships. Despite all the obstacles and hindrances, you kept going on to fulfill your mission. We are all enjoying the fruit of your efforts.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please make us follow in your footsteps. We will try our best to serve you and your ISKCON. So please give us the strength to do so.

Thank you for accepting me at your lotus feet. Thank you for giving us unlimited mercy which I am always seeking.

Śrīla Prabhupāda *kī jaya!* ISKCON *kī jaya!*

Your worthless servant,

Āśālatā Devī Dāśī

Atītaguṇa Devī Dāśī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for starting me on a positive journey in spiritual life by introducing *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* to the Western world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, isn't it true that we can only really appreciate someone great when that person affects us and our own life's path changes so much that we find ourselves on a different level of awareness?

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for dispelling the illusion that our consciousness expansion by artificial means was merely sense gratification on the mental platform.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for helping us understand that being aware of Kṛṣṇa's love for us even on a simple level is to start thinking of our real position in the cosmos.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for introducing to us that we are not the body or the mind—a difficult concept, at least for me, to realize, and laying to rest my illusion of false ego.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving us the formula for purifying our minds, a most difficult exercise—but you gave us the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa to cleanse our dirtied consciousness.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for helping us make the hardest leap of all... the leap of faith to put us in Kṛṣṇa's orbit.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for putting me on the right track. You guided my heart and soul with a concept that, at first, my mind and senses wanted to fight but then I saw by your example and inspiration that by following your path all spiritual desires would be fulfilled.

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, I always wanted to see the end result of living a particular philosophy embodied in one person who followed it without deviation. You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I found to be wonderful in every way.

Thank you, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, for your loyalty to your spiritual master's teachings, we all need to follow your example. It's the only intelligent path to follow. You adhere to the goals of the *paramparā* in every circumstance.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for the greatest jewel—the chanting of the *mahā-mantra*. You encouraged us to get rid of sinful activities, to associate with like-minded souls and pray for the spiritual welfare of others. I remember in Melbourne, Australia, at the last *darśana* you gave there you said that if you really want to please me ... distribute my books. I hope to get back into that

service again soon.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for allowing us fallen souls to engage in devotional service—to try to become selfless by offering everything to Kṛṣṇa. You saved us from this selfish materialistic society that teaches us to put ourselves first. That only ends in misery and frustration.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for saving this unworthy soul. I have found myself in humbling circumstances and you have been my only shelter.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for waking me up. You are the answer to all my prayers. There is no-one as munificent as you. You are helping me out of the intoxicating trap of material dependency.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for blessing us. The results are ecstatic: to sing and dance in front of the Deities in temples all around the world. What other place can you visit in the *brahma-muhūrta* hour where our hearts fill with bliss at the gorgeous sight of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and our ears fill with the harmonic delights of the *kīrtana* of the holy name?

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. We have become so happy because of you. We are enthused to listen to your wise words.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for helping us become devotees. It is the greatest joy in the universe. I know that you are always looking out for me. I feel indebted to you.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for helping me make the best decision of my life—to chant and follow you.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for coming down from the spiritual world to enlighten us. I feel extremely grateful to you for opening up my heart so I can start to embrace Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for helping me on my journey to know Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Absolute Truth, even in a small way. You have shown us how to live life to its highest spiritual potential.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for your inspiration and guidance.

Your unworthy servant,

Atītaguṇa Devī Dāsī
(Śrīdhāma Māyāpur)

Cakrī Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Recently, I was recounting your pastimes before coming to America, and after your arrival. I was amazed at how much you struggled to establish this movement. Before coming to America, traveling to America, and in your early days here, you encountered so many difficulties. But, you were undaunted in your determination to fulfill the order of your spiritual master. He asked you to print books, and distribute Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the West. You wrote the books, printed them, and also distributed them by yourself. You cared very little for your own personal convenience. Your only thought was to satisfy your spiritual master and give us Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Your dedication and determination are very inspiring. By your example you showed us how to overcome all obstacles, and become successful. It is possible by following the order and instructions of the spiritual master.

Now everything is easy for us, by your efforts. The temples are there, your books, the holy names, and your wonderful disciples, who are carrying on your mission. These disciples are like bright moons illuminating this planet with Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They were expertly trained by you, and are enlivening all the devotees. We are so fortunate to have their association and guidance in our spiritual lives. This is a part of the legacy that you have left for us; the many wonderful devotees that are inspiring us in your physical absence, and carrying on your mission.

You established for us the proper conclusion of spiritual life. You wrote in a poem to your spiritual master, “Impersonal calamity thou has moved, the Absolute is sentient thou has proved.” You showed us that the Absolute is a person, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and that we can have eternal loving pastimes with Him. You dispelled all our illusions about what is real spiritual life.

By your mercy we can achieve that goal. On your arrival in America you wrote a beautiful prayer to the Lord, entitled “Preaching Kṛṣṇa Consciousness in America.” In that prayer, you humbly prayed to the Lord for His mercy, for the ability to spread His message. You fully depended on the Lord for success in your mission. You wrote, “I wish that You may deliver them.” By your will this is happening, since Kṛṣṇa is obliged to His pure devotee.

You were able to import the entire Vaiṣṇava culture to the West, without change, including exclusive devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. No one thought that this could be done. Your godbrothers couldn’t understand how the prediction that Lord Caitanya’s name would be chanted in every town and village would

happen. But you believed it, and you were empowered to do it.

Your request to us was to take what you have given us, become Kṛṣṇa conscious, and then give it to others. I pray to you that I may fully embrace your teachings and instructions, and, as you have struggled for us, I work enthusiastically for the welfare of others. I pray that I may be able to obtain pure devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, by your mercy, and then give it to others.

Aspiring to be your humble servant,

Cakrī Dāsa

Ātmātmā Dāsa and Śacī-mātā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnī itī nāmīne
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

I offer you my repeated obeisances again and again and again.

Everyone is looking for some satisfaction, the satisfaction of serving the pure devotee of the Lord is out of this world.

When I see you I can understand how merciful Lord Kṛṣṇa is, showering His mercy through His pure devotee. *Mahā* mercy, the mercy of Kṛṣṇa amplified through His pure devotee. By your order we are acting, not inventing some new idea, but taking the seed of devotion you have planted in our hearts and expanding your movement. Again and again I offer my profound obeisances to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

You are the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, that will always be. Those who are yet to come for so many thousands of years, all owe you a debt of gratitude for your unflinching devotion to your guru mahārāja. Every act as the *ācārya* for this age has been flawlessly carried out by you. We who are your faithful servants have the great good fortune to render some service to you and your mission.

The time now is full of so many disturbances, a sober person would be greatly concerned by the events taking place. But frankly I am not concerned for myself, due to your transcendental instructions and the shelter of your lotus feet. My concern is to pass on transcendental instructions to those souls who are bewildered by the material energy and the Age of Kali. The only solution to the suffering souls is the instruction of Your Divine Grace and the merciful manifestation of the Lord in the form of His holy name, *nāma-saṅkīrtana*.

I am here endeavouring to serve you in whatever way I am able, your order is my life and soul. Please continue to guide us.

Your servants,

Ātmātmā Dāsa and Śacī-mātā Devī Dāsī
(Winchester, UK)

Datta Dāsa

If not for you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, where would we be?
You always saw others by their highest potential, not their greatest faults.
You were not judgmental, but never hesitated to lay down the law.
When so many things became unclear, who you are was always clear, if we chose to see.
You showed us what true friendship looks like, and what true love feels like.
You never wavered in your devotion to Kṛṣṇa, and to your mission.
May we become more like you, without trying to become you.

You will always remain, our ever well wisher.

Datta Dāsa

Gaura Dāsa

Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I did not know what the words “inspiration” or “authority” meant until I met you. Your inspiration is so fathomless that even forty-six years after you left Mumbai for Boston Harbour, thousands continue to become “initiated” by you into Kṛṣṇa consciousness, just by receiving your transcendental books from your *saṅkīrtana* devotees. As Lord Kṛṣṇa’s pure devotee, you never act independently of Kṛṣṇa’s will and are a perfect instrument in His hands, to serve His will, 24-7.

Prior to meeting you, I accepted the popular slogan, “Question Authority,” but you taught me that a genuine spiritual authority should not be approached in a challenging spirit, but in a spirit of submissive inquiry. Once while discussing authority in a conversation with John Lennon, George Harrison, and Yoko Ono, you stated: “Authority means one who has accepted Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord.” (September 11, 1969)

Before I met you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I was bewildered by all the *bhogī yogīs* that seemed to be speaking something profound, but other than you, none were clear in establishing the ultimate authority of Lord Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Lord. All the clouds covering the illumination of Lord Kṛṣṇa were dispelled by your pure words, love, and character.

Before I met you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I was a real “*Nowhere Man*” going down “*The Long and Winding Road*” of life. You taught me “*All You Need is Love*,” love of Kṛṣṇa. Little did I know, when I was just ten years old watching The Beatles make their debut on the popular 1960s television program, The Ed Sullivan Show, that this musical event would lead me to you?

Later, you inspired Śyāmasundara prabhu with the support of Mālatī, Yamunā, Gurudāsa, Jānakī and Mukunda prabhus to meet the Beatles because they were convinced that the whole world could become Kṛṣṇa conscious if, with your divine guidance, the Beatles took to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Your expertise is to fan the spark of anyone’s devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa into a big *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* flame and to get us to always do something wonderful for Kṛṣṇa.

Back in 1971, as Kṛṣṇa’s empowered representative, you unfolded your latest preaching strategy for an eleven-day Mumbai *pañḍāl* festival at Cross Maidan, hosting tens of thousands of receptive souls, but the devotees questioned how they could ever raise any money? How could they erect such a huge tent? Where would they get so much food? And who would cook it? You responded by reminding us, “You are all Americans, so what is the use of being American unless you do something wonderful.” It is my prayer to you

that you may empower me to do something wonderful to please you.

Just as Lord Kṛṣṇa intrigued His cowherd boyfriends to join Him to enter into the mouth of the giant snake demon, Aghāsura, you are always offering me a new exciting adventure in sharing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. You make it possible for Lord Kṛṣṇa to open new doors for me, out of His indebtedness to your love for Him.

Out of your love for your disciples and grand-disciples you inspired Bhūrījāna, then Janmāṣṭamī, Atul Kṛṣṇa, and Sureśvara prabhus to take up your desire to create a Kṛṣṇa conscious educational system, now known as the VIHE and MIHET, to provide devotees with substantial knowledge, to serve your mission better.

As early as 1968, you warned Acyutānanda Swami, “I am training you all to become future spiritual masters, but do not be in a hurry... Don’t be allured by cheap disciples. Go on steadfastly to render service first. If you immediately become guru, then the service activities will be stopped; and there will be many cheap gurus and cheap disciples, without any substantial knowledge, and manufacturing new *sampradāyas*, and with service activities stopped, and all spiritual progress choked up.”

You have stated that *vāñī* is more important than *vapuḥ*, and that there was never a time that you did not remember Kṛṣṇa or not feel the presence of your spiritual master. Please bless me to always feel your presence in all that I say, think and do. In a letter to my godsister Mālātī prabhu (1968), you stated:

“In the absolute world there is no distinction as me, or he, and I. Kṛṣṇa and His representative is the same. Just like Kṛṣṇa can be present simultaneously in millions of places, similarly, the spiritual master also can be present wherever the disciple wants. A spiritual master is the principle, not the body. Just like a television can be seen in thousands of places by the principle of relay monitoring.”

