

Vyāsa-pūjā Offerings of
His Holiness Prahlādānanda Swami
to His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda,
founder-*ācārya* of the International Society
for Krishna Consciousness

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Introduction to Vyāsa-pūjā Book 1998 by Prahādānanda Swami

The Vyāsa-pūjā book, with offerings from the followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda, is an opportunity for them to crystallize their transcendental realizations through writing about Śrīla Prabhupāda. Each year these realizations become newer and fresher as the devotees experience how Śrīla Prabhupāda's ISKCON and teachings, by ushering in a new culture of spiritual enlightenment and values, are saving humanity from the degradation of unrestrained materialism and confusion.

Śrīla Prabhupāda often instructed his disciples to write their appreciations. He even stressed the value of writing to a man who couldn't understand or appreciate the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When Śrīla Prabhupāda visited Buffalo, New York, in 1969, I listened while he repeatedly tried to explain to an Indian gentlemen that Lord Kṛṣṇa is like our father and the Vedas are like our mother. As our mother is the authority for understanding who our father is, so the Vedas are similarly the authority for understanding who the supreme father is. They will reveal to us how Lord Kṛṣṇa is that supreme father. Unfortunately, the Indian gentleman, being an impersonalist, could neither understand nor appreciate what Śrīla Prabhupāda was saying.

The man then mentioned that he had written an article for Back to Godhead magazine but that it had not been published. Śrīla Prabhupāda then began to explain that devotees should express their realizations in writing, and that these writings should be published for the benefit of others.

As Śrīla Prabhupāda said in a lecture delivered in 1972 in Los Angeles:

Realization means you should write, every one of you, what is your realization. What for this Back to Godhead is? You write your realization, what you have realized about Kṛṣṇa. That is required. It is not passive. Always you should be active. Whenever you find time, you write. Never mind, two lines, four lines, but you write your realization. Śravaṇam kīrtanam, writing or offering prayers, glories. This is one of the function of the Vaiṣṇava. You are hearing, but you have to write also. Then write means smaraṇam, remembering what you have heard from your spiritual master, from the scripture.

In the pages of this Vyāsa-pūjā book, many devotees elegantly express their gratitude to and appreciation for their dearest friend and ever well-wisher, Śrīla Prabhupāda. The spiritually uneducated may find some devotees' offerings trite or repetitive. But when a sincere devotee composes an homage to Śrīla Prabhupāda that is philosophically in accordance with the teachings of the disciplic succession, then Śrīla Prabhupāda and Lord Kṛṣṇa undoubtedly appreciate it despite its literary flaws, just as a father appreciates the incoherent stammering of his young child as he tries to express his affection for the father.

During Janmāṣṭamī devotees around the world have the opportunity to meditate upon Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance and activities. The Lord Himself says this meditation helps one become eligible to return to the spiritual world. By Lord Kṛṣṇa's arrangement, the day after Janmāṣṭamī is Śrīla Prabhupāda's appearance day, a day when we in the International Society for Krishna Consciousness have the opportunity to enhance our meditation on the Lord by increasing our meditating on and praying for the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pure devotee, Śrīla Prabhupāda. When we receive the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda,

our understanding and appreciation of Lord Kṛṣṇa develop easily. The offerings in this book are sublime meditations on Śrīla Prabhupāda and inspirations to pray for his mercy. Such meditations and prayers assure our success in life.

Prahlādānanda Swami

1969: Prahladananda

You came with Krishna Chaitanya in your heart and asked us humbly to come home. I in my fog stumbled into a circle of chanters of your merciful song and my heart began to melt. Oh! Prabhupad, Oh! deliverer of all wretched creatures such as I, how can I understand your love—I accept so little but you want to give so much. Oh! Krishna! Oh! Rama! Oh Chaitanya, Oh Nityananda! I beg you for the strength to repay your gift.

Prahladananda
(ISKCON—Buffalo)

1970: Prahlādānanda Dāsa

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Through this dungeon I have desired and still too ignorant to leave. I’ve faintly heard you cry in the light asking me to come see. You who are in love with everyone and everything are at Kṛṣṇa’s feet and He at Yours. The clouds come and go, but the moonshine of your smile dissolves them, and so now and then I can see more clearly. “Oh Kṛṣṇa! Oh! Most auspicious universe!” My pride covers my humility, so to see what I cannot see I must surrender to Your lotus feet. Devotional service and the kingdom of God are one and the same. Your Divine Grace at Boston Airport. I see you in this picture here, one hand holding a bead bag in the air, waving to the devotees. “Kiba jaya jaya gorācānder arotiki sobhā.” How happy the must have been, bowing down at your lotus feet. “Jāhnavī-taṭa vane jaga jana-manlobhā.” When will I accept my Godbrothers and surrender at their feet. I turn to Lord Jagannātha and smile—You’re real. The pleasure that I feel tells me I’m going home. Lord Caitanya in ecstasy of love walks to Vṛndāvana, and the animals dance with Him. “Sing ye. O animals, the name of Kṛṣṇa.” “You may see Lord Jaganātha smile, but you would faint if you actually saw Him.” “Oh when will my mind be completely purified so that I may be able to see Vṛndāvana as it is?” “The real thing is bhakti, your feeling. Kṛṣṇa, kindly take. I have no qualification. I am rotten, fallen. (Śrīla Prabhupāda is crying.) But I have brought this thing for You. Please take.” “You may all think that I am very advanced, but I pray to Kṛṣṇa every day to protect me from māyā.” To be personal must be amazing. If I could hear you, then I would know.

Your fallen servant,
Prahlādānanda Dāsa
(ISKCON Buffalo)

1971: ISKCON—Dallas

Most Merciful Spiritual Father!

The waves of Your causeless mercy are spreading over this material world like a tidal wave, drowning us all in the nectar of love of God. By Your lotus feet you have graced us with the highest benediction—engagement in Your service, the bliss of *sāṅkīrtana*. Please allow us to humbly serve You with love offerings of heart, body, mind, words, time and energy, in order to spread these blessed holy names throughout the three worlds. In the darkness of night we stumbled along until, by Your mercy, one by one, we heard the transcendental song, so nice, such a relief from this cruel, cruel world full of hate and grief. We were little lost children, and now You're bringing us home.

We are learning how to appreciate the words of instruction which Your Divine Grace is so kindly delivering to us. We are learning how to offer our activities to Your Divine Grace and thereby become happy and find meaning to our lives. We are learning how to tell others of this message so that they may be benefited by Your association. We are learning how to develop the sincerity to try to please You.

All Glories to Your Holiness.

All Glories to the eternal message of love you have given us! All Glories to the transcendental moon of the Śrī Kṛṣṇa Śāṅkīrtana Movement of Lord Chaitanya, which we relish more and more each day!

Oh, blessed day, time most sweet,
The end of life's eternal repeat,
Causeless mercy has come complete—
Devotional service at Your lotus feet.

*Mohanānanda and Śāstī devī / Prajāpati and Satarūpa and Sadhānanda / **Prahlādananda** / Rshavdev / Raghunāth / Rodney / Paul / Kelly / Gail and Kody*

1972: ISKCON—Austin

Yes, we want to be Kṛṣṇa conscious; we are tired of lonely, ignorant, deathly lives without any real happiness. We want to be free to live spiritual lives and be in love with Kṛṣṇa and all His creations.

Who does not want to be in Vṛndāvana with Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and the cows? The words of Your Divine Grace can give us real light beyond the unreality which Lord Kṛṣṇa has created, but for which we ourselves are responsible. “An affectionate father does not like that his children should be chastised by another agent, still he puts his disobedient children under the custody of a severe man just to bring them in order. But the all affectionate Almighty Father desires at the same time relief of the conditioned soul from the clutches of the illusory energy.” (Bhāg. 1.7.5)

Lord Kṛṣṇa has red lotus petal eyes and a peacock feather in His hair, He is perfect and complete and so is the mercy at Your lotus feet. We are bowing down at Your lotus feet and await the day that our throats will be choked up and our eyes will be flowing with uncontrollable tears, unable to express our appreciation to Your Divine Grace. Please accept whatever gratitude You have created within us.

ISKCON Austin

Prahladananda das / Srīnātha das Brahmachary / Dharmabhavana das / Bhakta Ben

1973: Austin

In material existence everyone is busily engaged in activities based on the bodily misconceptions “I” and “mine”. The Vedic knowledge, however, informs us that we are eternal servants of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa and consciously or not, we are engaged in His service. Material existence means that we are unaware of our eternal relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thus we feel ourselves to be in a most unnatural situation.

To aid the living entities entrapped by ignorance, Lord Kṛṣṇa periodically incarnates or sends His bona fide representatives to disseminate information concerning the path back to Godhead. There are numerous welfare organizations to aid suffering humanity, but they fail to see the soul within man’s material body. Thus, they ignore entirely the real malady—the absence of genuine spiritual life. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, thirty-second in a 5,000 year old unbroken line of spiritual masters originating from Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, is delivering knowledge beyond the illusory pretensions of our material relationships.

In 1966, His Divine Grace sat in a lower eastside New York park, chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa and told us that our complicated existence of material enjoyments robbed us of our understanding of the Absolute Truth. Today there are over 60 centers around the world distributing the stolen knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thus thousands of disciples are taking shelter under His Divine Grace’s instructions, and are finding comfort and light from his lotus feet.

As stated in the Brahma-sāṃhitā, the original Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa has an eternal transcendental form, full of bliss and knowledge. He is called Govinda because He is the “reservoir of all pleasure”. His pure devotees are connected with Him in a reciprocal relationship of love, and thus enjoy unlimited and unceasing happiness. As a desert is devoid of water, the material world is similarly dead and dry, being a place where one does not experience the sweet mellows of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the present ācārya, has been sent to us by Lord Kṛṣṇa, to practically demonstrate and relate the means of reviving our dormant Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. As Lord Kṛṣṇa states in the Bhagavad-gītā:

“Whatever action is performed by a great man, common men will follow in his footsteps. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues.”(Bg. 3.21)

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s unceasing efforts to broadcast the Supreme Lord’s glories throughout the world prove him to be the great soul or mahātmā that Lord Kṛṣṇa describes—

“Always engaged in chanting My glories, endeavoring with great determination, offering homage unto Me, they worship Me with devotion.” (Bg. 9.14)

In the Vedas it is stated that mundane sound vibrations are different from the objects they describe. But the name of God, the words used to describe His name, form, qualities, pastimes etc., being absolute, are non-different from the Personality of Godhead. Chanting of the names of God, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Rāma therefore engages one in a direct relationship with the Supreme, the perfection of which is demonstrated in unalloyed devotion. It is only this natural love for Lord Kṛṣṇa that can save us from our incessant hankering and lamentation over dead material things.

“I am simply an instrument for my master,” His Divine Grace declares. If somehow we can make his example our life, then we may attain the most attractive possession of pure love for God. All Glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Prahlādānanda dāsa / Dharmabhāvana dāsa / Bhakta Lani

1974: Austin

In every country we will find the general populace more or less adherent to the rules and regulations of the society, while a small percentage willfully violates such state laws. Those souls who, incalculably long ago, acquired a rebellious attitude towards God, were sent into material nature to live out their fantasies of becoming the supreme god, the enjoyer and controller. Although every living entity is the eternal servant of God, Lord Kṛṣṇa, they are imprisoned in material bodies, acting helplessly under the direction of Māyā’s mental and sensual impulses. Service to such illusions never satisfies the factual longing of the soul for real, unending pleasure and awareness.

The Vedic literature informs us that after passing through the 8,400,000 species of life, “It is time to inquire about Brahman.” As spirit souls we require spiritual life, and therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa, out of compassion, sometimes sends his representative as the spiritual master. The spiritual master delivers to his disciples knowledge of the material and spiritual laws so that they can act properly, become liberated from material perplexities and achieve the Supreme Lord’s eternal, blissful service and association.

Lord Kṛṣṇa cautions us in the Bhagavad-gītā that only a bonafide representative of His can reveal His message exactly as it is to the aspirant disciple.

*evam paramparā prāptam
imam rājarsayo viduḥ*

“This supreme science of yoga was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way.”

Śrīla Rūpa Goswami informs us that a spiritual master is one who can control the six sense gratifying agents, i.e. the tongue, belly, genitals, mind, anger and words. If one is the servant of such impulses, how can he surrender to God to act for the Lord’s interest? The spiritual master is one who utilizes his senses in the service of the Lord for everyone’s benefit.

*yoga-yukto viśuddhātmā
vijitātmā jitendriyaḥ
sarva-bhūtātma-bhūtātmā
kurvann api na lipyate*

“One who works in devotion, who is a pure soul, and who controls his mind and senses, is dear to everyone, and everyone is dear to him. Though always working, such a man is never entangled.” (Bg. 5.7)

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is an ācārya (teacher by example) coming in disciplic line from Lord Kṛṣṇa. His demonstration of aloofness from material sense gratification and his incessant glorification of Kṛṣṇa testifies to his absorption in the loving service of God.

“Those who are not deluded, the great souls, are under the protection of the divine nature. They are fully engaged in devotional service because they know Me to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead, original and inexhaustible. Always chanting My glories, endeavoring with great determination, bowing down before Me, these souls perpetually worship Me with devotion.” (Bg. 9.13-14)

His Divine Grace is giving us real knowledge of life and pure existence, not simply the word jugglery of so-called scientists, philosophers, educators, etc. These rascal demons, though totally ignorant of any true spiritual knowledge, mislead and misdirect the general mass of people into material activities leading to more bondage. Śrīla Prabhupāda’s pure and simple logic cuts through the labyrinths of bewilderment and fear created by such demoniac authorities.

Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees are served best by love. All living entities in conditional life suffer from forgetfulness of this loving attitude. Seeing this plight of the living beings, compassionate devotees attempt to end such distress by spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The spiritual master’s greatness not only lies in reminding his disciples about Lord Kṛṣṇa and devotional service, but also in teaching them how to relate the same knowledge to others.

“For one who explains this supreme secret to the devotees, devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me. There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear.” (Bg. 18.68-69)

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda

Austin ISKCON

Prahlādānanda dāsa / Jitaprāna dāsa / Dharmabhāvāna dāsa / Cinmayī dāsī

1975: Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara Saṅkīrtana Party

On this appearance day of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, we are remembering the prediction of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura: “Soon will appear one who will spread the saṅkīrtana movement of Lord Caitanya all over the world.” Your Divine Grace is that rare devotee, and we bow down to your lotus feet again and again. Your Divine Grace must have some intimate connection with Lord Caitanya, otherwise how is it that in five hundred years none of the great devotees have pushed the wave of love of Kṛṣṇa so far as to teach the desert-like hearts in the Western world. We wish we could understand your special position in relation to Lord Caitanya, but as we are only your foot stool and dogs, we can only take your mercy and purify ourselves so that someday we may be enabled to glorify Your Divine Grace properly.

Apart from our inability to glorify Your Divine Grace, we learn from the Bhagavad-gītā (18.68-69):

*ya idaṁ paramamṁ guhyaṁ
mad-bhakteṣv abhidhāsyati
bhaktiṁ mayi parāṁ kṛtvā
mām evaiśyaty asaṁśayaḥ*

*na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu
kaścin me priya-kṛttamaḥ
bhavitā na ca me tasmān
anyaḥ priyataro bhuvī*

“For one who explains the supreme secret to the devotees, devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me. There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear.”

Not only was this said to men of earth, but Kṛṣṇa spoke of your glories even to the demigods in heaven. In the Nectar of Devotion, it states that the spiritual master is the sum total of all the demigods. We ponder on the position of Your Divine Grace. Even if we could travel to the ends of millions of universes, we could gain nothing of value compared to your lotus feet. Your glories are sung by the devotee poets like Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī in Śrī Gurv-aṣṭaka (5):

*śrī-rādhikā-mādhavayor apāra-
mādhurya-līlā-guṇa-rūpa-nāmnām
pratīkṣaṇāsvādana-lolūpasya
vande guroḥ śrī-caraṇāravindam*

“The spiritual master is always eager to hear and chant about the unlimited, conjugal pastimes of Rādhikā and Mādhava, and Their qualities, names and forms. The spiritual master aspires to relish these at every moment. I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of such a spiritual master.”

The spiritual master is always engaged in assisting the gopīs in the transcendental loving affairs of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Most important to us is the shelter of your service. For it is your pleasure, realized through carrying out your orders, that protects us from Māyā. Were it not for knowing your pleasure, certainly we would have lost the holy inspiration to tender our small devotional creepers. It is in this truth and realization that we perceive your splendor. We can therefore joyfully exclaim that there is no end to the ecstasy of serving and knowing the pleasure of Your Divine Grace, and we are confident that this pleasure will continue and sustain us in our march towards the Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara Traveling Saṅkīrtana Party

TSKP No. 4

Prahlādānanda dāsa brahmacārī / Kavi Datta dāsa brahmacārī / Śivānanda dāsa brahmacārī / Jñapaka dāsa brahmacārī

1977: Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara TSKP

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda

You are the General Directing the fight
Revealing the Godhead
Destroying māyās' might.

Like Arjuna, we fear the battle call
We hesitate—we tremble—we fall.
Like Lord Kṛṣṇa, you lift us up by your instruction
You chastise—you enlighten you save us from destruction.

Remembering the cowherd boys, fearless we march
Into the Aghasurine cities and towns
Defying their 'fishy bad smells' and
Skyscraper fangs touching the clouds.

Armed with your books, forward we thrust
Deep into māyā's kingdom,
Illusions dispelled, the conditioned souls
Experience real freedom.

Māyā advanced through the godless technological race
Her gleam and glitter turn men's eyes from God's grace

Fouling the air, poisoning rivers and lakes
The scientists are modern Kāliya snakes.

And with your strong words
You kick on their heads
Replacing their venom
With nectar instead.

O Master! O Lord!
Please show us the arts
Of chanting and dancing
And purifying our hearts!

"Jaya Prabhupāda" and "Hare Kṛṣṇa"
These our battle cry! Pray to remember
Your lotus feet when we die.

And in your monumental plan
To create a new history
Remember your words—"Without a hard struggle—
What is the chance for a glorious Victory."

Śrīla Prabhupāda, all glories to you. How can I glorify you adequately? Only by your mercy will it be possible for me to begin. Like Haridāsa Thākura, you are an ocean of transcendental qualities. Like Vāsudeva Datta, your compassion knows no bounds as you are prepared to bear the sins of the universe and go to hell for Lord Śrī Caitanya. As Vakreśvara Paṇḍita danced all night, you once danced for Lord Jagannātha's entire festival in London, giving the Lord and all your devotees great joy. Just to hear this is wonderful. Who can estimate your fame? It is spread all over the three worlds. Like Rūpa and Sanātana, you are increasing the limits of the ocean of love of Godhead. Tirelessly preaching like no one else, you are never-endingly speaking of Lord Caitanya's mission, inspiring all of your devotees to preach this nāma-saṅkīrtana. O Śrīla Prabhupāda, so great you are, you have saved the world with your Bhaktivedanta purports.

You are my heart, my life and soul. My morning rising is by your call of service to the transcendental Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Morning bath, viṣṇu-tilaka, saffron robes, Gayatrī, thousands of Godbrothers, japa and maṅgala-ārātrika are all from you; priceless gifts of service and association you have bestowed. The Deities and Their prasāda, more than we can eat, and a first-class transcendental home; you have offered all this. What I could not have dreamed of in eternity, what would have been impossible for me to conceive of with this mundane mind, into this ISKCON Kṛṣṇa consciousness I have gained entrance by your grace. You are His Divine Grace, the mercy incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, and this movement is a manifestation of your pure, uncontaminated desire to please Śrī Gaurasundara.

This mission, your life and soul and every breath, is pure nectar, simply sublime and full of transcendental ecstasy. To take part as your assistant birth after birth—let that be my only desire. By assisting your preaching I can taste the highest bliss and know who are Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa—your youthful loving couple

for whom you've given up this world in madness. You are Their Lordship's eternal servitor and topmost devotee, and for this I have the proof. For Them you have come here and saved me and all of us. You are making everyone a Vaiṣṇava. Who can resist you? It is not possible. You have defeated everyone. You have taught the world real science, the best economy, perfect government and better business. You are the greatest cook, the best musician and sweetest vocalist. Even Nārada and Vyāsadeva sing your glories. You are the greatest author, greatest devotee, greatest spiritual master of all time, yet more humble than a blade of grass. Tolerating my offenses, always encouraging me, O Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am your dog. I cannot begin to glorify you yet you have allowed me to write some words. I love you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, please let me distribute your books wherever you see fit. You are my guide, my master, and my life is all your mercy. I am falling at your lotus feet, please consider my plea. You are my only shelter, what can I do? I am appealing to you and you will not turn me away. You have given me this sannyāsa order of life, now again I promise you, I make this vow, eternally I am your menial servant.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. All glories to you!

Śrī Śrī Radha Damodara Traveling Saṅkīrtana Party

Bus No. 1: Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Damodara

(Cincinnati Preaching Center, Louisville Preaching Center)

*Kavīcandra dāsa adhikārī / Gaurāṅga dāsa brahmacārī / Mahā Muni dāsa brahmacārī / Rāmācārya dāsa brahmacārī / Coṭa Haridāsa dāsa brahmacārī / Goloka dāsa brahmacārī / Bhagavān Ācārya dāsa brahmacārī / Aindra dāsa brahmacārī / Vrajendranandana dāsa brahmacārī / **Prahlādānanda dāsa brahmacārī** / Ratnabāhu dāsa brahmacārī / Jīva Pāvana dāsa brahmacārī / Mukunda Datta dāsa brahmacārī / Dayala dāsa brahmacārī*

1979: Chicago

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Your lotus feet are the greatest treasure within the three worlds. Completely aloof from the modes of material nature, you appeared in this world to establish the teachings of Vyāsadeva. From your childhood, Your Grace worshiped Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, organized Ratha-yātrā festivals, and held kīrtana. Never forgetting Kṛṣṇa for a moment, you stayed in India for sixty-nine years, and then under the instruction of Śrī Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Ṭhākura, you appeared in the West, like the early morning rising sun.

Just as Kṛṣṇa blessed this planet five thousand years ago with the imprints of His lotus feet, so you also placed your lotus feet on the land across the ocean that nonpreachers dare not cross. From Butler, Pennsylvania, to New York to Los Angeles and around the world, you benedicted all the unfortunate souls of Kali-yuga. Your mercy knows no bounds, as you magnanimously give shelter to anyone who comes your way. Delivering devotional service and love of God, you are a pure ambassador of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, your accomplishments are endless and unfathomable; how can we describe them? If one had thousands of mouths, then he could chant your glories for thousands of kalpas and never come to an end. If one had thousands of ears they would not be enough to hear your unique pastimes of delivering the fallen conditioned souls. We stand in awe of your greatness, and with all humility at our command, we pray to you, please hear us.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, if ever by our carelessness we commit some error in our service, please correct us and forgive our faults. If somehow we become offensive in our attitude please destroy the seeds of envy within our hearts. If by some chance we swerve from the path of bhakti, please set us straight and rectify our faults. And if somehow or other we forget Kṛṣṇa, please remind us of His lotus feet. Please give us the strength to push on the saṅkīrtana movement, and free us from all material desires so that we may work cooperatively for this goal. Please protect us from the poison of lusty thoughts, and when we leave this world, please assist us to remember Kṛṣṇa's holy name. And one more thing, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, when we have finished our service in this world, please let us accompany you to some other place. Please let us be with you while you vanquish the atheists, and sit by you as you lead ecstatic kīrtana.

We are all your children, and we are helpless without you. We need your direction at every step. Whatever service we render is meant just to please you. Please protect us and give us the shelter of your lotus feet.