I have heard some of my godbrothers and godsisters say that you live in the heart of your intimate associates, so I spent a couple of months visiting one of these associates, but in his camp I heard a lot of painful criticism toward your ISKCON. I even heard your ISKCON minimized with the statement that you never started ISKCON, but that it was started by Lord Brahmā millions of years ago. This was very disturbing to me. On the one hand, I was hearing you glorified for spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world, and simultaneously I was hearing how your godbrother Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Swami had actually done this. I suppose it could be understood that he had done this through you, but there was no mention of you being credited with this.

On the one hand, I was hearing that you had deputed one of your godbrother's disciples to take care of all your disciples after your departure, yet, even as early as 1967, when you were making your first return to India due to compromised health, we hear this pastime documented in your biography by Satsvarūpa Mahārāja.

Devotees worried, speculating on whether they could carry on without Swamiji. One devotee suggested that perhaps one of Swamiji's godbrothers should come to America and fill in for Swamiji and, if the worst happened, take over the leadership of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. When the suggestion reached Prabhupāda, he considered it without immediately replying.

Mukunda: I was sitting alone with Swamiji in his room, and he was very grave and silent. His eyes were closed. Then, suddenly, tears began flowing from his eyes. And he said in a choked voice, "My spiritual master was no ordinary spiritual master." Then he paused for some time, and wiping the tears from his cheeks, he said in an even more choked voice, "He saved me." At that point I began to understand the meaning of "spiritual master" and dropped all consideration of ever replacing Swamiji.

After two days Prabhupāda said he would not call any of his godbrothers to come and take care of his disciples. He said, "If this person speaks just one word different from what I am speaking, there will be great confusion among you." Actually, he said, the idea was an insult to the spiritual master. (*Only He Could Lead Them*, Vol. 3, p. 162)

Whether or not your instruction changed for your disciples to take *śikṣā* outside of ISKCON after your departure remains a contested point for some. You showed the example of taking good advice from anyone without compromising your relationship with your spiritual master. Even when a non-devotee doctor told you that you needed to walk every morning to improve the condition of your heart, you obediently followed suit.

You have given me enough instructions for several lifetimes to fulfill, but I find it a challenge to do so without like-minded, affectionate association. Please arrange for me to have the association of those who have not been too discouraged to find reasons to leave your ISKCON for other *saṅgas*. I have so much to do to help with building your "house that the whole world can live in."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you said that most dreams are simply functions of the mind, but that dreams of the spiritual master are of spiritual significance. I have

met even uninitiated followers of you that have such dreams and feel myself unfortunate to not have had this experience. Please enter into my dreams and guide me to become your pure devotee.

I admire and appreciate how your second generation of disciples continue to maintain your transcendental institution to minimize any transcendental anxiety that you might experience. You explained that the various services were actually the spiritual master's responsibility, and when a disciple cleaned the temple or performed any service, he did so as the spiritual master's assistant. Any job done improperly was the spiritual master's responsibility. Please give me the strength to accept any anxiety you are feeling to help you give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others, beginning with myself.

You explained that satisfaction for the devotee lay in pleasing the previous spiritual masters, and that was best accomplished by preaching to the fallen souls. "To the degree that the devotees carried out that order, they would satisfy their spiritual master and subsequently feel satisfaction themselves." (*Śrīla Prabhupāda-līlāmṛta* 4, p. 23)

Your love for your disciples is parental in nature, more intimate than just the awe and reference afforded to a spiritual master. You said, "Actually I am not your spiritual master. That title is simply a formality. You should think of me as your spiritual father, your eternal father." Having lost my biological father at the age of five I am very grateful for you bestowing your mercy upon me and adopting me as your spiritual son. Thank you very much for creating so many spiritual brothers and sisters for me who took initiation from you and who have kept me alive in Kṛṣṇa consciousness all these years. Please allow me to join them in being with you and continuing to serve you.

I miss you a lot and need to feel your presence, always.

Your eternal son,

Gaura Dāsa

Gaura Keśava Dāsa

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

We offer our respectful obeisances unto our spiritual master, who has opened our eyes, which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance, with the torchlight of knowledge.

Socrates said, “An unexamined life is not worth living.” That was the fate we faced but for you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Just more wasted lives, mindlessly seeking what our society, family and friends told us was the goal of our existence. You came and you changed all that.

*tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ*

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth.”

We didn’t know enough even to seek a master, what to speak of what questions to ask if and when we encountered one. We did not know what kind of service to render or how to be submissive. All this you had to give us.

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

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

Our faith is often found lacking and is anything but implicit. We therefore do not find the truths you taught us automatically revealed. Again and again you have had to drum into us the process by which we may change the parrot-like lip-service we pay to the śāstras into realized knowledge. Even the basics have not been absorbed and digested by us. Only by deeply meditating again and again on your instructions, can we hope to come to the right conclusions. Even this process of deliberation you have taught us.

Everything we are now, and even all the words we offer back in praise of you, have been taught to us by you. It is not possible for us to repay you for any of that. Your mercy is therefore all that we are made of. All we can do is continue to pray for your blessings.

All glories to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Gaura Keśava Dāsa

Gopa-patnī Devī Dāsī

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda!

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are the perfect example of everything you preached. Thank you for picking me up and engaging me in your service. I am still here in Alachua where I came back to worship your dear Lordships Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

My dear departed Prabhu (husband) would always say to me, “Of all devotional service I ever did, dressing Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma at night in Vṛndāvana was the most nectar!”

Thank you for installing Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma here at New Raman Reti Dham, Alachua, Florida. Thank you for engaging this fallen, useless soul in Their service, from thirty-four years ago, doing *saṅkīrtana* book distribution, to help with the down payment for this land, to now when I get to put Them in Their beds at night, and massage Their lotus feet... along with Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāmasundara.

Your kindness and mercy are in no way measurable. I am eternally in debt to Your Divine Grace, begging you to please always keep me as a particle of dust at the bottom of your lotus feet.

I will remain your eternal servant,

Gopa-patnī Devī Dāsī

Jānakī Devī Dāsī

Jaya Gurudeva!

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnī itī nāmīne
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vānī-pracāriṇe
nirvīṣeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Jaya Gurudeva, great shining star
Your example is the bright moon by which we live our lives
Your lifetime in preparation, a lifetime of devotion
Fulfilling the desire of your own guru mahārāja
He saw your special qualities and impressed upon you
The need to convey the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
To the Western world
With great conviction and unswerving devotion
You took the great risk to your personal comfort
And travelled to America aboard the *Jaladuta*—
Messenger of the Water
How prophetic the name—you carried the greatest message
“This is not our real home—we don’t belong here
We’re like a fish out of water
We are eternal parts and parcels of that Supreme Lord
Eternally meant to be in loving relationship
With that Supreme Lord”
Caitanya’s sublime message—chant the holy names,
Chant Kṛṣṇa’s names and dance,
Chant, dance and feast on spiritual food—
offered with love to the Lord
How expertly you taught us how
To dovetail our lives in the here and now
By example you clearly showed the way
To serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa come what may
Your faith so strong, your heart so pure
We’re eager to serve you more and more
Your family is growing day by day
With thoughtful souls along the way
Magnificent temples inspired by you

With your vision and energy coursing through
To serve you, to please you is our desire
Keep us strong from the pitfalls of tempting *māyā*
Śrīla Prabhupāda our beloved Gurudeva
We humbly bow down at your lotus feet
Please bless us with one drop of your qualities rare
Keep us safe and protect us with your tender care
May we live out this lifetime in service to you
Most exalted, most glorious, *jagad-guru!*

Aspiring to be your useful servant,

Jānakī Devī Dāsī
(Leicester, UK)

Jaya Gaurī Devī Dāsī

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, my Gurudeva,

I fall at your lotus feet begging for mercy. All glories to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Nityānanda Rāma! *Jaya gaura-bhakta-vṛnda!*

I pray every day to my Ṭhākurajī: “Please engage me in serving my *gurudeva*’s mission to teach others about Kṛṣṇa” for I know this pleases you most!

When news of *harināma* in the streets, *nāma haṭṭa* programs, beautiful festivals celebrating Vaiṣṇava holidays, and dedicated preachers doing such selfless work reaches my ears, I know you are very happy. This is your legacy! You miraculously implemented these practices around the globe in twelve short years. All glories to you, *jaḡad-guru!*

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, this process of devotional service is simple for the simple. My challenge is to remain simple at heart and to maintain a high regard for the welfare of all people. Determination and enthusiasm in grasping firmly to your lotus feet is the key to maintain Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Your constant guidance in *vāñī* format is fuel to keep on going. Using the precious knowledge in the *śāstras* and all your purports as my intelligence I navigate these dark waters of material existence. To feel your protection while making difficult decisions, and to hear your instructions in my head as a sounding board shelters me against my own sinful desires leading me closer and closer to full surrender at your lotus feet.

Godbrothers and godsisters together share memories of you creating a delightful pastime. We relish so many precious moments remembering your mannerisms, your laughter, your graveness, your perfect synchrony with Lord Kṛṣṇa’s desires. Also your complete dedication to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī’s instructions, what an example! You left us with so many clever analogies to use in convincing others of the glories of Kṛṣṇa. Your unflinching faith in the words of the *paramparā*, your childlike humbleness, your personable interactions touching each one of us in a unique way, all these features of you swell our hearts with *bhāva!*

Oh Gurudeva! Your reality is my reality, your desire is my desire, please make me an instrument of your mercy for as many lifetimes you may deem necessary. I am yours, heart and soul. Please engage me in your devotional service!

Thank you for *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana*, *smaraṇa*, *pāda-sevana*, *arcana*, *vandana*, *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *ātma-nivedana* and *sādhu-saṅga*. You are the sunshine of my life!

Grateful to meditate on your glories, this very insignificant servant of yours begs to remain at your lotus feet,

Jaya Gaurī Devī Dāsī

Jaya Mādhava Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances.

All glories to Your Divine Grace on your holy appearance day, 2011.

I am in awe of your mercy on me, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I'm speechless that you'd accept such an unqualified and fallen disciple like myself.

You picked me up from the gutter of the material world in Philadelphia and placed me in your ISKCON spiritual world for over forty years now.

This is a treasure I can never pay back to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

You gave me spiritual treasures more valuable than money or gold. The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, *kīrtana*, *prasāda*, your books, devotional service to KṚṢṂA through you, and the priceless association of ISKCON devotees throughout my life. This is real mercy. Treasures.

This month I write my sincere offering to glorify you, a true, pure devotee of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and I place my head eternally at your feet.

This is a very difficult time for me, Śrīla Prabhupāda. As I write this offering, I suffer the loss of one of your very sincere granddisciples, Lavaᅅga Rādhikā Devī Dāsī (disciple of His Holiness Jayapatākā Swami), my wife, who passed away April 9th 2011 in Moscow. She was a sincere Prabhupāda follower from Moscow, Russia. Lavaᅅga Rādhikā always said that you sent me to her and it is a fact that not even a blade of grass can move without the sanction of the Supreme Lord or the blessings of Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotee. At this time I'm a changed man and changed devotee and I hope this will bring me into new ways to preach for you and I hope it's in Russia, helping your very sincere granddisciples.