*Śivarāma Svāmī / Tripurāri Svāmī / Gopījanavallabha Svāmī / Praghoṣa dāsa brahmacārī / Śukra dāsa brahmacārī / **Prahlādānanda dāsa brahmacārī** / Naikātmā dāsa brahmacārī / Pratapana dāsa brahmacārī / Subuddhi Rāya dāsa brahmacārī / Kāśirāma dāsa brahmacārī / Paśupati dāsa brahmacārī / Mahāmuni dāsa brahmacārī / Manusuta dāsa brahmacārī / Jaya Kṛṣṇa dāsa brahmacārī / Guruvāgni dāsa brahmacārī / Jīvapati dāsa brahmacārī / Jīva-pāvana dāsa brahmacārī / Sarvopama dāsa brahmacārī / Balirāja dāsa brahmacārī / Edhanīya-svabhāva dāsa brahmacārī / Mathurā-pati dāsa brahmacārī / Aindra dāsa brahmacārī / Sītā-Rāma dāsa brahmacārī / Bhakta Joe / Bhakta Joe / Bhakta Tim / Bhakta Ujama / Bhakta Mark Bhakta Melvin / Bhakta Bob / Rāsavihārī dāsa adhikārī / Rāmakeli dāsa adhikārī / Sikhi Mahiti dāsa adhikārī / Dīnanātha dāsa adhikārī / Śrī-nandanandana dāsa adhikārī / Gaura-devīdāsī / Mīsrāṇi-devī dāsī / Vraja-maṇḍala-devī dāsī / Cintāmaṇi-devī dāsī / Ṣaḍbhujā-devī dāsī / Paśupati-devī dāsī / Kāraṇa-kāraṇa-devī dāsī / Lalitā-devī dāsī / Saṅga-devī dāsī / Bhaja Govinda-devī dāsī / Yaśomatī-devī dāsī / Bhaktin Iantha / Kāñcanabālā-devī dāsī / Bhaktin Candisha / Vrajalālana-devī dāsī / Bhaktin Dianne / Rādhā-Gokulānanda / Nakula / Sahadeva / Rādhā-priya / Śyāmasundara*

1980: Los Angeles

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you once wrote, “Simply a festival of flowers and fruits does not constitute worship. But the one who serves the message of the guru really worships him. The service of the message is the real meaning of the Vedas. Don’t be proud, brothers. Come back to this.” While we lack both the realization and the sincerity to so boldly cry out to our Godbrothers, we hope that by repeating your words, they may see beyond our own foolish envious motives and recall your prophetic warning.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you came to England in what would be your last Western world appearance, and we were astonished, shocked and somewhat disappointed to see that apparently you had already left the earthly realm. “Madhyama-Prabhupāda,” the lionlike messenger of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, was at last tamed by an “Uttama-Prabhupāda,” who was until that time unknown to us. We were informed to not sing śrī-guru caraṇa padma, for it disturbed you. We knew why. We wanted to think that it caused you to feel too much ecstasy, but internally we knew that our lack of realization of the meaning of the words and subsequent parrotlike chanting was the actual reason. “Every day you are chanting, but unfortunately you do not know the meaning.” Some of my Godbrothers have foolishly thought that to know the meaning one must learn the language. Later they dared and died to differ with your “absolute opinion.” Let us pray to become servants of your message and really worship the guru. But, just as then, we cannot face you now. Just as then, we have forgotten you now and misplaced your message somewhere in the mire of personal consideration. In your absence, intoxicated by the flattery of sentimental fools and lusty women, we have taken our assets and accepted the most royal facilities for this breathing bag of stool and foul-smelling desires, allowing you’re your transcendental form to lie ingloriously unadorned, shamelessly neglected within the cool sands of Ramaṇa Reti. O Śrīla Prabhupāda, are we so ungrateful (guru-druha)? If all the great mountains of the world assembled in Vṛndāvana and offered their most valuable stones, jewels and gold in service of your lotus feet, perhaps a suitable memorial could be constructed. By collecting our hearts (vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ), massive marble monuments could arise, towering in the skies of Māyāpur and Vṛndāvana, testifying to your greatness. But we are “too intelligent.” “Milk is better than water. Please accept my offering, Śrīla Prabhupāda.” You have so patiently, compassionately given us Kṛṣṇa, most dear friend, but what have we offered you in return (guru-māra-vidyā)? We have offered you our sins, and not only from the past! But what is needed now is a demonstration of love, not intelligence, meaning the sacrifice of personal desires in the service of the beloved. Now, on this most glorious of all days, let us worship you in service to your message and vow book by book, brick by brick to spread your fame throughout the three worlds. In a brief moment of sincere humility, we devote our lives as flower offering unto the lotus feet of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda.

F.A.T.E. (L.A. & Detroit divisions)

*Ādi-deva dāsa adhikārī, Śilāditya-devī dāsī / Dhūmradeśa dāsa adhikārī, Cinmayī-devī dāsī, Anapāyinī / Bhāskara dāsa adhikārī, Kṛṣṇalaulyā-devī dāsī, Mandākinī, **Prahlādānanda** / Dayālu Nitāi dāsa adhikārī, Jaganmayī-devī dāsī / Yādavācārya dāsa adhikārī, Thomastina / Lāl Kṛṣṇa dāsa adhikārī, Pārvatī-devī dāsī / Locana dāsa adhikārī, Kṛṣṇa-vilāsini-devī dāsī / Ojasvi dāsa adhikārī, Viṣṇupriyā-devī dāsī / Rādhā-Gopīnātha dāsa adhikārī, Vṛndā-devī dāsī / Rūpānanda dāsa adhikārī, Colleen / Viśoka dāsa adhikārī, Pṛthā-devī dāsī, Viṣṇupriyā, Vṛndā / Yadunandana-pāda dāsa adhikārī, Dharmadā-devī dāsī / Samaraṇānanda dāsa adhikārī, Saṁsāramocana-devī dāsī, Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura / David, Subhadrā-devī dāsī / Nistraiguṇya dāsa / Bharadrāja dāsa / Ameyātmā dāsa / Caitanya-rūpa dāsa / Hari-Harā dāsa / Kṛṣṇapāda dāsa / Śacī Dulāl dāsa / Śyāmasundara dāsa / Caturā-devī dāsī / Madhyama-devī dāsī / Vṛndā-devī dāsī / Carol / India Śrī / John / Juana / Milton / Nestor / Benjamin / Angel / Jose / Bonnie*

1981: Philadelphia

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

This universe of measured duration is glorified by the numerous appearances of the Lord and His pure devotees. Our Vaisnava calendar records so many auspicious and holy days, but your appearance in this world is the most blessed event, the most auspicious of all holy days. Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have descended from Goloka Vṛndāvana, bringing the pure and potent message of Godhead, flavored with the sweetness of your unique transcendental personality. This world is wrapped in ignorance of Kṛṣṇa, and the tales of woe, misfortune, and havoc are ever mounting. The heavy repercussions for our lives of sin constituted our future. But you intervened, carrying the divine power to grant us pardon and parole.

The Mayavāda doctrine, sprouted in the soil of Bhārata-varṣa and spreading to Western shores, consumed the intellectuals in its hypnotic trance of monism and nihilism. It then seeped into the minds of the masses, like a dose of poison in the water supply. With awesome philosophical power and clarity, you have revealed Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as the Absolute Truth, delivering a deathblow to impersonalism and voidism.

Beyond liberation, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have given us pure devotional service to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the most sublime activity. You have responded to Lord Caitanya's plea for assistance in distributing Kṛṣṇa-prema as one else has ever done. The miracle of your attachment in creating ISKCON is like a many-faceted gem; although pondered and contemplated continuously, it reveals ever new depth and brilliance.

We, your disciples and granddisciples, fervently pray that we may eternally remain within the shelter of your lotus feet.

*Mahākrama dāsa brahmacari / Nārāyaṇa-kavaca dāsa brahmacari / Rāya Kṛṣṇa dāsa brahmacari /
Pālāyita dāsa brahmacari / Janmāṣṭmī dāsa brahmacari / Rāgānuga-dāsa brahmacari /
Rūpa-Raghunātha dāsa brahmacari / Dhīrodatta dāsa brahmacari / Amṛtāmsa dāsa brahmacari /
Adhokṣaja dāsa brahmacari / Śāstra dāsa brahmacari / Kṛṣṇanāma dāsa brahmacari / Haryāśva dāsa
brahmacari / Patita-pāvana dāsa brahmacari / Bali Maharaja dāsa brahmacari / Nanda dāsa
brahmacari / Bhakta Jimmy / Bhakta Mark / Bhakta Dave / Bhakta Dennis / Preraka dāsa adbhikārī /
Keśihā dāsa adbhikārī / Jaya Baladeva dāsa adbhikārī / Viṣṇu-ārādhanam dāsa adbhikārī / Tāraka dāsa
adbhikārī / Paramārādhyā dāsa adbhikārī / Mṛṇālīnī-devī-dāsī, Abhaya / Dharmarāja-devī dāsī /
Jāmbavatī-devī-dāsī, Mitra, Bālagore / Lalitāmṛta-devī dāsī / Kṛṣṇa-laulyam-devī-dāsī, Kāḷindī,
Mandakinī, **Prahlādānanda** / Harakāntā-devī dāsī / Revatī-devī dāsī / Līlā-avatāra-devī dāsī /
Jānakī-devī dāsī / Jayanti-devī dāsī / Tryadhīśa-devī dāsī / Īśvara-parama-devī dāsī / Mahā*

1981: Back to Godhead

The Bhagavad-gītā states that when religious practice declines and irreligious practice increases, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appears. His mission is to lead people to God consciousness and obedience to the principles of religion. Sometimes He descends personally, and sometimes He sends His bona fide representative in the form of His sons or servants, who propagate the dharma of the age. In the present age this dharma is sankirtana. As the Caitanya caritāmṛta states.

*Kali-kālera dharma Kṛṣṇa-nāma-sankirtana
Kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana*

“The fundamental religious system in the age of Kali is the congregational chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. Unless empowered by Kṛṣṇa, one cannot propagate the sankirtana movement.” (Cc. Antya 7.11)

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the founder-ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, should be considered an extraordinarily empowered servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Indeed, he is a śaktyāveśa-avatara, and this fact has been proved by his ability to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness around the world. As the jagad-guru, the spiritual master of the entire world, he could deliver anyone back to Godhead. The teachings and example of such an empowered preacher must be followed by anyone who wants to understand transcendental knowledge and attain the goal of human life.

The greatest empowered servants of Kṛṣṇa are the twelve mahājanas, the leaders of devotional service. The activities and teachings of the mahājanas, some of whom are personal expansions of Kṛṣṇa Himself, are glorified in the Vedic epic Śrīmad-Bhagavatam, which lists them as Lord Brahmā, Nārada Muni, Lord Śiva, the four Kumāras, Lord Kapiladeva, Prahlāda Mahārāja, Yamarāja, Janaka Maharaja, Śukadeva Gosvami, Bali Maharaja, Svāyambhuva Manu and Bhīṣmadeva. Śrīla Prabhupāda displayed many of the great qualities and abilities of the mahājanas in his preaching of Kṛṣṇa consciousness around the world. Let us now look at how Śrīla Prabhupāda embodied some of the transcendental qualities of them.

Lord Brahmā

Śrīla Prabhupāda was the current representative of the disciplic succession coming down from Lord Kṛṣṇa to Lord Brahma, the original created being and the engineer of the material universe. Just as Lord Brahmā was empowered by Lord Kṛṣṇa to create the material world, which gives the living entities an opportunity to use their allotted energies in the Supreme Lord’s devotional service, so Śrīla Prabhupāda was empowered by Kṛṣṇa to create the International Society for Krishna Consciousness to give people the opportunity to use everything to please Lord Kṛṣṇa. At the beginning of the creation, Lord Brahma prayed, “May the Supreme Lord be merciful toward me so that I, as before, may be empowered with the introspection to create, for I am also one of the surrendered souls who are dear to the Lord.” (Bhāg. 3.9.22) With the same devotional humility, Śrīla Prabhupāda, upon arriving in Boston harbor from India

in 1965, prayed to Lord Kṛṣṇa for the spiritual strength to perform his service: “Only by Your causeless mercy will my words become pure. I am sure that when this transcendental message penetrates their hearts they will certainly feel englanded and thus become liberated from all unhappy conditions of life.”

Narada Muni

Since time immemorial Narada Muni has cleansed the hearts of conditioned souls with his singing of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s glories to the accompaniment of his vīṇā. Similarly, Śrīla Prabhupāda has attracted many people to Kṛṣṇa consciousness with his singing of transcendental songs to the accompaniment of mṛdaṅga, karatālas, or harmonium. The primary duty of those following in the line of Nārada Muni, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, is bringing the conditioned souls back to Godhead. Narada Muni gave shelter to a low-born hunter named Mṛgāri, but Śrīla Prabhupāda awakened Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the hearts of thousands of people addicted to sinful activities even more vicious than a hunter’s. Indeed, Mṛgāri hunted only animals in the forest, but now people kill without any restriction—babies in the womb, innocent cows, and even themselves. Śrīla Prabhupāda is saving such lost souls.

Misguided materialists cannot recognize the greatness of saints like Śrīla Prabhupāda and Narada Muni. Dakṣa cursed Narada to have no fixed residence because he had converted thousands of Dakṣa’s sons to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda said some of his disciples’ parents had also cursed him to have no fixed residence. Śrīla Prabhupāda assures us, however, that because the curses against Narada and him resulted in traveling and preaching for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, these “curses” were actually benedictions. But Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to transfer the curse to his young disciples, particularly his sannyāsīs, so that he could sit in one place and translate Śrīmad-Bhagavatam.

Lord Śiva

Maharaja Dakṣa also previously cursed Lord Śiva, during a sacrifice attended by all the principal demigods, but Lord Śiva remained undisturbed and continued his meditation on Lord Viṣṇu. Similarly, Śrīla Prabhupāda had to endure many offenses from politicians, false incarnations, and ordinary demons, but he remained unaffected. Sometimes, simply by his charm and composure, Śrīla Prabhupāda would dissipate the hostility and doubts of his challengers. Just as Lord Śiva possesses all material wealth but lives beneath a tree, Śrīla Prabhupāda was the leader of a prosperous international movement but preferred to live simply. We should also note that both Lord Śiva and Śrīla Prabhupāda are so compassionate that they give shelter and their transcendental association to many low-class, ghostly living beings to elevate them to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Now people who were formerly immersed in the modes of ignorance and passion are healthy, happy, and progressing back to Godhead.

The Four Kumāras

Being completely absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Śrīla Prabhupāda always appeared youthful and effulgent, just as the four Kumāras always appear youthful and bright by their mystic power. Those under the modes of material nature cannot understand the Vaisnavas; therefore great Vaisnavas like the four Kumāras and Śrīla Prabhupāda are usually invisible to ordinary persons, although such Vaisnavas travel all over the universe to liberate the conditioned souls. But Śrīla Prabhupāda was even more merciful than

the Kumāras; although the Kumāras are reluctant to go to sinful places, Śrīla Prabhupāda, on the order of his spiritual master, came to the most sinful place, the Western countries, to purify the people there.

Lord Kapiladeva

Both Lord Kapiladeva and Śrīla Prabhupāda propagated pure devotional service; so those who know the transcendental purpose of human life consider them the most important personalities. In the last years of Śrīla Prabhupāda's manifest presence, at an age when most men had retired, he traveled extensively all over the world to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness. During the twelve years of his most far-reaching preaching, Śrīla Prabhupāda personally guided many thousands of disciples, through lectures, books, letters, tapes, and his personal association. Śrīla Prabhupāda's very life was preaching, and through his preaching he gave back to the real life of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to many conditioned souls.

Prahlāda Maharaja

Like Prahlāda Maharaja, Śrīla Prabhupāda remembered Lord Kṛṣṇa despite the greatest difficulties. Although living in the hellish Bowery in New York, Śrīla Prabhupāda was unconcerned about danger; he was always confident of Lord Kṛṣṇa's protection. Absorbed in remembrance of Lord Kṛṣṇa from the very beginning of their lives, both Prahlada and Śrīla Prabhupāda always worshiped Him with enthusiasm. Even the opposition of their family members could not dissuade them from their service to the Lord; instead, they converted the sons of many demons to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Without a thought for any material benefit, they underwent great tribulations simply out of compassion for the fallen, conditioned souls.

Yamarāja

Yamarāja was so eager to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness that he willingly accepted the position of a śūdra, Vidura. Śrīla Prabhupāda also underwent many hardships, such as crossing the turbulent waters of the Atlantic Ocean to preach in a foreign land where he had no connections and no apparent means of support.

Janaka Maharaja

As Janaka Maharaja brought forth the goddess of fortune even from the dust, Śrīla Prabhupāda founded the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement amidst the dirt of materialistic America.

Śukadeva Gosvami

Śukadeva Gosvami's father, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, is the literary incarnation of God, and Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual father, His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura, was the foremost scholar and devotee of the recent age. By the mercy of the Supreme Lord and the great spiritual masters, both Sukadeva Gosvami and Śrīla Prabhupāda narrated the Śrīmad-Bhagavatam for the enlightenment of the conditioned souls in Kali-yuga.

Bhīṣmadeva

Bhīṣmadeva, the great devotee and soldier, fought fiercely on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra although, he had long since earned the title “Grandfather Bhīṣma.” Similarly, Śrīla Prabhupāda, although in his seventies, worked so strenuously at preaching, translating, and traveling around the world that even his youthful disciples could not keep up with him. As the time of departure approached, both Bhīṣmadeva, lying on a bed of arrows, and Śrīla Prabhupāda, afflicted by painful disease, spoke perfectly on religious principles according to time, place and audience. Thus Lord Kṛṣṇa proved that his pure devotees are always sound in body and mind by dint of spiritual enlightenment. Lord Kṛṣṇa personally attended the passing away of both Bhīṣmadeva and Śrīla Prabhupāda. Those present when Bhīṣmadeva quit his material body could see Lord Kṛṣṇa standing in His four-armed form before the great warrior, and those present at the time of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s departure experienced Lord Kṛṣṇa’s presence in the incarnation of the holy name.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s delivering the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the most auspicious event in the history of the West. He is like an eternal sun, illuminating everything with the brilliance of his preaching. Owl-like men who choose to close their eyes to his effulgent teachings will remain perpetually in darkness. But those who take advantage of the opportunity to become God conscious will surely attain the ultimate goal of life and return back to the spiritual kingdom.

Satsvarūpa dāsa Gosvami / Jayādvaita Swami / Yogeśvara dāsa / Ravīndra-svarūpa dāsa / Prahlādānanda dāsa / Draviḍa dāsa / Yamaraja dāsa / Jaya Jagadīśa dāsa / Tattvavit dāsa / Taponidhi dāsa / Rkṣaraja dāsa / Sādhana-siddhi dāsa

1982: Newark

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

The Vedic literature states, mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ: for spiritual advancement one must follow in the footsteps of previous authorities. Except for the completely independent Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, everyone is following some authority, material or spiritual. A spirit soul absorbed in a material bodily conception of existence is under the jurisdiction of material nature. Forgetful of his relationship with the Supreme Lord, the conditioned soul blindly serves the whips of lust, anger, greed, illusion, and words in activities of sensory gratification. Struggling to control and enjoy material nature, he is aware of neither the degree of his material conditioning nor the power of the actual controller and enjoyer, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The spiritual authorities are Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and those who represent Him in disciplic succession. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the controller and source of all material and spiritual energies, is truly qualified to be worshiped by everyone. In Bhagavad-gītā Lord Kṛṣṇa has advised everyone to surrender unto Him and thus become happy and free from all material distress. Lord Kṛṣṇa created the material world to give the rebellious souls an opportunity to surrender unto Him; therefore, He says that no one is dearer to Him than one who distributes the knowledge of bhakti-yoga, devotional service.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, as the disciplic representative of the Supreme Personality of Godhead who has spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world, you are most dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Your accomplishments in the Lord's devotional service are too vast to measure—the opening of over one hundred centers, translating over seventy major works of Vaiṣṇava literature, accepting over forty-five hundred disciples and traveling to Rāvaṇa's kingdom in the Western world, at the age of seventy, to begin a massive assault on impersonalism and godlessness. You have thus spread an effulgence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness by your every word, thought and action—and by Lord Kṛṣṇa's grace this effulgence continues to shine brightly.

We can only pray to be engaged in your devotional service and to become a pure instrument, assisting you in fulfilling the desires of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Your servants in Newark,

Prahlādānanda Swami / Amṛtāmśa dāsa / Palāyita dāsa / Kṛṣṇa-nāma dāsa

1983: Newark

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to your divine self.

Meditating upon you and the effulgent gifts emanating from the spring flowing from your love for Kṛṣṇa and your spiritual master is actual happiness. We worship you, Lord Kṛṣṇa's divine manifestation of pure spiritual existence, empowered with ever-expanding Kṛṣṇa-prema. By your smile or serious contemplation, by your glance or facial gesture, you awaken our dormant affection for Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. Your instructions melt the iceberg of our hearts and allow Lord Kṛṣṇa's sublime pastimes to flow through our minds and immerse our souls in divine thought.

Others before you spoke of Lord Kṛṣṇa, but only your spontaneous love for Him and your spiritual master could attract us. As the key to our long-neglected treasure of love for Kṛṣṇa, only you can save us. Śrīla Prabhupāda, at every moment many souls, forced by their sinful karma, take bodies in lower species of life, missing their opportunity to awaken their love for Kṛṣṇa. Unfortunately, we lack the potency to save them or ourselves from the grinding wheel of material existence. But we are confident that gradually your love for us is removing our material attachments and thus enabling us to assist you in bringing Lord Kṛṣṇa's other children back to the spiritual kingdom. Let us remain close to your lotus feet as tiny instruments in your glorious movement.

Your servants in Newark, Delaware,

Prahlādānanda Swami / Dvārakādhīśa dāsa / Kṛṣṇa-nāma dāsa

1985: Prahlādānanda Swami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

The Supreme Personality of Godhead's message comes down through an unbroken succession of bona fide spiritual masters, which originates with Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. Today is the celebration of your divine appearance day. It is especially auspicious because you are the most exalted representative of Lord Kṛṣṇa who has distributed full Kṛṣṇa consciousness further around the world than any saint or incarnation within recorded history. Having gotten a glimpse of your lotus footprints, we can only pray for the strength to be able to follow them.

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

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

You have stated that your disciples' love for you will be tested by their ability to work cooperatively together. Certainly this will at times require great patience and determination, but to satisfy you we must be prepared to do anything. Pradyumna, Lord Kṛṣṇa's son, once said that if he was placed in an ocean of nectar but could not remember Lord Kṛṣṇa, he would experience the ocean as being poisonous; but even if he was in an ocean of poison, if he was in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, it would seem to him like an ocean of nectar. Kṛṣṇa consciousness in this age also means consciousness of you—Prabhupāda consciousness.

Once in San Francisco, in 1974, when I was fanning you, you were radiating with compassion as you began talking about the conditioned souls of this material world and said, "I just want them to be happy." So by your mercy let our desires be transcendently pure and simple like yours; let us not be burdened by our petty material dreams connected with our material bodies and desires; let us turn inwards, into our hearts, and listen to the Lord, yourself, and your sincere representatives, and thus let us become divine instruments to spread Kṛṣṇa and Prabhupāda consciousness around the world.

Your humble servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

1986: Peru

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our humble obeisances. All glories to your divine self.

*nama oṁ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

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

Although very few of the devotees in Peru had direct personal association with you, still, as we surrender to your divine instructions and become servants of your servants, we experience your transcendental association. Our country lacks material wealth, and its people have many misconceptions about spiritual life, but somehow your simple and sublime process appeals to them, and therefore we have great hope of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness here nicely.

You have given us the example of a perfect loving servant of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees; indeed, you love everyone because you see only Lord Kṛṣṇa and His energies. Please help us to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness to serve your mission sincerely and thus awaken the fallen sleeping souls, so they can realize their ecstatic and loving Kṛṣṇa consciousness and thus be eternally happy. Please grant us the intelligence to increase our book distribution and other ways of distributing the culture of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and let us also become pure devotees by following your instructions carefully, thus becoming examples for others.

Your servants in Peru, Lima

Disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda

Prahlādānanda Swami

1986: Prahlādānanda Swami

*nama oṁ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Although we are Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal servants, we, the conditioned souls in this material world, are imagining ourselves to have many illusory identities. Thus we fight amongst ourselves to gain

prominence in this material world, trying to enjoy temporary pleasures in a world of birth and death. But fortunately we have the opportunity to relish your nectarean association in the form of your transcendental literature, tapes, films about you, and the good example of your devotees. Indeed, you have declared that ISKCON is your transcendental body.

An important part of your glories is your followers, those who live by your transcendental instructions. Therefore, I pray for the intelligence to enable me to become the servant of your servants. Please grant me the humility to serve them, and the transcendental discrimination to do it properly. As you are always seeing Kṛṣṇa everywhere and in everything and are serving Him with transcendental love, let me bow down in service to your lotus feet and the lotus feet of your followers and lovingly serve them with enthusiasm, confidence, and patience.

Please make me an instrument to glorify Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lord Caitanya, and Their followers by giving me the ability to expand the Kṛṣṇa conscious culture around the world, especially by printing and distributing your literature and by making my life nondifferent from your orders.