This real life and death experience personally brings home to me the URGENT importance of what you have given me. Kṛṣṇa consciousness and all ISKCON devotees are so important to us all. None of this could have happened in my life if your disciples had not been merciful to me and did not give up preaching to that hippie guy, Bhakta Michael in Philadelphia temple in the early 1970s. Of course you bestowed your causeless mercy to me to accept this wretched fool as your disciple and for that I'm awestruck.

Please bless me to preach on your behalf for the rest of my life and help you in your ISKCON to make things as you would have wanted them to be done.

Please bless me so I never leave the association of your devotees in your ISKCON and may I have the power to preach for you and help save the conditioned souls on your behalf and help and serve your devotees in ISKCON

in Moscow and worldwide.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, my real eternal spiritual father, with love and devotion from the bottom of my heart.

Your servant,

Jaya Mādhava Dāsa
(Moscow, Russia)

Kṛṣṇacandra Dāsa and family

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

All glories to Your Divine Grace on this auspicious day.

Without you we would still be lost souls.

Without you we would never know Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Without you we would never know Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

Without you we would never know Lord Caitanya.

Without you we would never know Lord Nityānanda.

Without you we would never know the six Gosvāmīs.

Without you we would never know the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Without you we would never know the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

Without you we would never have tasted the holy names.

Without you we would never have tasted *prasāda*.

In fact, Śrīla Prabhupāda, it is only because of you that anything spiritual has been revealed.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Even without you, we know that we are never without you.

I cannot wait to be with you again.

Your son,

Kṛṣṇacandra Dāsa and family

Mukunda Datta Dāsa

My dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

As the “living *mṛdaṅga*” of your spiritual master’s *kīrtana*, you exemplified perfect and spontaneous Kṛṣṇa consciousness, characterised by qualities like transcendental empathy and compassion. Constantly absorbed in sharing the profound nectar of Kṛṣṇa consciousness (*mahāmṛta-magna-cittaḥ*), you epitomized the very mood Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja expressed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.9.43):

“O best of the great personalities, I am not at all afraid of material existence, for wherever I stay I am fully absorbed in thoughts of Your glories and activities. My concern is only for the fools and rascals who are making elaborate plans for material happiness and maintaining their families, societies and countries. I am simply concerned with love for them.”

As such, you freely offered the love given by Lord Caitanya even to the lowest of demons. Everything in your life demonstrated this spirit; even in your final moments on this earth you still guided us, for our benefit, on behalf of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Ultimately, all the *Vedas* sing only of your character. We too pray to remain immersed in singing your glory (*tvad-vīrya-gāyana*). The vast nectar-ocean of all your kind instructions remains for anyone to hear submissively, while this rare and short opportunity lasts. Let us all dive deeply, our minds becoming one with your words, without diversions, without motives. May we thus emulate your faith in your own spiritual master’s words, and purely chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. As our thoughts increasingly turn to the coming generations and the future of your mission, may we always depend entirely on your blessings. Perhaps your most crucial work remains now. We can be of any value only if our minds are wholly focused upon your pinkish lotus feet, which carry an eternal fragrance of sandalwood and roses. Kindly give us shelter there.

Your eternal servant,

Mukunda Datta Dāsa

Nāga-naṭana Dāsa

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

But for your determination to carry out your spiritual master's order, I would have been roving about on the material plane. And because Sumati Morarji gave her best charity to the most qualified and pure Vaiṣṇava, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am living in the house where all the servants of Nitāi-Gaurāṅga are now living together.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you bestowed causeless mercy upon us. But my plea has a cause; please give me the strength to carry out your order.

As if sneering at my determination to come out of the dark well, my body and mind never allowed me to do so; the determination slips out of my palms. I really don't realize the very first instruction of spiritual life, *aham brahmāsmi*.

Māyā is weak before the staunch.

Māyā is strong before the wretched.

I see numerous staunch devotees around me.

I see one wretched in me.

Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, guide your staunch men to use me so that I can be of use for your mission.

Your humble servant,

Nāga-naṭana Dāsa

Nidrā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your divine lotus feet. All glories to you and your Vyāsa-pūjā.

Your heart is so kind and generous that you have love for all souls. This enlivens the devotees because they see what a brave and compassionate *saṅkīrtana* general you are. Vaiṣṇavas all around the planet and the universe appreciate your eternal service to the *saṅkīrtana* mission and take heart from your example and thereby feel encouraged to spread this mercy.

I never have enough gratitude for all that you have done and continue to do, but your example of being grateful to your guru mahārāja shows the true example of how to be thankful. In truth, you are the example for everything. Never have I encountered anyone more glorious. Śrīla Prabhupāda, all souls will benefit from your association. May as many as possible come to your lotus feet.

All glories to you and your followers.

Your servant eternally,

Nidrā Devī Dāsī

Nitya-tr̥ptā Devī Dāsī

SAVED BY YOUR MERCY

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

Your coming to America saved my life. I had been searching for the answers to the meaning of life since becoming a teenager. What was the purpose of life? What should I do with my life?

In the 60s and 70s there were plenty of ‘alternate’ ways to look at and experience life. But at last I understood a teacher was needed—a master, a great man. But where to find this person? I looked here and there, went to various churches, temples, meditation and yoga centers, but no, the satisfying answers to my questions were not there.

Then one day in 1974 I looked into your World Headquarters in Los Angeles on Watseka Avenue. Your disciples answered my questions from the teachings in your books. Chanting in the temple and on the streets awakened a happiness in me I did not know even existed. And when I offered my *daṇḍavats* to your photo on the *vyāsāsana* I knew I had found my master. The one who could teach and show the way, the real way.

You came the very next day to the temple. It was jammed with devotees, I barely saw the top of your head as it floated through the ocean of *kīrtana*. You were much smaller than I had imagined, for your picture was huge in my eyes. Then came the first lecture, but not only could I not get into the temple to see you give it, as I sat on the steps listening to a speaker outside, I could understand very little of what you said. The one thing I did understand and still remember is that one has to learn how to hear properly, just as an elephant has big ears but this does not mean he can understand. I quickly learned to understand your English. I wanted to be your disciple right away; I wished I had been your disciple for ten years, and I wanted the knowledge your followers had immediately.

This was but the beginning of your wonderful and profound teachings that changed my way of life as well as saving me from certain doom. As the years passed, I learned not so much by your personal presence, for that was very rare and I was not among the fortunate few who could be physically close, but from your books, your devotees, from service, and from prayer. I felt very very connected through all these. Your presence grew in my mind and heart until there was room for little else.

Then you left this world and I, as well as everyone in your movement

was devastated. But your presence in my life continues constantly. I have ups and downs, but you are still saving me at every moment somehow. Only by remembrance of your lessons can I stick to this movement that has grown and changed from the days that I joined in 1974.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you for saving me then and now and always. Please remain my guide, and in the spiritual world I expect to be guided by you still, in how best to please the reservoir of pleasure, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Your most fallen unworthy servant,

Nitya-tṛptā Devī Dāsī

Puṇyātmā Dāsa

PRABHUPĀDA: UNIVERSAL HERO

Jīvan-mukta Jaladūta Warrior you arrived in
Our lives In our hearts you're on a throne

Opening the windows and doors for your sons
and daughters to the spiritual world our eternal home

You and our eternal family living in your books
For the next ten thousand years

Each day we go through the different villages
on your pages releasing from our fears

Your pure poetic words are flowers
decorating the holy places of saints and sages

Their association and yours is ours
to relish on each and every one of your pages

Śrīla Prabhupāda your global body and unending
river of loving sound incarnations

Mission of mercy pure love in your heart
because of you Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are dancing
into each and every nation

When the last flower aeroplane departs
Śrīla Prabhupāda your mission will be done here

Gaurāṅga good news *Jīvera Mocana*
Benediction upon all be with Kṛṣṇa have no fear

A song dedicated to His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet, Your Divine Grace.

I offer my humble obeisances to your Lords Śrī Śrī Rādhā Dāmodara and Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī. I offer my obeisances to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Lord Nityānanda, Śrī Advaita, Gadādhara, Śrīvāsa, and all the residents of your books. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Kṛṣṇa* book, *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, *Nectar of Devotion*, *Nectar of Instruction*, *Teachings of Queen Kuntī*, *Easy Journey To Other Planets*, *Perfection of Yoga* and all the other books that you have given us. We thank you for the reintroduction to our eternal family from the bottom of our hearts.

Today, all over the planet your devotees are gathering to celebrate you, a Universal Hero. Within the eight million, four hundred thousand species that exist, the human race is one species, currently I am one of the seven billion members. From a satellite our planet is a marble, and the members of the human race are insects. How blessed are we that we get to associate with you, a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa? The guru who, if you think of him, he is there. The guru who lives in his books. You are an ambassador from the spiritual world, *jīvan muktaḥ sa ucyate*, a liberated soul. While you lived amongst us your heart was seen by Kṛṣṇa, your friend. Your compassion was real and he empowered you to become a Universal Hero. Now your global body, your Hare Kṛṣṇa movement is giving birth daily to billions of sound incarnations of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, Sītā-Rāma, on a daily basis. These divine personalities are dancing around the universe seven times, purifying our universe 24-7, 365! You told us that the spiritual world was our eternal home, you told us that when we get home it will be like we had just left.

One day you waved your hand and said all of us have taken millions of births in this material world, well I can only say thank you, Your Divine Grace. When I observe the suffering of so many residents of this planet in all different species I am grateful to you and Lord Caitanya for giving me the opportunity to serve you and slowly advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, despite the sad reality of being incarcerated for millions of lifetimes. Just knowing the purpose of Lord Caitanya's appearance to bestow benediction upon all, and your appearance in our lives is the only light at the end of Kali-yuga's tunnel. When I imagine how many souls are incarcerated in this material world from *Brahmaloka* to *Pātālaloka* in all eight million, four hundred thousand species, and all the bad karma that is forcing these billions of *jīvas* to suffer, we can only live in this moment and celebrate your presence in the form of your global movement doing everything possible to spread the movement, and

purify ourselves with this process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Whatever drama is going on is secondary to the reality unfolding by your causeless mercy which is book distribution all over the planet. Each book is your house, full of your different friends, garlanded and celebrated by your poetic words. The mahā-mantra of deliverance is pouring out of your global body, circling the universe seven times. Devotees, having been introduced to our seven sacred mothers in the form sacred rivers (Mother Ganges, Mother Yamunā, Mother Sarasvatī, Mother Godāvarī, Mother Narmadā, Mother Sindhu, Mother Kāverī), are sharing their blessings by putting drops of their water in all the oceans, lakes, rivers, on dogs and cats and every living entity to free all recipients from their past karma giving out human births to all those blessed and telling all recipients to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission.

You've given us wonderful tools. I fall down at the feet of all devotees of your movement and celebrate their service of fulfilling the mission of *jīvera mocana*. The universe is celebrating your service, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are famous all over the higher, middle and lower planetary systems as they witness the unfolding of your service to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, in the early days of your movement you were the center of our world. We were united at your feet. That type of high-dimensional interaction remains the closest memory I have to what it would be like to live in the spiritual world, everyone cooperating to serve Kṛṣṇa's desire. As we individually and collectively evolve in the form of your movement, and achieve higher dimensions of personalism, I pray for the day that, in each and every temple, you are taken in your deity form for *darśana* to listen to Yamunā Devī singing the *Govindam* prayers and let that experience awaken us to higher dimensions of awareness of your presence.