Your servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

1987: Prahlādānanda Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

In your Bhagavad-gītā purport to the fifty-seventh verse of the Eighteenth Chapter you explain that the word *mat-paraḥ* in the verse is very important. These words you say indicate that a pure devotee has no goal in life save and except acting in Krishna consciousness just to satisfy Krishna. And while working in Krishna consciousness one should think of Krishna only: “I have been appointed to discharge this particular duty by Krishna.” This is the method you prescribe for one to naturally think of Krishna and thus make one’s life perfect in Krishna consciousness.

However, to understand Lord Krishna’s desires one must follow the teachings and example of elevated devotees, who have understood Krishna by their proper deliberation and practical activities. Fortunately, by Krishna’s grace we have the association of Your Divine Grace, who has given us Krishna consciousness through your instructions and pure spiritual example. You are still present with us through your ISKCON institution and your instructions. Out of ecstatic love for Krishna and your spiritual master, not only have you distributed Krishna consciousness further around the world and in more diverse ways than anyone in history, but also through your instruction you continue to inspire your followers to

maintain and expand the mission that you yourself established. Because you only see Krishna in everyone, and because everyone is very dear to you, you are always trying to distribute generously the most valuable possession you have – pure love for Krishna.

Because you are the most addicted to Krishna, your books are continuously revealing Krishna and helping to expand His glories around the world. Anyone who reads your books regularly and seriously will certainly gradually intensify his awareness of Krishna and thus awaken his natural dormant love for Krishna. You are happy to see others happy in Krishna consciousness, and you appreciate with deep devotional love even insignificant service rendered to please you, and your feelings of appreciation and love help others to advance in Krishna consciousness.

Ultimately to satisfy you we must become pure and continue on with your cultural revolution to spread Krishna consciousness around the world. This revolution is a change in the consciousness of the people by convincing them that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that if they follow His instructions they will revive their dormant loving relationship with Him and be happy. Therefore, by distributing your books, by art, by music, by theater, by dioramas, by any and every means, we must try to convince people that Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And if they think that Krishna is mythological, we can introduce Lord Caitanya, who appeared only five hundred years ago. And if Lord Caitanya is still too distant, surely any intelligent person will appreciate your glories, if they are properly presented, and therefore agree to follow your simple instructions to make progress in Krishna consciousness. We pray for your mercy that we can serve as your instruments in this campaign to convince everyone, all Vaiṣṇavas, all Hindus, all religious groups, to unite together and distribute Krishna consciousness all over the world. This is the real meaning of *mat-parah*; this is the real meaning of being your sincere disciple.

Begging to be your eternal servant,
Prahlādananda Swami

1988: Prahlādananda Swami

*nama oṃ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

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

One day, as I was fanning Your Divine Grace, I experienced that you were submerged in a mood of compassion when you said, “We simply want to see that people are happy.” Since people can be happy only in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the method of fulfilling your pure desire is to give the innocent people in general knowledge of how to revive their awareness of and appreciation for Lord Kṛṣṇa. Charity, as you also confirmed, begins at home, and so I must also give up envy born of ignorance and base my

relationship with Kṛṣṇa not on the business of fulfilling my own personal desires, but out of genuine love for Him and His pure devotee.

A serious offense in devotional service is blaspheming devotees who are engaged in devotional service. What is constructive criticism and what is offensive, we must judge by guru, sadhu, and śāstra, and ultimately by its results—my aim should be to serve Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, not to unnecessarily disturb them. I can advance rapidly in devotional service by becoming the servants of His servants, and fall quickly by offending them. Giving up all unnecessary criticism, I can begin to develop a hearty appreciation for the big and seemingly not-so-big services that Kṛṣṇa’s pure devotees render to Him. I cannot taste the amount of love Kṛṣṇa devotees place in their offering, but you and Kṛṣṇa can. If I serve you and Kṛṣṇa’s devotees, I can make advancement in devotional service and give up my entanglement with Māyā. Let me follow your example and instructions and become a true friend to anyone who even renders the smallest service to Kṛṣṇa through your movement.

You have explained to your disciples that to expand their love of Kṛṣṇa further and further, they must preach by creating a world revolution to convince people that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. How do you do this? By art, by music, by theatre, and especially by distributing your books, and by any and every means. Let people know that Kṛṣṇa is God and if we serve Him and His instructions everyone can live peacefully and happily, make progress in life, and at the end go back to the spiritual world. Let us, your followers, compete amongst ourselves to serve you and Kṛṣṇa, who is the source of everything we hanker for. The more we become expert, the more we can engage our mind, senses, and intelligence fully in this work; indeed, we can engage all the Vaiṣṇava in this cultural revolution, then perhaps all religious groups. Let us conquer our atheistic minds and whimsical senses by conquering the world for you and Kṛṣṇa. “Work now, samādhi later.”

Begging to become your servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

1990: Prahlādānanda Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*Om ajnana-timirandhasya jnananjana-salakaya
Caksur unmilitam yena tasmai Śrī-gurave namah*

In your books you have explained, “The art of focusing one’s attention on the Supreme and giving one’s love to Him is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness. “ Mercifully, you have given us your transcendental books and the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement to help us learn this art and thus rise to the platform of spontaneous love for Kṛṣṇa, whereby our lives will actually become peaceful, happy, and truly successful.

One time, while I was fanning you in San Francisco, I felt the atmosphere ecstatically permeated with your compassion when you said, “ We just want people to become happy.” What is the method of becoming happy? Your books explain, “Satisfaction of the self-realized spiritual master is the secret of

advancement in spiritual life.” Who is a bona fide spiritual master? “ A person in the disciplic succession [who] can convey the message of the Lord as it is to his disciple.” How to satisfy the spiritual master? “ A spiritual master should be accepted in full surrender, and one should serve the spiritual master like a menial servant, without false prestige... One must be able to pass the test of the spiritual master, and when he sees the genuine desire of the disciple, he automatically blesses the disciple with genuine spiritual understanding.”

Clear understanding of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, obtained from a bona fide spiritual master, will enable us to act in such clear consciousness that Lord Kṛṣṇa will be pleased to sit in our hearts and give us His transcendental directions. It is our primary duty as devotees to learn how to properly render service unto Kṛṣṇa, under the direction of a spiritual master, and thus be recognized by Him.

You are the perfect example, Śrīla Prabhupāda, of a devotee completely attached to Lord Kṛṣṇa and to serving His mission. And the best service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, as you have many times told us, is to preach His message through a Kṛṣṇa conscious cultural revolution –through art, theater, music, and especially by distributing books- a revolution in which we can engage all our energies in trying to convince people that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If we fight with determination and intelligence in the battlefield of preaching, under the guidance of the great mahā-rathīs like you and the Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, surely māyā will be defeated and Kṛṣṇa-prema will flood our hearts and the hearts of many other suffering conditioned souls in this universe.

Your servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

1991: Prahlādānanda Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhūtale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta svāmin iti nāmine*

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

When aboard the ship Jaladuta, you humbly said that your qualification for preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness was your strong faith in the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. Indeed, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is an expansion of your desire to give the holy name of Kṛṣṇa to others. And when ending your manifest līlā, you repeatedly quoted from the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, nivṛtta-tarṣair upagīyamānād bhavauśadhāt: The best medicine in the world is hari-kīrtana. In the verse in the Bhagavad-gītā (18.65) where Śrī Kṛṣṇa reveals His most confidential knowledge, your confidential purport says, “One should arrange his life in such a way that throughout twenty-four hours he cannot but think of Kṛṣṇa.” Therefore,

if we arrange our lives to live as simply as possible and always chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, then our next lives will be spiritual.

Simple living can be many things. It can mean yukta-vairāgya, that we are using all material resources at our disposal to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Our consciousness becomes simple as we see everything in its relationship to Kṛṣṇa, and thus our material desires to be independent lords and enjoyers of this material world are removed. Simple living can also mean to simplify our material lives by working only for the bare necessities of life. And the time saved can be used to engage in direct Kṛṣṇa conscious activities, beginning with hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa. By your mercy, Śrīla Prabhupāda, members of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness society have been successful in many parts of the world using their material resources to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And that is most important. But especially devotees who are not fully engaged in preaching or assisting the preaching mission should show the example of how to live simply and engage fully in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

For preaching we must be very organized and we must be very pure. Organized means to arrange our movement systematically and intelligently. As you wrote in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, “Let there be systematic propaganda for popularizing reading of the Bhagavad-gītā and the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which will act like sugar candy for the jaundicelike condition of sense gratification.” When people have a taste for this literature, the other literatures, which are catering poison to society, will then automatically cease to attract them. And pure means to love Kṛṣṇa and to learn to love everyone and everything as they are related to Kṛṣṇa.

Nothing is so intimately related to Kṛṣṇa in this material world as the preaching work of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. No one is so intimately related to Kṛṣṇa in this material world as one who is trying to spread His glories. No better method exists in this material world to show our love for you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, than to cooperatively preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the institution that you founded—ISKCON. By doing this we will naturally remember Kṛṣṇa. Thus we all have the same duty to do—to please you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, by following your instructions completely, according to our best understanding. But let us not become complacent. You have given us a big mission—to save humanity by a Kṛṣṇa conscious cultural conquest, especially by distributing your books. And at the same time, we must save ourselves.

Your aspiring servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

1992: Prahlādānanda Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

Within your heart is the spiritual world, where Kṛṣṇa and His transcendental associates perform their eternal līlā. The Lord has kindly sent you to teach us, the conditioned souls of this material world, how we can join His association through service. Out of your devotional love you have created the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, ISKCON, and you have explained to us that serving Kṛṣṇa means serving this movement.

Seeing the defects in this movement or in its devotees is not difficult for such expert faultfinders as us. But by your training we are also learning to appreciate ISKCON, the only movement that is doing anything of lasting value. And if this movement has any problems, because we appreciate you we will try to rectify them. By working with such full appreciation, we can advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

The more we appreciate the enthusiasm, conviction, and patience of ISKCON's devotees, big and small, the sweeter our relationships become, and the sweeter our lives. The best way to learn how to appreciate this movement and its devotees is to meditate on how you appreciate them, and how this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement was created and is expanding on the basis of your loving appreciation. Śrīla Prabhupāda, please give me even a drop of such appreciation.

Your servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

1993: Prahlādānanda Swami

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhūtale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

A conditioned soul should not imitate a mahā-bhāgavata devotee's activities, but must follow his instructions to reach perfection. In 1969, on the disappearance day celebration of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, when I saw you walking up the stairs to the temple room in Boston, the entire room turned into Vaikuṅṭha by your presence. All my anxieties disappeared. Sitting down on the vyāsāsana, you looked at me and I could see that your vision was perfect and clear. Your samādhi of emotional ecstasy that you experienced in your transcendental separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His eternal

associates cannot be imitated. However, in the association of your devotees, through your books I try to develop transcendental vision and try to serve you and thus achieve your blessings and causeless mercy. “Discussion of Kṛṣṇa is very potent, and if a fortunate person has such association [of devotees] and tries to assimilate the knowledge, then he will surely make advancement toward spiritual realization” (Bhagavad-gītā 9.1, purport).

You are compassionate upon the many conditioned souls suffering in the material world and know the ultimate solution to their problems—hearing about the Supreme Lord in the association of devotees and a bona fide spiritual master. “The other methods of purification may be helpful to come to this stage of life, but ultimately one has to come to this last point before he attains actual perfection” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.6.34). Therefore we must preach your message and create the Vaiṣṇava atmosphere within our temples, so people can come and faithfully hear about Śrī Kṛṣṇa—that will solve the problems of this world.

Your aspiring servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

1994: Prahlādānanda Swami

*nama oṃ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Simply by loving Kṛṣṇa. It is very easy. You love here, there, so many. You just try to love Kṛṣṇa and stay in transcendental state. Love is there, but we are misplacing our love. That is our folly. (Śrīla Prabhupāda Lecture, Montreal July 6, 1968)

In this way our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is very simple, focusing our attention on Śrī Kṛṣṇa and giving our love to Him. You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are the ācārya teaching how to engage everything in the loving service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and not getting entangled unnecessarily in material affairs. Therefore as it states in the Mahābhārata: dharmasya tattvaṁ nihitaṁ guhāyāṁ mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ. Let us follow in your lotus footprints, develop our Kṛṣṇa consciousness and preach your message purely and effectively to others.