I fall down at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee.

*Thank you for being in my life,
Your aspiring servant,*

Puṅyātmā Dāsa

Prahlāda-priya Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances.

The spiritual master is an ocean of mercy. That mercy manifests in so many inconceivable ways. I have been the fortunate recipient of your mercy while you were present with us. Now in your physical absence, I hanker as I'm sure all of your disciples do, for your association, however it may come. From your books, photographs, temples, worldwide preaching programs and your wonderful disciples.

Out of my desire to be with you again, and by your boundless love and compassion, you have come to me—in my dreams. Normally I would not share such personal experiences, however I hope they serve to inspire and enliven those who may happen to read. Over the last thirty-five years, you have come to me at least twice in my dreams. Since your departure, I have watched with great happiness as your movement grows and expands each year, creating one generation after another of young Vaiṣṇavas. I can not help but feel that I have let you down and have become a disappointment as your disciple.

As I dreamt one night, I found myself in a room with you. Just the two of us. You were sitting in a rocking chair, with *japa* beads in your hand. I was kneeling down by the side of your chair. I began to speak (which is something I could never actually do in your presence). I must have wanted to impress you with my words. I began by describing how fallen I was. You looked at me very sternly, almost annoyed. The look was a familiar one. You were chastising me with your glance. I understood immediately that you were not interested in my false humility or self pity. The mood changed suddenly, and you asked me why I was so unsettled. I said, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have so many disciples who are working so hard to spread your movement, they are preaching all over the world. I have been engaged in family life, feeling constantly distracted, and I do not feel that I have earned the honor of calling myself your disciple.” I began to weep, barely able to catch my breath. You reached down and lifted my head onto your shoulder. As I cried on your shoulder, I remember being concerned that I was soiling your cloth with my tears. You embraced my head with both hands, and with great love and concern, you reassured me, “You are also my disciple.” You said, “My personal instruction to you is that anyone you meet, you tell them who Kṛṣṇa is.” I awoke still feeling your embrace. The feeling was indescribable.

Some years later while residing in San Diego, I had another dream; I

received a phone call from one of my godbrothers with great excitement, informing me that Śrīla Prabhupāda is at the temple. I showered, put *tilaka* on, jumped in my car and sped toward the temple at ninety miles an hour. When I arrived, the temple room was packed. I thought that now you are here, I don't know if I'll ever see you again. I quickly stepped through all of the devotees, almost pushing them out of my way. I didn't care. I just wanted to be next to you. Finally I found my seat just next to you. As I settled in and tried to understand what was going on, I realized that you were performing a fire *yajña*. There was a small stack of wood. You motioned to me that when you waived your hand, I should place more wood on the fire. I did so carefully, as you poured ghee into the fire, chanting *svāhā, svāhā, svāhā*. I was in ecstasy. As this went on I tried to determine why you were performing the sacrifice. There were no initiates, no couples waiting to be united in a marriage ceremony, and it was not a special holiday.

Then an amazing thing happened. You finished the fire *yajña*. The devotees parted, clearing a pathway, as we always did for you. You stood, cane in hand and began to walk toward the double doors. I leaned over to see where you were going and was absolutely stunned to see your spiritual master Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Mahārāja along with his entourage. He motioned to you and you joined him. As you walked side by side with your guru mahārāja—all of your godbrothers walked behind. At that very moment it occurred to me that you were performing a *yajña* to honor your spiritual master.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda, for all you have done and continue to do to keep us inspired and faithful.

Your humble servant,

Prahlāda-priya Dāsa

Ramiya Dāsa and Ananta Devī Dāśī

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnī itī nāmīne
namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirvīṣeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

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

Dear beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

On this most glorious occasion of your appearance I would like speak of one of your transcendental qualities and activities. That quality in your heart is your deep and most notable meditation on preaching.

You were always ready to make simple or extraordinary sacrifices to preach. You molded your days and your entire life to spreading the message of Lord Caitanya and your guru mahārāja. Many more things can be said of your qualities but this focus on preaching remains very special even among many types of Vaiṣṇavas. This to me is the most inspiring and meaningful of your extraordinary qualities.

You exhibited deep love for your disciples which was more than that of any parent and you also felt great compassion on the people of the world. Therefore you asked your disciples and followers to assist you in your preaching work even though we were not very advanced. You advised us that preaching will do good to us and to the people we came in contact with. Our attempts to preach—however small or insignificant—always gave you great pleasure.

You gave us encouragement to preach, not in a demanding or authoritative way, but rather as a most dear friend who helps us on the path to recover from our material disease of identifying with our bodies.

When I first came in contact with you by meeting one of your disciples, I began reading your *Bhagavad-gītā* and my life began to change. My life blossomed from a life of suffering, fear and so many illusions of what was best for me, to a new life that was full of happiness of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, reading and learning from your books and taking *prasādam*. This is all due to the preaching of your devotees. As Kṛṣṇa states in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām*

“One who is thus transcendently situated at once realizes the Supreme Brahman and becomes fully joyful. He never laments or desires to have anything. He is equally disposed toward every living entity. In that state he attains pure devotional service unto Me.”

Although I was not advanced when I joined your movement, I quickly felt joyful and my lamentations and material desires receded. Somehow by your association, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and that of your devotees, I was able to experience some small taste of this fruit of transcendental elevation.

Kṛṣṇa also states in the *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*rāja-vidyā rāja-guhyam pavitram idam uttamam
pratyakṣāvagamaṁ dharmyaṁ su-sukham kartum avyayam*

“This knowledge is the king of education, the most secret of all secrets. It is the purest knowledge, and because it gives direct perception of the self by realization, it is the perfection of religion. It is everlasting, and it is joyfully performed.”

I have felt deeply that you have certainly given everyone including me, the king of knowledge and the most secret of all secrets. Gradually, I am realizing more and more that you are my best friend also and this is making me feel more and more indebted to you.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your mercy is all I am made of. I have received so very much from you but still I beg for more. Without you I am nothing and my life will be a shattered nightmare of hopelessness. I beg that I may become worthy to continue assisting you with your great preaching mission.

Your eternal servants,

Ramiya Dāsa and Ananta Devī Dāsī

Śubhaviḷāsa Dāsa

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

On this auspicious occasion of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā, I would like to offer some words, but no pen or number of pages can justify your unlimited mercy and kindness towards us fallen souls. Only because of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are we in ISKCON—the Kṛṣṇa consciousness family that you have established.

Before you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, Kṛṣṇa consciousness was limited to India and even that was not always with the understanding that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, took this out of India and distributed the love of Kṛṣṇa to anyone and everyone throughout the entire world. Today, because of your efforts people all over the world are being attracted to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and transforming from *mlecchas* to devotees.

Just like Bhagīratha brought the river Gaṅgā from the celestial planets down to the earth planet, you have flooded the whole world with *bhakti-yoga*. What you have done, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is even a greater treasure than what Bhagīratha has done.

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself predicts, *prthivīte āche yata nagarādi-grāma, sarvatra pracāra hoibe mora nāma*: “My holy name will be chanted in every town and village.” And in 1896, Śrīla Bhaktinoda Ṭhākura predicted that a great personality would come to the West and preach the message of Lord Gaurāṅga and fulfill the prediction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are that great personality and you did ensure that Lord Kṛṣṇa’s names are known and sung in every continent across the globe.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, before we met you, we did not know that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that each and every one of us has the opportunity to go back home, back to Godhead. This information has been given only by you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. You gave us the process to achieve this.

You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, gave us the formula to get out of this material life. Therefore, there is no way to repay what you have given us.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, whatever little I know is because of your mercy.

I still remember sweet memories of you, your pastimes and your personal association. These are memories that I wish to never forget.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I would like to thank you again and again and again for your causeless mercy to me, my wife Āśālatā Devī Dāsī and my children.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are our only hope to be rid of this material world. Please, please, please do not forget me and always keep me at your lotus feet.

Please shower us with your blessings and mercy and keep us in your service and the service of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Lord Kṛṣṇa forever and ever. Please grant us the determination and strength to continue to follow your instructions and serve you and your ISKCON.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, thank you, thank you, thank you!

Your worthless servant,

Śubhaviḷāsa Dāsa

Tattva-darśa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my *sahasra-koṭi daṇḍavats* at your lotus feet.

Please accept this humble offering on the occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā 2011 from your fallen disciple, Tattva-darśa Dāsa at Bhaktivedanta Eco Village, South India, Karnataka.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I beg you for the courage and strength to continue my fledgling service to your mission. I am dedicated life after life to distributing your books and implementing your desire to establish simple living and high thinking based on the land, the cows and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. By Śrī Kṛṣṇa's grace you have secured the most amazing piece of land in an elevated valley on the side of the mountain which is the topmost tip of the mountain which Hanumān carried to Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with the healing herbs of *sañjīvanī*. The valley is the exact spot described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in which Lord Ṛṣabhadeva left his body in this world in a forest fire. The *Narasimha Purāṇa* describes this sacred ground as the abode or *dhāma* of Vaikuṅṭha of Lord Viṣṇu in this world as well as the Ambāvana, or the gardens of Mahālakṣmī. Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Rukmiṇī visited here after Their marriage at Dvārakā to get perfection of married life in a *sambhāvanī-vrata* because this hallowed spot is reputed to give a thousand time quicker effect to any *yajña* or endeavor performed here.

By your mercy I am trying to follow all your instructions and plow the land with bullocks, have lived without electricity for sixteen years, am schooling many local tribal children in Vedic culture and Kṛṣṇa consciousness through your own school which is also recognized by the government, grow all our own rice, vegetables and flowers while using wood from the forest for cooking, worship Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi daily in Their own temple with handmade incense. In this place only you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, have ever been worshipped on the *vyāsāsana*. We protect the cow like our own mother, sweeten the *bhoga* offerings with honey from the jungle as well as jaggery from your own sugarcane, take all our water needs from the sacred Cakranadi River in which gravity flows through the land in cascading waterfalls, and is acclaimed to be able to deliver one from sinful reactions in only one dip as Mother Ganges does by repeated baths.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, please give me the desire and the ability to follow your every instruction and carry your instructions on our head as my life, breath and soul.

May I carry your book bag through this whole life and never put it down distributing your original books without change and directing all the fallen souls of Kali-yuga only to your lotus feet.

Your humble servant, praying to always submit to your desire and instructions to form such 'Vṛndāvana Villages' or 'Varṇāśrama Villages' which you called 50 percent of your mission left for us to fulfill.

Tattva-darśa Dāsa

Vedavatī Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

You have warned us that this material world is a dangerous place, full of trials and tribulations, where one wrong decision could affect millions adversely. Every day we make small or large decisions, for instance we might say, “Today I’m going to be at work—on time! Today I’m going to clean the house! Today I’m going to the temple—also on time!” Sometimes we fulfill our expectations, sometimes we fall short. However, we keep working on our goals, right? Never surrender!