Prahlādānanda Swami

1995: Prahādānanda Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Only by our trying to understand your instructions and obeying them enthusiastically can our lives become successful. As we gain more experience it becomes clearer that you are not an ordinary person whose instructions can be subject to our speculative interpretations. When you visited Buffalo in 1969, a devotee named Nanda Kumāra dāsa came there from Canada to receive initiation. At that time, you were staying in Rūpānuga Prabhu’s apartment. While speaking to a gathering of devotees, you gave Nanda Kumāra a letter to put in the mailbox. You cautioned him not to put it in his back pocket, or otherwise he would forget to mail it. Several times you repeated this instruction to him. Later Nanda Kumāra met me in a laundry and said, “I forgot to mail the letter that Śrīla Prabhupāda gave me. I put it in my back pocket.” Without following the orders of the spiritual master, we are sure to be defeated by the illusory energy and to commit mistakes.

Although steady faith in the spiritual master is not easily obtained, when you were physically present Lord Caitanya invested you with the potency to distribute this faith. Many times in your association my faith in you and Kṛṣṇa consciousness causelessly increased. On the day celebrating the disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī in December 1969, when I saw you walking up the stairs to the temple room in Boston, I was struck with wonder and appreciation. Your transcendental effulgence dissipated the gloom of a dark winter day and pervaded the temple room with a celestial atmosphere, sweeter than any spring morning. When, sitting on your vyāsāsana, you glanced at me, I saw that with your spiritual vision you could understand everything about me, all the way to the soul.

Sometimes when I attended your darśanas or accompanied you on morning walks, I could to some degree perceive your exalted spiritual position. I often wondered how you had achieved such a marvelous state of transcendental existence. However, as you always stressed, it is an open secret that all perfection comes from following the instructions of the spiritual master. You encouraged us that although we may not have any spiritual assets from our birth or upbringing, if we surrender to the spiritual master, Lord Kṛṣṇa will create our spiritual assets. Sometimes my mind still deludes me into thinking that I should be immediately granted spiritual advancement without any austerity or sacrifice. But by your mercy I struggle to follow the process, and I look forward to the day when I can distribute your books in continuous joy and when I can concentrate on my sādhana and not only on prasāda.

Any service done under your guidance and with faith and devotion is ever fresh and new. If a devotee sincerely tries to please you, Lord Kṛṣṇa becomes pleased and reveals Himself to the devotee. Lord Kṛṣṇa’s name, vibrated according to your instructions, becomes the holy name, no longer simply letters of the alphabet. If we follow your instructions, our concentrated and careful hearing and chanting about Lord

Kṛṣṇa in the association of devotees brings us immediately to the spiritual world. If I therefore could ask you for any benediction, it would be that you please give me faith in the service of your wonderful lotus feet.

Prahlādānanda Swami

1996: Prahlādānanda Swami

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

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

Each year a highlight of your Vyāsa-pūjā ceremony is hearing the devotees' Vyāsa-pūjā homages glorifying you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. This is an opportunity to broaden my understanding and appreciation of your transcendental qualities and activities. Since I am a conditioned soul, my experience is limited, and I have not entered deeply into the profound depths of your transcendental glories. Still, because your glories are absolute and you have blessed your sincere devotees, hearing about your glories from their lips, or repeating what they have said, or remembering their insights into your divine personality, is purifying and gives me the opportunity to intimately associate with you.

When Gopīnātha Ācārya was trying to convince Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya that Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Bhaṭṭācārya challenged him. He questioned Gopīnātha Ācārya: "What is the proof that you have received the mercy of the Lord?" Gopīnātha Ācārya replied that if one understands the transcendental potencies of the Lord, that is proof of one's receiving the mercy of the Lord because the Lord is absolute, His potencies being nondifferent from Him. Therefore, hearing your transcendental glories sung by purified devotees is receiving your divine association.

Two prominent glories of yours are your transcendental books and the transcendental movement that you created. These were services that you rendered to please your Guru Mahārāja. You, more than any of your contemporaries, understood that success in spiritual life depends completely on becoming a surrendered servant to the spiritual master. From your own example and instructions, you emphasized to your disciples that all success, individually and collectively, can be obtained by strictly following the orders of Guru and Kṛṣṇa.

In the 1950's before coming to the West you became struck with wonder when you read Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary on the 41st verse of the second chapter of the Bhagavad-gītā:

"The best kind of intelligence I can have is intelligence used in the service of Kṛṣṇa. Intelligence is defined as 'fixed' when it is intent upon my spiritual master's instructions, such as chanting the name of Kṛṣṇa, remembering His activities, and performing service to His lotus feet. My spiritual master's instructions are my sādhana and my life, both in the beginning stages of bhakti as well in bhakti's perfectional stage. I

desire only to follow his instructions; I accept nothing else as my life's work, even in dreams. Whether I am happy or distressed, whether the material world remains or is destroyed, I don't care. There is no loss for me. I simply must carry the orders of my spiritual master. Fixedness upon his order is determined intelligence and devotional service, and only by being fixed on his orders can such determined intelligence flourish.”

In a lecture in Los Angeles in 1975 you humbly said, “I have no personal qualification, but I simply tried to satisfy my guru. That's all.” Your Guru Mahārāja instructed that if you ever got money then you should print books. Another instruction was to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the English language. Combining the instructions, you first translated and printed books in English. Then, like Hanumān's burning Laṅkā and thus more than fulfilling the original orders of Lord Rāmacandra, you gave the monkeylike soldiers in your army the opportunity to attack Māyā's kingdom by translating your books in different languages and distributing them around the world.

Your spiritual master understood that only a unified preaching mission could do something significant to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. To keep a unified mission, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Ṭhākura asked that his leading devotees form a GBC, with the idea of conducting the missionary activities in a cooperative spirit. Surrendered to the instructions of your spiritual master, you instituted a GBC in ISKCON and emphasized cooperation over personal achievement. Sometimes, when your leading devotees did not cooperate and thus disturbed the preaching mission, you removed them from their positions. You did not want only an official GBC body, but you wanted it to follow your instructions and example and thus set the example of cooperation in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In your purport to Bhagavad-gītā 18.57, you express Rūpa Gosvāmī's success formula. A devotee should always try to please Lord Kṛṣṇa by acting to fulfill His desires. What the Lord desires can be known through the disciplic succession's instructions, which come down through the bona fide spiritual master. One who executes such Kṛṣṇa conscious service will naturally remember Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is obvious from your transcendental successes that no one was as empowered to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness as you. This is undoubtedly because you most perfectly understood the desires of your spiritual master and the disciplic succession and enthusiastically engaged in their service. You could thus chant the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa purely and be always absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, your heart being a place of pastimes for Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Pañca-tattva. Thus as a personified place of pilgrimage (tīrtha), you attracted thousands of sincere souls to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Although I have not clearly understood your desires and am not strictly engaged in your service, Śrīla Prabhupāda, please bless me by allowing me to continue to associate with those devotees who are anxious for your mercy and who will thus help me steadily approach closer to your lotus feet.

Your aspiring servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

1997: Prahlādānanda Swami

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

Although in the Bhagavad-gītā (10.38) Lord Kṛṣṇa mentions that of secret things He is silence, still He reveals to Arjuna secret and still more secret knowledge. Similarly, in his books Śrīla Prabhupāda reveals to us confidential, more confidential, and most confidential knowledge. Śrīla Prabhupāda follows in the footsteps of Rāmānujācārya, who, when his guru gave to him a secret mantra that would benefit everyone, immediately revealed it to others. His guru at first became angry but was then pleased when he understood Rāmānuja's pure motive. Lord Kṛṣṇa also says that anyone who reveals His secrets to the devotees is most dear to Him and thus becomes eligible to return to the spiritual world.

Below is a small selection of the secret information that Śrīla Prabhupāda reveals within his books. Śrīla Prabhupāda would like us to understand these secrets and distribute them to others. As Śrīla Prabhupāda said in Boston in 1969:

So everything is there. You can take advantage of these facilities. Therefore we have opened this center. You come. You try to understand and be benefited. We are not asking you that "Give us thousand dollars. Then we shall open our secret." Our secret is all open secret. You simply take advantage of it. Try to understand with your reason, with your sense, everything.

The Secret of Service to the Guru

The secret of Vyāsa-pūjā

The plain truth so vividly explained in the Gītā, which is the central lesson of the Vedas, is not understood or even suspected by the most powerful scholars of the empiric schools. Herein lies the secret of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā. When we meditate on the transcendental pastimes of the Absolute Godhead, we are proud to feel that we are His eternal servitors, and we become jubilant and dance with joy. All glory to my divine master, for it is he who has out of his unceasing flow of mercy stirred up within us such a movement of eternal existence. Let us bow down at his lotus feet. [The Science of Self-Realization, Ch. 2]

The Secret of advancing in spiritual life

Satisfaction of the self-realized spiritual master is the secret of advancement in spiritual life. [Bhagavad-gītā 4.34, purport]

Secret of getting Lord Kṛṣṇa's benedictions

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, 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. [Lecture on the disappearance anniversary of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura, Los Angeles, 9 December 1969]

Prabhupāda’s Secret of Success

The secret of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s success

My Guru Mahārāja gave me hint that book publication is more pleasing to me than maṭha-mandira. So I took it and I began to publish books, and that has come successful. Kāryaṁ karma. I took it, “Oh, Guru Mahārāja wants that books should be published. So let me concentrate on this instead of—” My creating so many centers, big, big temples, that is not my primary duty. My primary duty is to write books. Therefore I am going on still. These are coming automatically. Maybe this is the secret of my success. [Morning walk, Bombay, 2 April 1974]

Prabhupāda’s humility

Actually, that is the secret of my success, not that personally I have done anything wonderful, but that because those who are helping me are sincere, they have done the work, that is the reason for our success all over the world where others have failed. [Letter to Karandhara, January 1973]

Preaching

Prabhupāda’s open secret

You write to say that you do not know what is my desire, but my desire is an open secret. I simply want all over the Western countries people may take this simple formula of chanting, dancing, and eating Kṛṣṇa prasādam, and being happy. [Letter to Tamāla Krishna, September 1969]

Purity is the force

Before me, many swamis went to the Western countries to preach this Bhagavad-gītā. Not a single person became a devotee of Kṛṣṇa.... And now Bhagavad-gītā is being presented as it is, thousands are becoming devotee of Kṛṣṇa. This is the secret. [Lecture on Bhagavad-gītā, Ahmedabad, 8 December 1972]

Utility is the principle

One should not give up anything which can be utilized in the service of the Lord. That is a secret of devotional service. [The Nectar of Devotion, Ch. 14]

Engaging Others in Kṛṣṇa’s Service

The secret of engaging others in Kṛṣṇa consciousness

The secret will be to engage them as they like to be engaged, that is, supposing I have got some education, I am business student, or I have got some skill or talent, I am typist or musician or something like that, so

I will like to utilize these things for Kṛṣṇa only if I am encouraged in a certain way, very tactfully, and I must not be discouraged by too much forcing me at first to accept everything of shaving the head, rising very early, going for street saṅkīrtana, like that. No, let me come gradually, let me study also Kṛṣṇa consciousness and see how it is practical and sublime. Gradually I may get some taste for these other things and agree to do them voluntarily and intelligently. [Letter to Śukadeva, December 1972]

The secret principle of service

So we have to mold our life in such a way that we shall always remember Kṛṣṇa. Therefore remembering Kṛṣṇa is my primary business. And we have to act in such a way that we may not forget Kṛṣṇa. That should be the principle. That is the secret. Therefore it is equally good for anyone because we can engage anyone in the business of Kṛṣṇa. If somebody has no, I mean to say, knowledge, he can simply sweep over the floor of Kṛṣṇa's temple. That will make him remembering Kṛṣṇa, that "I am cleansing the floor of Kṛṣṇa's temple." He's as good as the editor of Back to Godhead. [Lecture on Bhagavad-gītā, Los Angeles, 25 November 1968]

Surrender to Kṛṣṇa

The secret of surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa

They do not know the secret of surrendering to Kṛṣṇa. Such surrendered devotee sees that everything is part of Kṛṣṇa's plan, that whatever is meant to be, I am doing that, so let me do it with my full attention to every detail, let me become absorbed in such service, never mind what it is, but let all other considerations be forgotten and only my desire to do the thing best for Kṛṣṇa's alone pleasure be my motive. [Letter to Jayapatāka, December 1972]

Secret wealth

The devotees are generally without material prosperity, but they have a very secret treasure house in the lotus feet of the Lord. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.8.27, purport]

Spiritual Advancement

The secret of learning to love God

Reporter: What is the secret to learning to love God?