You’ve taught us to trust in God, Kṛṣṇa, and ask Him to help us conquer our shortcomings and fulfill our desires. By serving Kṛṣṇa, one is able to realize pure spiritual existence in this material world and thus get out of this cycle of birth and death. When you came to America, the socio-political climate of this country was ready for you. You gave young people a new goal to strive for—love of God through Kṛṣṇa consciousness! You taught them how to cook, how to clean, how to study the scriptures, and how to pray, then they “took the ball and ran with it!” Your movement raced across the country and then throughout the world.

Your temples are an oasis. Associating with devotees, chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, dancing for the Deities and partaking of delicious *prasāda* is a most wonderful pastime of which I am grateful to be a part of. Thank you very much, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for giving us all a God conscious life to live. We are not just material bodies, but also spirit souls, who desire to serve God and by doing so, can rise above the dangers of this material world into the science of self-realization.

Sincerely from your servant,

Vedavatī Devī Dāsī

Aṅkoththa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Many times I think that I am making some spiritual advancement but *māyā* quickly shows me the truth of my fallen condition. As the years go by my appreciation of your mercy and compassion increases more and more seeing that someone as conditioned and blinded by material desire as myself can still somehow or other remain on the path of progressive spiritual life.

As I listen to your transcendental sound vibration in your recorded lectures, conversations and *bhajan*s I find complete shelter. Just as darkness cannot remain when the sun rises, the darkness in my mind and heart is lifted when I let your instructions enter. I am trying my best to make a suitable sitting place in my heart for your divine *śikṣā* which is filled with the beautiful gems of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *līlā*.

I hanker to be of some use to you in your mission of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness but since you are like a roaring lion full of courage and spiritual vitality, and I am like a whimpering mouse, I know that my efforts will never add up to much. But I take solace in the story of Lord Rāma acknowledging the service of the ant who could only contribute grains of sand to the Laṅkā bridge building project and I hope that in some small way I am adding to your glorious activities.

On this most auspicious Vyāsa-pūjā day I am hoping for your merciful glance. I reaffirm my complete dependence upon you—you are the sum and substance of my spiritual life and I beg that I never stray from your loving shelter.

Your insignificant servant,

Aṅkoththa Dāsa

Arcana-siddhi Devī Dāsī

Each year in my spiritual journey I discover more about my relationship with you.

In the beginning, I listened and read your teachings with my black and white understanding. As light of the spiritual reality filtered more through my polluted consciousness, I have come to understand your teachings are filled with gray—applied to time, place and circumstance.

You expected that we would study your teachings and learn the *siddhānta* in such a way that we can harmonize what seem to be contradictions. You wanted us to assimilate the teachings and find creative ways to present Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others in a way that are relevant to times we live. You hoped we would all write our realizations, become teachers and gurus.

Spiritual life is dynamic and alive. You left us so many wonderful books and lectures yet you expected that we would also write books and lecture according to our realizations. You hoped that one day your tiny spiritual children would fill your shoes and lead your worldwide movement for the upliftment of everyone.

You hoped to see your society flourish on the basis of love and trust. You hoped to see the members becoming serious practitioners and making significant spiritual advancement. We all have to do our part to make your vision a reality. We need to be committed to our spiritual practices and take shelter of advanced Vaiṣṇavas who have taste for hearing and chanting.

Your mercy is ever present. When we look for the good in others, serve others, take a humble position, spread these teachings, we perceive your loving encouraging smile, as we taste more sweetness in the holy name.

You are my eternal guide and master. And you have sent so many advanced Vaiṣṇavas into my life to help in your physical absence from the planet. Each one of these Vaiṣṇavas personifies one or more of your unique and endearing qualities, such as your compassion, your determination, your light-heartedness, your enthusiasm, your uncompromising faith, your humor and your kindness, just to name a few.

I don't know how I have become so fortunate outside of your causeless mercy for this insignificant *jīva* who was floundering in the material ocean of miseries.

With deep heartfelt gratitude, I thank you again and again for lifting me out of that ocean and bringing me to spiritual life.

Arcana-siddhi Devī Dāsī

Gaura Puruṣa Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

When the sun shines everyone takes off their thick layer of winter clothing and puts on their beautiful summer dress.

You are shining on this world now immersed in the winter of Kali-yuga. Those who are noticing your presence dispose of their Kali-yuga winter outfits, and adorn the dress of devotees, their mentality changing likewise from the thick Kali-yuga consciousness to the beautiful Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

As we, the ones who notice your shining presence, wake up to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and join you in your mission, distributing your books, the message of Kṛṣṇa, we see the great Golden Age arising.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for coming to the forest of darkness and uncovering me from hibernation.

Gaura Puruṣa Dāsa
(Leicester, UK)

Gopī-mātā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

You see us hiding from Kṛṣṇa,
Scurrying here and there in the darkness
Pretending to be free.
We run on our short tethers, until the rope of our karma snaps tight.
We squeal and complain that God gives us pain,
Then try running in another direction again and again.
Running away from the source of love,
Hiding from real happiness.
You watch all this with wizened eyes.
You see us with a so soft heart.
You laugh, you cry, you feel our pain,
understand us, reprimand us, offer us a hand.
Thank you for your patience,
For encouraging us to be brave enough
To come out of hiding.

Admitting our absolute dependence on you, we crawl back towards the Lord's lotus feet.

Aspiring to become your humble servant,

Gopī-mātā Devī Dāsī

Haridāsa Ṭhākura Dāsa

My dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotuslike feet.

My first thoughts in regard to this offering are that I am a completely unworthy and insignificant disciple. I am continually nagged by feelings of regret and failure in my service mentality towards you and your mission.

I COULD do so much more, but I don't.

I COULD give up my selfish mentality, but I won't.

I COULD be a better servant of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, but I can't.

I COULD be a better devotee all round, but I'm not.

What hope is there for such as I? What is the point in dwelling on past surrender and sacrifice? What is the point in lamenting our shyness and reserved self's reluctance to lead a *kīrtana* or give a class? What is the point in remaining alone when we have invitations to associate? What is the point in meditating on female companionship when we know all well and good that no happiness lies there? Why, why, oh why do we continue to make choices that take us away from the happiness and bliss that we experience when we please you? I am just the biggest idiot this side of Vaikuṅṭha and I am so fallen that I am afraid even of my very self.

In reviewing the above and considering the truth about my sad and fallen condition I still have faith in one thing, the one thing that can never ever be taken away by any outside agency, not by any means whatsoever. That one thing is the love I know you have for me and the love I have for you, THAT, no one can take away! Not the grippers, the snipers, the fault finders, the criticisers or the jaundiced foolish inside outsiders. No one can take the love I have for you away from me.

All of my statements in the first paragraph would seem to indicate that I have no love for you, but I have faith in this moment of eternal time, the future is here now, we just don't see it yet. Just as you said, we should not desire to be big devotees but instead we should desire to be small devotees, we should not have any ambition apart from that of desiring a little service just to keep the life airs flowing. The big ambitions obscure our real identity and deny us that right of entry into the pure spiritual realm of divine service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The little devotees are just as important as the so-called big devotees and if we haven't realised that fact then we are still swimming against the currents of the material world. In your eyes and in the eyes of the Supreme Lord there is no difference between the pot washer and the sitting guru being garlanded and offered numerous eulogies. These are just positions

relative to eternal service and are equally purifying and neither is superior or inferior to the other. We have to see like this, and if we don't then let's pray that soon we do so as to gain entry into that land of reality wherein we gain our sanity. I first read one of your books in 1975 and that changed the whole direction of my life and I am so grateful for that. I can say quite happily that I love ISKCON, I support ISKCON and I WILL ALWAYS support ISKCON and of that there is no doubt. I have seen many changes in our society but still the preaching goes on regardless, and those devotees surrendered to your order are the guiding light and the purifying principle on which the society rests.

I am very proud, I am very foolish and above all I think that I know something which is to my detriment. So with this in mind I pray that all my godbrothers bestow their loving glance upon me because I am most in need of loving glances and kind exchanges.

To finalise my offering to you, I wish to state that I am hoping one day to directly receive your loving mercy, and that I will be able to transcend the material covering of ignorance that forces me to think I am this, that and the other.

So please don't care for my mundane attachments, just take them all away, guide me to a better day.

All glories to Your Divine Grace.

Haridāsa Ṭhākura Dāsa

Jayadeva Gosvāmī Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances. I am your most fallen fool who has never been deserving of your sweet transcendental grace and mercy. Somehow this wretched fallen soul was given an opportunity to associate with your kind and merciful servants during this lifetime. Any credit to myself for anything that I have given in service to yourself and the cause of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's most important movement in this age of *harināma-saṅkīrtana* is ill deserved, and so miniscule that it can hardly be counted as service.

I have no sincere desire to serve Nitāi-Gaurāṅga in my heart. I am as low as they come in this human form, but by dint of your divine grace I do have some taste for the association of your devotees and their wonderful pastimes, which are so directly related to you and yours. It must be by that alone that I still have a shred of desire left in my heart to serve you, for I am by myself absorbed in the mode of darkness and ignorance, caring little for the true nectar and the real constitutional nature of my self that you have so wonderfully described with such purity and simplicity for all of us to understand in your elaborate translations of the *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

Without your blessings and love, I am nothing. I pray with all that I can muster that I can somehow continue to come to serve you in a more effective and devoted way. My concerns during this lifetime have been largely selfish, and selfishly extended, rather than committing to the most glorious and beneficial of all causes which you have given all of us in ISKCON to benefit the entire world and universe with Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The watering of the root of the tree, serving Kṛṣṇa, rather than the attempts of nourishing each leaf of the tree individually which does little to serve the whole. You taught us through philosophy, love, and your example that one person can move the entire planet in the proper direction for peacefulness in this lifetime, and liberation beyond. You gave all of us the formula in your books, your letters, your association, and your example.

I pray that Śrī Kṛṣṇa keeps you close to Him and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī at all times, for you are the greatest devotee of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa that any of us have ever known or will ever know!

Your fallen servant,

Jayadeva Gosvāmī Dāsa

Jivānanda Dāsa Vanacārī

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnī itī nāmīne
namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracārīṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa on this earth, having taken shelter at His lotus feet. Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I pray to take hold of your lotus feet as I pay my prostrated obeisances unto you.

For so many years now I have prayed to you and begged for your mercy. As I reflect on my life I realize that you have always fulfilled my every desire. It is with this in mind that I now pray to you once again to please give me your continued mercy. My only desire is to please you and assist you in spreading this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement to every town and village and saving the fallen conditioned souls who are helpless and hopeless without your mercy.

You surely have been sent by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu as part of His plan to spread His mercy all over the world. Nothing else can explain the success of your wonderful ISKCON. This ISKCON is the last hope for the lost souls in this material world in this age of Kali.

I beg you to please let me be a part of this movement of yours and serve you eternally. You have answered my prayer to be allowed to travel and preach your message. I beg you to please let me continue to help you spread this Kṛṣṇa consciousness for the rest of my days and beyond, wherever and however you desire. Please use me as your instrument however you wish. Please allow me to serve your lotus feet eternally.

Although I will never understand the full extent of your unlimited glories, I pray to spend my life spreading them. Please guide me on this path and please never let me forget this mission. Please do not let me become distracted by any attraction or attachment to anything else. Please allow me to learn how love you properly. Please soften this hard heart and allow me to feel some of

the compassion you have for all living entities. Without learning how to love you and my fellow living entities, I will not be able to love Lord Kṛṣṇa. That is my only desire. Please give me whatever I need to achieve that goal.

Your fallen servant,

Jivānanda Dāsa Vanacārī

Kratu das

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept my humble obeisances.

I am very, very thankful to you as you give me the whole guru-paramparā and join me to a great Vaiṣṇava sampradāya. You have given me what I was looking for—that bliss of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Thank very much, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your worthless servant,

Kratu Dāsa

Matsyāvatāra Dāsa

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirvīṣeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please accept my respectful obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace.

Writing to you has always been for me a precious opportunity to immerse myself in deep thought. Writing to you requires an inner journey to find myself, in order to better understand and carry out, year after year, the vastness and richness of your teachings and model of living.

Mine is the story of an ordinary man, traveling the world in search of God. A journey that led me to see the abyss with his despair, and touch the peaks of knowledge along with its related joy and wonder, to feel the presence of twisted agony and ecstasy, with the fleeting impressions of hell and heaven, of conditioning and freedom, of salvation and damnation, of ego and love.

The will, which manifests itself through small and big decisions, even before the actual visible experiences, initiates the complex and constant process of our self detection. This is how we become people, each with his own unique individuality and sense of responsibility. In the end, the history of each, is the outcome of his choices!

Understanding of who I am and where I am, could not be clear without me unveiling my story and see, as a watermark, the changes that you have induced in me and how these have been structured in many different dimensions: physiological, psychological, philosophical, ethical, moral, all the way to the present where I ardently desire the experience of divine love.

Without faith we return to the cycle of death: *aśraddadhānāḥ puruṣā (...)* *mṛtyu-saṁsāra-vartmani*. (Bg. 9.3) From a young age I was devoured by the passion of knowing the true nature of man, the root causes of the apparent world and its ultimate purpose, and as the ordinary school did not give satisfactory answers to my existential questions, my research has been oriented toward the metaphysical and the transcendent. By recognizing the limits of empirical knowledge, I considered it vital to become a disciple, by accepting a guru and his school. See Rūpa Gosvāmī, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

So, by the grace of God, I have come to you! Meeting you, listening to you, accepting you and following you with faith is a unique continuous journey, which I have experienced and am experiencing as a special event. An event that has radically transformed my life and set it for my encounter with God. In fact, since our meeting, to better guide me, you have consented to dwell in my heart as my guru.

The power and mercy of God, by thy divine grace, have purified me and revived my awareness of the spiritual dimension of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*.

As my master, You have inspired me, guided me, corrected me, encouraged me, and, above all, you have always made me feel loved. Since your physical disappearance you have entered my heart, in which there is the garden of my memory, and there you have sat on the throne of gems, gold and diamonds that I offered you, at the feet and the right side of God. Since then, you were ever present in my consciousness, revealing yourself through the listening of your lectures, the reading of your books, the dreams of you, your thoughts and your expression through my actions in the world. Since you have such a great and beneficial influence on me, filled with gratitude, I implore you to teach me to love God through all my thoughts, words and actions, by granting me pure *bhakti-rasa*. Please ensure that the enticements of the world do not distract me from my loving relationship with the eternal Lord of our heart, that unique Being filled with love, whom people call God! With fervent devout gratitude, eager to surrender with trust to the will of God and to your will, filled with joy I renew my commitment to serve you and your servants.

Matsyāvātāra Dāsa

Nanda-kumāra Dāsa

A WINDOW TO THE SPIRITUAL SKY

Sporting in the grape sugar milk nectar waters of the Yamunā, decorated with eternally blossoming indivara, kamala, kahlāra, kumuda and other golden lotus flowers, Śrī Rādhā hid in the forest of golden lotus flowers. Kṛṣṇa kissed a golden lotus flower mistaking it to be Rādhā's face. Laughing and laughing Śrī Rādhā was no longer able to hide. Throwing a great burst of kamala, kairava and other kinds of lotus flowers on each other's body, closing Their eyes as They splash water on each other's face, diving into the water and lifting each other from it and both claiming victory in battle, two fair and dark splendours sported in the Yamunā water. Violently splashing Rādhā and the gopīs, the Prince of Vraja was also splashed in return. Considering the great splashing intolerable, Kṛṣṇa slid under the Yamunā's water and as splendid as millions of moons rose in a distant place.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for inviting us to Goloka Vṛndāvana—your personal abode. As a window opens to reveal the panoramic vista outside, Your Divine Grace lovingly opened the windows to the spiritual world revealing the wonderfully splendid pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava.

All directions were filled with the cries of the dancing peacocks and the cuckoos constantly warbled 'kuhu-kuhu' on the branches of the mango trees. The bumblebees sang of the sweetness of each vine and flower and all directions were filled with a wonderfully sweet fragrance. Vṛndāvana's forests were so fragrant that it defeated the fragrance of sandalwood and musk multiplied millions of times. In a charming, newly blossoming grove, at the entrance to a palace, beautified with many vines charming with splendid leaves and flowers, wonderful with many splendid flower archways and decorated with flower couches, Muralī Manohara sat with Śrī Rādhā. Gazing at the wonder of her limb's splendour, glorious as golden campaka flowers and filled with the waves of the sweetness of deep love, Śrī Kṛṣṇa was struck by her exquisite beauty. Even though the red sindūra and other cosmetic ointments were washed away, her pearls and flower garlands broken and her eyes red from pastimes in Yamunā's waters, still Śrī Rādhā remained exquisitely beautiful. As Vraja-nandana placed His flute to His reddish lips, a group of beautiful maidservants entered the grove. Expert in the arts of transcendental mellows, expert in making a great variety of colour garlands, garments and ornaments, wonderfully youthful, beautiful, graceful and decorated with beautiful faces always blossoming with happiness in their service to the divine couple, the

beautiful maidservants whispered and shared sidelong glances as they made artistic and splendid arrangements for their beloved Lords.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for awakening within the core of our hearts the desire to be the servant of the servant of the servant... The process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness given to us by Your Divine Grace is perfect and complete and by following in your footsteps and by taking shelter of your divine instructions, perfection becomes our natural inheritance. My desire is to serve you as you tenderly serve the two oceans of love.

Among them is one especially beautiful girl who is a special object of Śrī Rādhā's kindness. Unable to bear a moment's separation from Her, she always stays by Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet. What more can be said to describe her? Sometimes, as Śrī Rādhā enjoys transcendental pastimes with her lover, Kṛṣṇa, this girl places Them both on the bed in the cottage of vines, and other times she dresses Them both in various garments. Her bodily lustre is as splendid and charming as gold. Her beauty is without limit. Her sweetness is without limit. She is wonderfully youthful. Her colourful bodice is covered by many pearl necklaces. Her very slender waist is enchantingly beautiful. Her splendid silk sari reaches down to her ankles. She wears a very fine bodice beautifully decorated with bunches of flowers. Her charming eyes are surrounded by curling locks of hair. She casts shy, sweet, smiling, playful sidelong glances. She is expert in various transcendental arts. The curving features of her transcendental form are very beautiful. The hairs of her body stand erect in her ecstasy of love for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. She is expert in all the sixty-four arts, having being personally taught by her mistress, Rādhā. She is charmingly decorated with flower garlands, garments, ornaments and many other things given to her by the dearest divine couple. She possesses great humbleness, good character, and a host of other transcendental virtues, she is expert at understanding the hints concealed in the glances, words and expression of her mistress Rādhā. She chews the betel nuts offered by Lord Kṛṣṇa, she worships Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa with great respect. She brings golden vessels and other paraphernalia to the secret meeting with Lord Kṛṣṇa. Rādhā's great love and various kindnesses make her overwhelmed with love.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for being that special *gopī* friend of Śrī Rādhā. You personify Her expertise in the ecstasy of devotional mellows and knowing the innermost desire of Śrī Rādhā you left her side to increase the ocean of ecstasy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's love by embracing the lost souls with your compassionate glance of mercy and kindness, reflecting the virtues of your beloved mistress.

Her youthful beauty fills the entire world with wonder. As she repeatedly

tastes the nectar of transcendental mellows, the hairs on her body stand erect in ecstasy. With the limitless splendid beauty of her transcendental form she enchants the entire world. Eager to perform her duties in Rādhā's service, she quickly goes here and there. She is like a walking golden vine with clusters of newly blossoming flowers; she floods the ten directions with waves of splendid beauty. With playful steps, the tinkling of her ankle bells and sweet jingling of bracelets and belts she enchants the entire world. She always drinks the sweet, cooling nectar of the narrations of the confidential pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. She is delighted by the very sweet and cool nectar of conversation flowing from the moon of Śrī Rādhā's mouth.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for descending from your transcendental home to show us the path of perfection. Giving us the matchless gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness you traversed this globe accompanied by your loving disciples. Chiming *karatālas* and delicate beats on the clay *mṛdaṅga* were like inseparable friends of the holy name. Just as a raging river that has burst its banks, floods the surrounding area, your flood of mercy is transforming this world into a transcendental ocean of love of Godhead.

How will it be possible for us to ever reach the end of our debt to Your Divine Grace, the greatest spiritual master who has now returned to the supreme abode of love, and from the moon of whose mouth has descended a torrential stream of the nectar glories of Vṛndāvana that now fills the world with bliss?

Just as in a pond fish are trapped by a fisherman's net, deer are cornered by hunters in a forest, men averse to Lord Hari are caught by *māyā* with the terrible rope of illusion in the wheel of birth and death, and thieves are shackled and placed in prison by the powerful king's police, in the same way may I be tightly bound by the flood of the wonderful nectar of the transcendental glories of the supreme abode emanating from your lotus mouth.

Thanking you,

Your grateful servant,

Nanda-kumāra Dāsa

(Adapted and based on the writings of Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī
Ṭhākura)

Prabhu-kṛpā Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept my humble obeisances.

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāmīn iti nāmine
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I don't have many fancy words or things of significance that I can offer at your lotus feet, even though you are worthy and deserving of every valuable offering. In fact I am a pauper, and have only a dream of someday serving you, or perhaps your mission, or one of your servants. Perhaps serving somebody that would want to become a servant of your servant. That is my dream, to stand off in some far corner of the world where I can share your glory without offending my godbrothers and your mission. Perhaps I can offer someone somewhere knowledge of your blessed self that they wouldn't have received if I hadn't taken the time to give of my own life for their benefit. You have given everything without any conditions, that is what I see in your divine example.

In the past I may have endeavored to try to impress you, but by your mercy I am finally starting to realize that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not about *karma-kāṇḍa*, or *jñāna-kāṇḍa*, or the things that we may accomplish. Rather, it is solely and wholly about approaching a self-realized spiritual master who has realized the truth by surrendering to his own spiritual master and thereafter, to take his every instruction as one's life mission.

In this regard you are qualified in every conceivable way as you have surrendered and unconditionally given your self to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. You have embraced his every wish and pleasure as your life. You have especially taken his preaching of Lord Caitanya's mission to the entire world. I can hardly begin to imagine the patience, tolerance, sacrifice, and personal offerings you have placed at your Guru Mahārāja's lotus feet. Truthfully, your service to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī is such a high thing, that I feel happy to even glance at it from a distance.

In truth, I am hoping to prostrate myself at your lotus feet again and again, in the hope that I may someday serve you in some insignificant, unimportant,

menial undertaking. That will be my real happiness and my offering of love and heartfelt appreciation to you on this, your holy appearance day or any day hereafter that you may desire some service of me.