Prabhupāda: Secret of learning God?

Jagadīśa: Learning to love.

Prabhupāda: Yes. The secret—that he must be a first-class man. Otherwise he does not understand what is God, and what to speak of loving Him. [Press conference, Chicago, 9 July 1975]

First guru, then Kṛṣṇa

While teaching Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja: one can achieve the seed of devotional service by the mercy of the guru, the spiritual master, and then by

the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. This is the secret of success. First one should try to please the spiritual master, and then one should attempt to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.9.28, purport]

The secret of success in Kali-yuga

Our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement stresses the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra only, whereas those who do not know the secret of success for this Age of Kali unnecessarily indulge in the cultivation of knowledge, the practice of mystic yoga, or the performance of fruitive activities or useless austerities. [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi 17.24, purport]

The secret of keeping spiritual strength

The secret of success will depend on yourself keeping on the spiritual strength by regularly chanting and following the regulative principles, and side by side you have to act on preaching the gospel, and it will go on without any impediment. [Letter to Citsukhānanda, March 1970]

The secret of not being a victim of māyā

If one is always careful about falling down and prays to Kṛṣṇa that he may not fall down on account of greater strength of Māyā, then Kṛṣṇa will give him special protection. This was advised to Arjuna by Kṛṣṇa Himself. Arjuna was a great fighter, statesman, and at the same time a great devotee. A statesman and military commander has very little time to perform the routine work of devotional service, but Kṛṣṇa advised him especially to be engaged in his occupational duty, and at the same time always be thinking of Kṛṣṇa. This is the secret of not being a victim of Māyā. [Letter to Gargamuni, October 1969]

The secret of being as strong as Lord Kṛṣṇa

This same man, he's guru, so long he gives the real knowledge of Kṛṣṇa. And the same man, he's ordinary man, as soon as he cannot give. Same thing, just like a stone doll, when it is worshiped according to the regulative principles—Kṛṣṇa. And the same doll, kept in the sculptor's showroom, it is stone. So if we keep our movement pure, then you are as strong as Kṛṣṇa. And as soon as you deviate from it, immediately, ordinary. This is the secret. [Room conversation, Honolulu, 3 May 1976]

The secret of hearing and chanting

A professional speaker cannot impress transcendental ecstasy within the hearts of the listeners. However, when a realized soul who is engaged in the service of the Lord is speaking, he has the potency to inject spiritual life within the audience. One should, therefore, seek the association of such pure, unalloyed devotees, and by such association and service a neophyte devotee will certainly develop attachment, love, and devotion for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. [The Nectar of Devotion, Ch. 17]

The secret of conquering the Supreme Lord

Lord Kṛṣṇa told King Yudhiṣṭhira that He is conquered by the love of one who has conquered his senses. One who has not conquered his senses cannot conquer the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is the

secret of devotional service. To conquer the senses means to engage them constantly in the service of the Lord. [Kṛṣṇa Book, Ch. 72]

Books

“The Nectar of Devotion” and “Kṛṣṇa”

I am very much glad to learn that you have appreciated the subject matter of The Nectar of Devotion and Kṛṣṇa while working on it in the press, and actually these two books will keep us constantly in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The secret of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is open in these two books. [Letter to Madhusūdana, June 1970]

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta

The Caitanya-caritāmṛta pastimes of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu constitute a very secret literature. It is the life and soul of all devotees. [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 25.283]

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

The secret of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s name in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam: “Sometimes the critics of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam find it difficult to find Rādhārāṇī’s holy name, but the secret is disclosed here in the word ārādhitaḥ, from which the name Rādhā has come.” [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 8.110]

Secrets of learning Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam: “No one can learn Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam who is associated with persons engaged in sex life. That is the secret of learning Bhāgavatam. Nor can one learn Bhāgavatam from one who interprets the text by his mundane scholarship. One has to learn Bhāgavatam from the representative of Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and no one else, if one at all wants to see Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the pages. The secret of knowing Bhāgavatam is mentioned here. No one can give rapt attention who is not pure in mind. No one can be pure in mind who is not pure in action. No one can be pure in action who is not pure in eating, sleeping, fearing, and mating. But somehow or other if someone hears with rapt attention from the right person, at the very beginning one can assuredly see Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa in person in the pages of Bhāgavatam.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.3.44, purport]

Bhagavad-gītā

The secret of the Bhagavad-gītā: “This is the art, and this is also the secret of Bhagavad-gītā: total absorption in the thought of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” [Bhagavad-gītā, Introduction]

The secret of understanding the Bhagavad-gītā: “So this is the process of understanding: you have to become dear friend of Kṛṣṇa. Then you will understand Bhagavad-gītā. Otherwise, for thousands of years you may go on reading Bhagavad-gītā; you will not learn even a word of it. That is the secret.” [Lecture on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Delhi, 12 November 1973]

Other Secrets

The secret of obtaining peace and fearlessness

The difference between a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and a person in bodily consciousness is that the former is attached to Kṛṣṇa whereas the latter is attached to the results of his activities. This is the secret of Kṛṣṇa consciousness—realization that there is no existence besides Kṛṣṇa is the platform of peace and fearlessness. [Bhagavad-gītā 5.12, purport]

The secret of obtaining all good qualities

So, people are trying to elevate the status of the society by so many things. But they do not know the secret. The secret is that if one is trained only to become a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, all good qualities automatically will be visible in his person. [Lecture on Bhagavad-gītā, London, 26 July, 1973]

The secret of life

“Otherwise” means the act which is done for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord, that is immune from all reaction, but anything which is not done for the satisfaction of the Supreme Lord, that will oblige me in so many bondage of obligation, and I will have to repay that after many, many continuation of this repetition of births and deaths. That is the secret of life. [Lecture on Bhagavad-gītā, New York, 20 May 1966]

The secret understanding in all Vedic literature

Everything happening within time, which consists of past, present, and future, is merely a dream. That is the secret understanding in all Vedic literature. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.29.2b]

The secret of peace in society

Kṛṣṇa is first of all interested to see whether in the society the brāhmaṇa and the cow is properly respected. *Namo brahmaṇya-devāya go-brāhmaṇa-hitāya ca*. His first business is to see that the brāhmaṇa and cow is being properly honored. Then *jagad-dhitāya*. Then automatically the whole world will be peaceful. This secret of success they do not know. Nobody is prepared to become brāhmaṇa, and so far cow protection is concerned, it is in the oblivion. This is the whole world position. Therefore it is in chaotic condition. [Lecture on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, New Vṛndāvana, 10 November 1976]

The secret of prasādam and why a woman is liked

Prabhupāda: They want very palatable things, the tongue. *Tā'ra madhye jihvā ati lobhamoy sudurmati*, very greedy. So if you supply them *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* at the same time to satisfy their greediness, then you conquer. This is the secret.

Gopāla Kṛṣṇa: You conquered a lot of devotees by prasadam.

Prabhupāda: Oh, yes. Yes. Automatically he becomes devotee: “No, we shall become, remain here.” This is the secret. Why the woman is liked? Because the woman, if she is trained up to give satisfaction to the tongue, to the belly and the sex, straight line, she becomes favorite immediately. This is woman's

business. And people are hankering. The karmīs especially, they are hankering after these three things: palatable dishes, fill up belly, and sex. That’s all. If the woman can do it, she conquers over the husband immediately because these three things they want. Take things very practically. [Morning walk, Māyāpur, 21 January 1976]

Secret of going back to Godhead easily

So this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is not on the bodily platform. It is on the spiritual platform. To come to the spiritual platform, it is necessary that you reduce or make nil sex life. So if one remains brahmacārī throughout the whole life it becomes very easy for him to go back to home, back to Godhead. This is the secret. [Lecture on Bhagavad-gītā, Nairobi, 27 October 1975]

The secret of determination

Thus, refraining from sex enables one to be very determined and powerful. It is not necessary to do anything else. This is a secret people are not aware of. If you want to do something with determination, you have to refrain from sex. [The Path of Perfection, Ch. 4]

* * *

By Śrīla Prabhupāda’s and Lord Kṛṣṇa’s mercy, let us become instruments to reveal these secrets to whomever we meet. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu said that this is the secret to making everything auspicious in this Age of Kali.

Praying for your revelations,
Your insignificant servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

1998: Prahlādānanda Swami

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

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda made many significant contributions to the world. But two which are especially prominent are his multifaceted instructions on spiritual topics, presented in the form of his books, lectures, conversations, and letters, and his spiritual movement and organization, ISKCON. Knowledge without practical application is dry speculation, while activities not based on solid philosophy are fanaticism. Śrīla Prabhupāda combined both philosophy and its practical application when he created ISKCON, a movement based on the Vedas and having as its goal Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Together Śrīla Prabhupāda’s instructions and the movement in which they can be practiced, ISKCON, make a perfect combination for spiritual progress. It is especially the duty of the leaders of ISKCON to clearly understand Śrīla Prabhupāda’s instructions and how to practically apply them so that ISKCON is appreciated as an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda describes this incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the Tenth Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.2.20):

Therefore Kṛṣṇa has taken birth or taken shelter within the womb of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Men of Kāmsa’s class, therefore, are very much afraid and are busy trying to stop this movement, especially in the Western countries. One politician has remarked that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is spreading like an epidemic and that if not checked immediately, within ten years it may capture governmental power. There is, of course, such potency in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. As stated by authorities (Cc. Ādi 17.22), *kali-kāle nāma-rūpe kṛṣṇa-avatāra*: in this age, Kṛṣṇa has appeared in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is spreading like wildfire all over the world, and it will go on doing so. Men who are like Kāmsa are very much afraid of the movement’s progress and acceptance by the younger generation, but as Kṛṣṇa could not be killed by Kāmsa, this movement cannot be checked by men of Kāmsa’s class. The movement will go on increasing more and more, provided the leaders of the movement remain firmly Kṛṣṇa conscious by following the regulative principles and the primary activities of chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra regularly.

Since bhakti automatically manifests knowledge and detachment, people in general should appreciate the ISKCON movement as a model of spiritual enlightenment and purity. This may not easily manifest all at once, and therefore those praying for ISKCON’s success may have to be patient, but not complacent. True spiritual life can be uncovered and discovered if the members of ISKCON try to understand Śrīla Prabhupāda’s teachings by applying them practically in their lives. Then clear knowledge can be there without speculation, and devotional love without selfish motivations.

ISKCON should not be an ordinary religious institution; it is meant to be a mission to respiritualize the world by creating a cultural revolution dedicated to the art of using everything— theater, dance, art, music, and especially Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books—in the service of spreading Lord Kṛṣṇa’s glories. ISKCON must create a revolution for the actual benefit of the entire world. Sarve sukhino bhavantu: “Let everyone become happy.”

Prahlādānanda Swami

1999: Prahlādānanda Swami

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

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

The basic principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is to always remember Lord Kṛṣṇa and never forget Him. This is easily done if one is in love with Lord Kṛṣṇa. This love for Lord Kṛṣṇa is natural and is dormant in

everyone’s heart. Since He is all-attractive, this love for Lord Kṛṣṇa becomes manifest as He reveals Himself to His devotee, just as the sun gives sunlight to one in its presence. The Supreme Lord reveals Himself in proportion to the service rendered by the devotee. The most potent services to help one become absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness are chanting the holy name of the Lord, hearing books such as Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, serving the Deities, serving the devotees, and living in holy places dedicated to the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

ISKCON, the movement dedicated to spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is based on the above principles. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains in his purport to Bhagavad-gītā 18.65:

Life should be so molded that one will always have the chance to think of Kṛṣṇa. One should always act in such a way that all his daily activities are in connection with Kṛṣṇa. He should arrange his life in such a way that throughout the twenty-four hours he cannot but think of Kṛṣṇa. And the Lord’s promise is that anyone who is in such pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness will certainly return to the abode of Kṛṣṇa, where he will be engaged in the association of Kṛṣṇa face to face. This most confidential part of knowledge is spoken to Arjuna because he is the dear friend of Kṛṣṇa. Everyone who follows the path of Arjuna can become a dear friend to Kṛṣṇa and obtain the same perfection as Arjuna.