Your worthless and insignificant servant,

Prabhu-kṛpā Dāsa

Prahāda-bhakta Dāsa

Śrīla Prabhupāda,

I wonder what stroke of fate, coincidence or good fortune allowed me, of all people, to be picked by you. Was I in the right place at the right time? Was I at a juncture in my life that allowed me to be receptive to your message? Whatever it was that allowed me to come into contact with your movement... thank you, thank you a million, million times.

You and your ISKCON taught me how to live as a human being. I don't know what will happen after I die; but I do know that you have given me a rare and unique worldview that is the most valuable thing I have, and will ever own.

For the rest of my life I will continue to chant my rounds every day because that will please you. And every day first thing in the morning and last thing at night for the rest of my life, I will continue to prostrate myself before you.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Your stumbling servant,

Prahāda-bhakta Dāsa
(Western Australia)

Śauri Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my humble obeisances at your lotus feet.

After joining ISKCON about two weeks earlier in the spring of 1975, you came to the farm where I joined on the big island of Hawaii. An *ārati* was being offered in the temple. I took the ghee lamp after it had been offered to Gaura-Nitāi and offered it to all the devotees, and, then, what I thought was the respectful thing to do, to you last. I again did this with the water and the flowers. Each time I offered you the particular item, you graciously accepted my offering, although I had transgressed Vaiṣṇava etiquette. When you were paying your obeisances to the Pañca-tattva in Honolulu on your yearly visit in May of 1976, I paid my *daṇḍavats* directly behind you and very softly touched my head to your feet. I got to go on a few morning walks with you, heard a dozen or so of your classes in person, and I personally offered my prayers to you during *guru-pūjā* also a dozen or so times. I got to see you, hear from you, and render some personal service to you a couple of times during the two and a half years or so that I served in ISKCON during your physical manifestation on this planet. I hanker to get to know and serve you more in the future. My appetite to see, hear, and serve you personally again has increased.

When you were present before my mundane eyes some thirty-five years ago, I must admit I didn't deserve any special attention. You acknowledged me, but never directly spoke to me. If I would have gotten direct attention, then I could have committed offenses towards you by feeling too familiar with you. Kṛṣṇa has been very merciful towards me by arranging for me to come in contact with you after you had numerous followers and were basically inaccessible from the physical standpoint for a newcomer like myself.

I honor and respect you far more now than I did then. I don't know Kṛṣṇa, but I do know you to some degree and am serving you in separation with the longing that some day, in some lifetime, or when I eventually go back to the spiritual world by your grace, I can again see you, hear from you, and serve Kṛṣṇa under your expert guidance in a direct realized experience. For now I'll just continue chanting at least sixteen rounds per day, following your instruction by doing some service in ISKCON, and endeavoring to follow your instructions in innumerable other ways. I am one of your younger disciples, but even the younger ones get old and leave their bodies. My hair is thinning and is mostly grey. I will some day leave my body like everyone else. Please think of me and again invite me into your personal association wherever you are in the material or spiritual worlds. I want to serve you eternally in a capacity you

feel is most pleasing to you.

For now I will endeavor to clean my heart so that I can become qualified for this to become a reality. I have faith that you and Kṛṣṇa know what is best for my spiritual growth and my life has, and is being perfectly arranged accordingly. Hopefully in the future you will offer your feet for me to touch my head on instead of me sneaking up behind you and touching them without your permission.

Please forgive me for my offenses.

Your lowly and aspiring servant,

Śauri Dāsa

Indrānuja Dāsa Adhikārī

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my prostrated obeisances. All glories to your ever blissful presence.

From the time you accepted me I have been trying to become the kind of disciple you would be proud of. I know I have not been up to the mark, but I hope as I become older and wiser I will take this on more and more. I reflect on your legacy, especially as I see so many of my godbrothers and sisters leaving their present bodies to continue in your service. And so as I write this offering, my mind turns to the future and the association of the great souls who have taken up the banner of Mahāprabhu.

As devotees we live in a relatively small society of like-minded souls. I say like-minded; however, there will always be seemingly small differences that can cause divisions between us. I have always tried to unite these apparently irreconcilable differences, as I have considered your legacy of “a house in which the whole world can live” a bridge over those chasms. So it was that when we started Bhaktivan we had in mind a neutral place where any devotee who loved you could find good association. Bhaktivan has always been inclusive, never exclusive, and the devotees here see this as a place any devotee can come to and find inspiration and peace in the company of like-minded souls.

My remembrance of you goes back many years to when I was fifteen years old with yearnings for the East and for the first time I heard the *mahā-mantra* being sung. This song awakened unknown feelings and memories. So when I finally met you that day in 1976 I was bowled over by your glowing demeanor, and it was then that I finally gave up everything to join your mission.

Over forty years have passed since I heard the holy names and I find myself increasingly hankering after your association. If I can be so fortunate to find you again after I leave this body I will count myself lucky indeed, and perhaps I will not have to go through the misery of being bereft of your association again. I remember this verse from your poem many times and it draws me on:

“O dear friend, in Your company I will experience great joy once again. In the early morning I will wander about the cowherd pastures and fields. Running and frolicking in the many forests of Vraja, I will roll on the ground in spiritual ecstasy. Oh when will that day be mine?”

Dearest Śrīla Prabhupāda, let my eyes be filled with your vision and let

my mind always remain fixed in your service. This world is full of so much pain and misery, but you are my passport to a world of service at your feet. When I was fortunate to simply sit at your feet in a Heathrow Airport departure lounge, you were sitting chanting on your beads waiting for your flight to Paris to be called. You seemed like an ocean of peace in a world gone mad. That was an eternal moment, and I wish for many more of those moments as I struggle with my mind and senses and move closer to leaving this body. Please grant me, in this life and beyond, access into your divine service. I fall at your feet and pray you will accept this wretched soul.

The fallen,

Indrānuja Dāsa Adhikārī

Kilimbā Devī Dāsī

FLOWER OFFERING IN 5'S & 7'S FOR HIS DIVINE GRACE A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA

Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Your glance full of Kṛṣṇa's love
Guides me still today.
(I'd been in the sea
of repeated birth and death
for God knows how long!)
Meeting with your gaze
Introduced me to real love,
Opening my heart.
Thank you, Gurudeva,
For everything you're giving,
And your causeless grace.
Drops of gratitude
From the ocean of *bhakti*
That you bring to us:
Bhagavad-gītā As It Is,
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,
Brahma-saṁhitā.
The commentaries
Of Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana
(Viśvanātha, Śrī Jīva).
Mahā-prasādam,
Mahat-saṅga, holy *dhām,*
Harer Nāma-KĪRTAN!
Chanting quietly
And congregationally
Serve the holy names!
You taught us to serve
And that this is our reward;
How this is quite sweet.
'Association
With advanced *bhaktas* is key'
(An aspiration you gave to me)

You've arranged for this
So many times, I'm amazed;
The light of Your Grace.
In our service now
Which is Radiance Cuisine,
I feel Your presence.
Yours eternally,
With eager ears to hear you,
And advance in love.

Kilimbā Devī Dāsī

Karuṇākṣī Devī Dāsī

Jaya Śrī Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga!

My dearmost beloved Śrīla Prabhupāda

Please accept my unlimited daṇḍavat-praṇāma at your divine lotus feet

How can I express my boundless gratitude and love, not just that you rescued me from this ocean of suffering in ignorance, but that you brought light to the whole world.

This world will never be the same since the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, sent you to bring us out of misery and into the fold of Their divine mercy.

You turned me around 180 degrees, from uselessness to twenty-four-hour service to your divine mission.

When I looked into your eyes, I found the meaning of true love. I shall never forget that long moment.

You have never left me but live within my mind and heart.

You are my greatest love, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Desperately aspiring to be your servant in Goloka,

Karuṇākṣī Devī Dāsī, to whom you gave Śrī Harināma initiation in Seattle in January 1977.

(Kastūrī Mañjarī Devī Dāsī)

Kṛṣṇa-Baladeva Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

My heart is burning with material desires that I cannot fulfill and make me anxious. I see the years passing by and wonder what will be my fate if I do not surrender unto you. I am afraid I will die another death without having achieved any tangible success in my spiritual life. I have wasted my life in pursuit of sense gratification only and without success. In simple words, I am good for nothing.

I have been trying to offer some service by teaching from your books to beginners in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and when I see their appreciation I feel I have given them something very important and that makes me feel good. But how much do I recognize that all those teachings are all yours?

I continue doing my little *sādhana* of waking up early, doing some Deity worship and chanting sixteen rounds of *japa*. Nothing extraordinary, it's only out of duty, devoid of feelings and always struggling to remain attentive and avoid so many other offenses.

It is said that the disciple can never repay the debt to his spiritual master. I have not yet begun to repay my own debt to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I should feel ashamed and do not portray myself as a "Śrīla Prabhupāda disciple" only because I want to receive some respect from others. So many godbrothers and sisters, your true disciples, are leaving their bodies. I will be next but unfortunately devoid of the right to be considered a disciple of yours.

Now by the arrangement of some of your devotees we, all "Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples," are given the chance to write a Vyāsa-pūjā offering to you to be printed in a separate book. This is perhaps your arrangement to give me the opportunity to reveal my heart to others about my real nature. Maybe somebody out there can help me and shake me from my ignorant slumber. I need that, Śrīla Prabhupāda. I need to receive the mercy of your disciples and grand-disciples to push me and one day I may become truly situated in devotional service at your lotus feet.

I do not have any significant realizations but I do realize your kindness, patience and tolerance towards me because I have not yet given up hope to become a devotee of your devotees and do not desire to leave their saintly association. I have nowhere else to go. I have no other refuge. Now I am praying for your benediction. I beg you with all the sincerity at my command, please let my mind always meditate and take shelter at the lotus feet of your devotees. By pleasing them I may have the good fortune to please you. I fear

I am continuously offending your devotees, but I have no other shelter.

I have become a prisoner in my own kingdom of lust, greed and envy. I feel tied up by fear and illusion. I would rather prefer to remain like this and suffer but the words of wisdom coming from your lotus mouth do not allow me to remain in this continuous illusion. In desperation I cry out to you again, please let my mind always meditate and take shelter at the lotus feet of your devotees.

Despite my offenses, your mercy has no bounds. Your devotees are the result of your mercy and I must earnestly approach their lotus feet and ask for shelter.

Thank you Śrīla Prabhupāda for giving me hope and keeping me with you through your dedicated disciples and granddisciples.

Your most insignificant servant,

Kṛṣṇa-Baladeva Dāsa
(Taiwan)

Kṛṣṇa-kīrtana Devī Dāsī

My beloved Prabhupāda,

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

As we reflect on all the mercy you have given us, we feel immensely grateful, and ashamed at the same time not to be 100% dedicated still, at your lotus feet.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you are overflowing our planet with the holy names and with transcendental knowledge in the form of your books, CDs, and pure disciples who are giving *śuddha-nāma* and *bhāva-bhakti*, around the world.

Thank you Prabhupāda, for allowing us to serve you and for staying in our home, in our heart and through your legacy. Please empower us to assist you in cleaning your society so that those who come in contact with your mission may directly experience your divine presence among us and thus surrender wholeheartedly at your lotus feet as we did in 1977.

You are the personal manifestation of the Lord's mercy and you introduce us to our *sevā* to the divine couple in Vraja-līlā, asking us only to follow your instructions with full faith, with love and devotion.

You personally gave us a glimpse of *kṛṣṇa-prema* by your personal example. Your tears while chanting or speaking, your absolute determination to please your spiritual master and your selfless dedication to train so many disciples to assist you in your transcendental mission for our *paramparā*.

We certainly have no qualification to receive your mercy. In your translation of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.5.2, you said:

"The *mahātmās* are equipoised. They do not see any difference between one living entity and another. They are very peaceful and are fully engaged in devotional service. They are devoid of anger, and work for the benefit of everyone. They do not behave in any abominable way. Such people are known as *mahātmās*."

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for guiding us so expertly in spiritual life. We humbly beg at your lotus feet to please go on leading us patiently to our eternal *sevā* in Vṛndāvana-dhāma. We feel so grateful and sheltered in the dust of your lotus feet that we will go on spreading your glories wherever we are.

We beg to serve you eternally.
Throughout life and death
Śrī Guru is my wealth
- How to progress?
- Wear Vaiṣṇava dress
Chant with eagerness
longing and happiness
Spread the holy names
Don't worry for fame
Śrī Rādhā is with you
Her sevā 's fresh anew
So pure and so sweet
Her divine, lovely feet
Her glories we all sing
That is your blessing
Prabhupāda, our shelter
You live with us for ever
In your instructions.
With much devotion
We beg for mercy.

Kṛṣṇa-kīrtana Devī Dāsī

Kṛṣṇa Gopāla Dāsa

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmīnīti nāmīne
namas te sārasvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirvīṣeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

In 1974 I traveled to India in search of you. I knew you were in India then because one night I cried uncontrollably, praying to God to direct me to my spiritual master. My prayer was answered when I walked in my house and there on the table was my passport which arrived several weeks earlier than expected. My friend had opened the mail and left it on the table for me to see. I left the next day en route to India via Washington, DC to obtain a visa. There I met and stayed with the devotees who insisted I go to Vṛndāvana. I believe they thought I would meet you there. I had been reading the *Nectar of Devotion* on the plane and I remember saying, “Śrīla Prabhupāda is either a pure soul or the best cheater because he is explaining everything—no mysteries.” Then after several special arrangements by Kṛṣṇa, I went straight to Vṛndāvana from New Delhi and I decided to be “shaved up” in the land of Vraja. From there, I traveled to Bombay to meet you because you had just left the holy *dhāma*.

My first encounter with Your Grace was during the greeting of their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rāsabihārī and *guru-pūjā*. You entered the temple and I was struck with how effulgent you were. As you sat on the *vyāsāsana*, devotees offered you flowers. I got as close to you as I could in hope that you would look in my direction. I did not know much, but I did know I was in the presence of a “pure soul.” By some causeless mercy I had come in contact with someone who was beyond this material world. I was witness to a living miracle. I was in the presence of a fully liberated person who embodied pure Absolute Truth. In those first moments, I knew I was the most blessed person in the world for I was standing in front of not just my spiritual master, but the spiritual master of the whole world. I knew the years of spiritual study, the yoga, the meditation and the austerity I had done prior to that moment was like a child holding pennies in front of the world’s bank vault. With my heart pounding, I again found myself praying for a special sign, something to reassure me, not that I had found my eternal guru but that he would accept this very fallen and insignificant person. Although, I didn’t quite feel that way at the time, such realizations would come later as you opened my eyes, which

were filled with darkness.

So the loud *kīrtana* went on and the devotees continued singing your praises. Even though I was standing and dancing just to your right, you had not looked upon me yet. Even when I had offered you flower petals—not a glance. Where was my sign? Maybe I was not qualified to be your disciple. Maybe I had come all this way just to be rejected. Maybe this, maybe that, my mind was reeling with hope and doubt at the same time. I was standing in front of God’s pure messenger, one who can hear directly from Kṛṣṇa. Then it was as if time stood still and you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and I were the only ones in the temple. And, as if in slow motion, you reached down with your right hand and filled it with beautiful red rose petals. Slowly your hand rose up with what seemed to be a mountain of petals. You held them in the air and ever so slowly you turned your head and then your eyes pierced my very soul as if you entered into my being. I witnessed you seeing all my faults, my shortcomings, my false pride, my material attachments, but you also saw my deep desire to attain pure knowledge and truth. You knew my dearest goal of several years prior when I wrote down, “I want to know what my relationship to God is.” With each second lasting an eternity, your eyes opened wide as if to swallow my sins and you broke out in a smile which seemed to rival the sunshine. While looking directly at me, you threw those flower petals right into my face. You laughed and you smiled as if to say, “I have freed you from your material bondage. You foolish student, don’t you understand Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Controller and is in your heart? Of course He heard your foolish request for a sign.”

Then as the flower petals struck my face and body, I was transferred to a place I so long for today. It was as if I had received a direct message from Kṛṣṇa. I had communicated with Kṛṣṇa and He had immediately responded—yes, Śrīla Prabhupāda is the *jagad-guru*, he is your eternal spiritual master and he is accepting you as a disciple. Although I had just “shaved up” in Vṛndāvana a day earlier, my hair (*śikhā*) must have been standing on end. The hairs on my arms were tingling, and of course my eyes immediately poured tears with an uncontrollable force. I was experiencing a spiritual event. I did not fully understand it and I did not care who was witnessing it. To me, the journey of my life, my search for knowledge, truth, and self-realization had come to the gateway. I had been handed the “Matchless Gift.” The *ācārya*, the *jagad-guru* of the age had accepted me as a disciple. I knew this was the most important event in my thousands and thousands of births in this material world. I knew my life would never be the same. I knew I was one of the most fortunate souls on the planet. All doubt, all reservation, all hesitation was taken away as each

flower petal hit my body. I pray to my Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Rādhā-kānta I will never forget that transcendental exchange.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I thank you again and again for your mercy and your kindness. I thank you for the direct words you spoke to me. I thank you for those special times I was able to touch your lotus feet and to have the mahā-prasāda from your plate. I thank you for allowing me to be an instrument to distribute your words in several places around the world. I thank you for the instructions you continue to give through your books. I thank you for allowing me to associate with devotees, may I never again forget these things are more meaningful and important than anything else within the three worlds.

My prayer, my hope, is to always remember this special moment when time vanished and a glimpse of eternal timeless bliss was bestowed on this unworthy disciple: the first time you glanced at me and smiled as you covered me in your flower petals of mercy. I pray that by your guidance I can overcome the cunning ways of *māyā* and never forget that special moment and all the countless mercy which followed. I have only one last blessing to ask: May I see this picture of you and remember this moment as the life airs pass from this body. While others may wish to remember Kṛṣṇa at the time of death, I pray to chant your name and remember Your Divine Grace for I know my eternal place resides in service at your lotus feet.

Your unworthy disciple,

Kṛṣṇa Gopāla Dāsa

Lakṣmī-Nṛsimhadeva Dāsa

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine
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nirviśeṣa-sūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

The hour glass drips relentlessly
And marks the passing time
Each drip etches its presence
On the face through deep creased lines.
Yamarāja has sent the warning signs
In the hair, on the face, in the eyes
Reminding us continuously
That all who take birth must die
Our body, an apartment given to us
A relatively short term lease
And what will be the final notice marked?
The resident herein deceased.
This illusion you exposed to us
In every purport and discussion
Our certain purpose in this short life
Hearing from you with full absorption.
And how you crafted ingeniously, Prabhupāda,
an environment for the cultivation
of our love for Rādhā-Śyāmasundara
without interruption, interpretation or motivation.
No one's path is on the blind
Your books the illumination
Each word that flowed from your pen
Supersoul's direct dictation.
What a joy to study your books
Each reading a revelation
Lucid answers to all life's questions
A blessed and deep meditation.
Your books are my Deities
Every word the *ārati* bell
That rings with pristine clarity
Which cause your instructions to jell.

To the conditioned naked eyes
Many things remain unseen
Your books, a transcendental microscope
Separate reality from the dream.
Oh what a sweet austerity
The recitation of your translations
To imbibe the words from your mouth
Pure and simple exaltation.
Each passing year from the time you left
Unfolds your penetrating genius
Study your books with resolve
In *vāṇī* you never leave us.
I pray this day, your Vyāsa-pūjā
To be blessed with an increased desire
To study your books, repeat what I've heard
Free myself and others from *māyā's* mire.

Your servant birth after birth,

Lakṣmī-Nṛsiṃhadeva Dāsa

Kośarūpā Devī Dāsī

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

By your prayerful request, the holy name of Kṛṣṇa has descended from the spiritual world to this planet Earth, and continuously traverses the airwaves, imbued with its own power and your causeless mercy, delivering unlimited souls in its wake.

From your solitary *bhajan*s at the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple in Vṛndāvana, to your first *kīrtan*s in New York and San Francisco, you brought the *sañkīrtana* movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to America and then around the world. I am ever so grateful to be a witness, and a participant, in your World Sankirtan Party.

In a short span of time, by your grace, the holy name has taken residence in the minds and hearts of millions of people. Knowingly or unknowingly they chant the holy names of Kṛṣṇa with abandon, sometimes laughing and sometimes crying, as love for God begins to awaken in their hearts.

“Impossible!” the faithless proclaim. “These people are *mlecchas* and *yavanas*. They have no qualification to chant the holy name. It is simply show; it cannot last.”

But it does last! As your World Sankirtan Party continuously gains momentum, the *mlecchas* and *yavanas* are swept up in the tsunami of the holy name. When the holy name awakens in their hearts, their material disease is cured and they return to their natural condition of spiritual health.

In November of 1969, on a morning walk in Regents Park, London, you pointed with your cane to the sheet of ice on the lake, and said, “The nature of water is to be liquid, but now it has become solid. This is *māyā*.” Breaking a frozen puddle with your cane, you instructed, “Similarly, the nature of our hearts is to be soft like molten gold, but now they have become hard. Just as the sun melts the ice, so the name of Kṛṣṇa melts our hardened hearts.” (*When the Sun Shines*, pp. 157-8)

You told us history would note how the world was changed by the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement. In your presence we knew this to be true. Then for some years after your physical departure, as the world’s degradation reached new lows, and our society appeared to be unraveling, we doubted we would see such a transformation in our lifetime.

Now we no longer doubt. We no longer wonder. Because of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* continuously resounds in temples and churches, in cities and towns, at beaches and parks, in schools and

colleges, in concert halls and stadiums, in yoga studios and at festivals, all over the world.

Whether we are actively serving the *sañkīrtana* movement or watching on the sidelines, we are all witnessing your mercy as people everywhere easily take up the chanting of the *mahā-mantra* and their lives become transformed. *Kīrtana* is no longer ours alone. You too, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are no longer ours alone. Joyfully we watch as thousands come to seek your shelter.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for cracking open the impenetrable covering of *māyā* surrounding our mind and hearts, and alluring us to the ever blissful service of your Lords, Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāma. Thank you for engaging us in bringing *kīrtana* and your teachings to others.

Let our gratitude to you forever increase. Please empower us to serve you and the holy name with our bodies, mind and intelligence. Please soften our hearts so that we may love you purely and serve you without material motivation.

Your eternal servant,

Kośarūpā Devī Dāśī