Śrīla Prabhupāda created a society based on these principles. Even Śrīla Prabhupāda’s system of management was simple: a GBC body whose members’ primary duty is to be Kṛṣṇa conscious and see that the rest of ISKCON’s devotees are also properly practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrīla Prabhupāda created temple presidents, who, along with their assistants, should be examples of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and whose main service is to participate in and encourage Kṛṣṇa conscious programs within their temples. On the basis of strong practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the members of ISKCON then become enthusiastic to share the most confidential part of knowledge, which was spoken to Arjuna.

Anarthas, aparādhās, and material desires tend to cloud over our consciousness and make things more complicated. If there are problems within ISKCON, elaborate structures, systems, and bureaucracy by themselves can’t solve them and may simply add more complications. However, if we try the best we can to understand and institute the simple instructions that Śrīla Prabhupāda left us, then gradual progress toward the goal is assured.

Prahlādānanda Swami

2000: Prahlādānanda Swami

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

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

At the end of his letters Śrīla Prabhupāda often wrote, “I hope this meets you in good health.” Some people may be surprised that a transcendental personality such as Śrīla Prabhupāda would be concerned

with something that might seem as mundane as a person's health. Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, gave Kṛṣṇa conscious reasons why he was concerned about our health.

Although the body is material, since it is being used in Lord Kṛṣṇa's service it now belongs to Lord Kṛṣṇa and should be taken care of nicely:

We should always remember that our body is not for sense gratification; it is for Krishna's service only. And to render very good sound service to Krishna we should not neglect the upkeep of the body. We learn from an instance of Sanatana Goswami. He was sometimes very much sick on account of eczema, and he was therefore sometimes bleeding. But whenever Lord Caitanya met Sanatana Goswami, He used to embrace him in spite of Sanatana's request for Him not to touch him. Because of this. Sanatana Goswami later on decided to commit suicide so Lord Caitanya would not embrace him in his bloody condition. This plan was understood by Lord Caitanya, and He called Sanatana Goswami and said to him, "You have decided to end this body, but don't you know that this body belongs to Krishna? You have already dedicated your body to Krishna so how can you decide to end it?" So you must not neglect the upkeep of your body. This is the lesson we get from Lord Caitanya and Sanatana Goswami. Try to take care of your health in the best possible way. [Letter to Rāyarāma dāsa, 9 February 1969]

Service to the body and mind may also be service to Lord Kṛṣṇa:

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura warns us in this connection that we should not mistakenly think that the idea of giving up everything implies the renunciation of duties necessary in relation to the body and mind. Even such duties are not sense gratification if they are undertaken in a spirit of service to Kṛṣṇa. [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 4.170, purport]

By maintaining one's health nicely one can do nice service for Lord Kṛṣṇa:

Keep your health in good condition and work very hard for Krishna. That is our motto of life. [Letter to Rāyarāma dāsa, 6 March 1969]

Śrīla Prabhupāda understood that ill health could hinder one's devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa:

If you are willing to offer your medical services to my students, when it is required, that will be very nice. It is important to keep the body fit and healthy so that we will not meet the obstacle of ill health while serving Krishna. Ill health may hinder one's service, so, we want to avoid it as much as possible. [Letter to Dr. W.D. Currier, 19 June 1975]

Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted his disciples to live a long time to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness:

Be careful about your health first. This information is not only for you but all my noble sons. I am an old man. I may live or die it does not matter. But you must live for long time to push on this Krishna Consciousness movement. [Letter to Rāyarāma dāsa, 21 December 1967]

To maintain one's health doesn't have to be difficult:

Regarding your question about maintaining your body nicely, I think that if you follow our regulations of diet, sufficient sleeping, and keep to the prescribed rules of cleanliness, two baths per day,* then you will

be able to keep yourself in proper health. Of course, disease will always be there at some time while there is this material body, but this we must tolerate and not be very much agitated by. Actually, the Vaisnava who knows that he is not this body, he does not therefore neglect his body, but he takes very nice care so that he may utilize his body in the service of Krishna. Just like a man may know that he is not his car, so he does not therefore neglect his car, but he will take care of it so it will be able to render service to him. So we must take sufficient care to provide our bodies with its demands, but when disease or other necessary inconveniences arrive, we do not become disturbed because such troubles are simply temporary manifestations. [Letter to Balabhadra dāsa, 12 May 1969]

*at least one

Regarding your fasting, if you are sick, then fasting is the best medicine. For disease and unwanted guests, if you do not give them food, they will go away. [Letter to Revafīnandana Swami, 16 January 1975]

The ultimate protection comes from Lord Kṛṣṇa:

Regarding Syama Dasi's health, it is to be understood that so long we have got this material body there must be some trouble. Actually, medicine is not the remedial measures for our bodily troubles unless we are helped by Krishna. Therefore, whenever there is bodily trouble we may adopt the prescribed methods of medical science and depend upon Krishna for His Mercy. The best remedy, not only for Syama Dasi but for everyone, is to consult some approved physician. But ultimately we have to depend on the Mercy of Krishna, so we should chant regularly, pray to Krishna to give us a chance to serve Him, and, if required, we may adopt the approved method of treatment. [Letter to Kīrtanānanda Swami, 14 February 1969]

Although Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted the devotees to be healthy, he also wanted them to tolerate the inevitable miseries of material life:

So long we have got this material body, the miseries will be coming and going, simply we have to tolerate them and try to make advancement in Krishna Consciousness as best we can. [Letter to Pradyumna dāsa, 23 March 1968]

The order of importance:

In some of the Vedic literatures, it is said that Atmanan Sarvato Rakshet, that means one should give first protection to the soul. Then he should take care of his particular type of faith, then he should take care of the material things, namely this body, and anything in relation with this body, or wealth. [Letter to Toṣaṇa Kṛṣṇa dāsa, 7 October 1968]

Śrīla Prabhupāda's eternal servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

2001: Prahādānanda Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

In your transcendental books and instructions you often talk about the bona fide guru. Thus the topic of who is a bona fide guru must be a very important one. When we refer to guru, we refer to three main types of gurus. As you write in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 8.128, purport): “The word guru is equally applicable to the vartma-pradarśaka-guru, śikṣā-guru, and dīkṣā-guru.” Due to the problems some of our ISKCON gurus have had, one may wonder, If only one who is very advanced in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can be a bona fide guru, how can others less exalted also qualify?

In your instructions you seem to emphasize two qualifications of bona fide gurus. One is that they have learned Lord Kṛṣṇa’s teachings from their superior guru in His disciplic succession. The second is that under the guidance of their superiors they repeat His teachings and work on His behalf.

Let us see what you have said about bona fide gurus in your Nectar of Devotion lectures in Vṛndāvana:

Where is the difficulty in finding a bona fide guru?

“It is the fortunate person who comes in contact with a bona fide spiritual master.” This question, we were just discussing before coming to the class, how to select a bona fide spiritual master. So that is not very difficult. Just like in our ordinary business life, we accept somebody as representative of the firm who is actually come, canvassing for the benefit of the firm. He’s representative. Suppose he’s representing some bookseller, publisher, so he should canvass for selling the books published by his firm, not for anything else. Suppose he has taken the advantage of becoming representative of a business firm, but he’s doing his own business. He’s not bona fide. He’s not bona fide. So real guru is Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa....Kṛṣṇa existed before the creation. Then He made His representative, Brahmā. Tene brahma hṛdā ādi-kavaye. He instructed the original guru, Brahmā....So therefore, the original guru is Kṛṣṇa. The same guru, Kṛṣṇa, is instructing Arjuna also. Kṛṣṇa became guru of Arjuna. Arjuna accepted Him guru: śiṣyas te ’ham. Arjuna said, “Now I am not talking with You as friend, but I accept You as my guru.”...Anyone is accepting the authority of Bhagavad-gītā, he’s accepting, imperceptibly, Kṛṣṇa as guru. Therefore, bona fide spiritual master means who is representing Kṛṣṇa....

So to find out a bona fide spiritual master is not a very difficult job, because if one is representing guru, Kṛṣṇa, then he must speak of Kṛṣṇa, canvass for Kṛṣṇa....

So that is bona fide guru. Where is the difficulty to find out a bona fide guru? Just like Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, yāre dekha tāre kaha kṛṣṇa upadeśa [Cc. Madhya 7.128]. Caitanya Mahāprabhu says that “You preach the words of Kṛṣṇa.” Therefore He’s bona fide. Similarly,

anyone who is representing Kṛṣṇa and canvassing for Kṛṣṇa, he's bona fide guru. Where is the difficulty? Is there any difficulty?

Anyone can understand that if Kṛṣṇa is the original guru, and if somebody's canvassing for Kṛṣṇa, he's bona fide guru. If somebody's canvassing for himself, he's not bona fide guru. So there is no difficulty to find out a bona fide guru, provided I am serious to find out a bona fide guru. But if I want something else...Because hr̥dy antaḥ stho hy abhadrāṇi. If in my heart there is something else, then I must be cheated by some...somebody else who is not a bona fide guru. Ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham [Bg. 4.11].

[Lecture on The Nectar of Devotion, Vṛndāvana, 31 October 1972]

The bona fide guru presents the message of Kṛṣṇa as it is.

So to become a bona fide spiritual master, there is no difficulty, if you, simply, if we carry the message of Kṛṣṇa as it is, without any adulteration. So we must find out a person who is actually bona fide spiritual master by this test, that he's not, I mean to say, adulterating Kṛṣṇa's message. He's not playing havoc with the message of Kṛṣṇa in order to introduce himself, his person. He's simply presenting the message of Kṛṣṇa as it is. Then he's spiritual master. Nobody else.

[Lecture on The Nectar of Devotion, Vṛndāvana, 31 October 1972]

The bona fide guru is in the disciplic succession from Lord Kṛṣṇa

One has to accept a guru, a spiritual master, who has received knowledge from another perfect spiritual master. Just like Kṛṣṇa is the origin, perfect spiritual master, guru. So Kṛṣṇa, what Kṛṣṇa said, was realized by Arjuna, directly. Therefore if we receive knowledge from Arjuna or his disciplic succession, then our knowledge is perfect. Kṛṣṇa...Arjuna accepted Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Brahman: param̃ brahma param̃ dhāma pavitraṁ paramaṁ bhavān [Bg. 10.12]. So if we accept the version of Arjuna, that Kṛṣṇa is Param̃ Brahman, He's the Supreme Person, He's the origin of everything, then our knowledge is perfect. I may be imperfect, but because I receive knowledge from a perfect person, my knowledge is perfect. This is called paramparā system.

So in order to dissipate our ignorance, we should receive perfect knowledge. Then we can stop our sinful activities.

[Lecture on The Nectar of Devotion, Vṛndāvana, 5 November 1972]

Lord Kṛṣṇa is the real friend of the people

We are becoming leaders, the friend of the people. But we are not friend of the people. Kṛṣṇa is the friend of...Suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ. If I simply say that "I am your friend in this sense: that I deliver the message to you that 'Kṛṣṇa is your best friend.' I do not...I am friend so far I am giving you this information. But actual friend is Kṛṣṇa," suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ, so this is friendship. If one preaches Kṛṣṇa consciousness and teaches everyone that Kṛṣṇa is your best friend...He does not say, "I am your best friend." "I am your best friend in this sense: that I am giving you this information." Actually, Kṛṣṇa is your best friend. What can I do? I am a teeny living entity. What can I do for you? I be...may become

your friend, but when you are in danger, I cannot give you any protection. Kṛṣṇa can give you protection. This is real friendship. He does not take himself. He always carries the message only. Ya imam mad-bhaktesu abhidāsyati. Simply our business is to carry the message of Kṛṣṇa. Then we are friend. Otherwise we are not friend. We may pose to become friend, but we are not friend because we do not know how to benefit the friend. Sometimes we mislead him.

Therefore our business is to point that “Kṛṣṇa is your friend.” Suhrdam sarva-bhūtānām. “He’s the proprietor. Don’t claim your proprietorship. You are not proprietor. You are falsely claiming; because what you are claiming as your property, it will be taken away by Kṛṣṇa at the time of your death. Everything will be finished.” Mṛtyuḥ sarva-haraś ca aham, Kṛṣṇa says. Mṛtyu...Kṛṣṇa says, “I am death when I take away everything from the person—his life, property, body, and everything.” Actually, we claim, “This is my property.” This is moha. Aham mameti [SB 5.5.8]. Lokasya janasya moho ’yam. This is friendship, to educate people that “You are not proprietor. Kṛṣṇa is proprietor. You are not enjoyer. Kṛṣṇa is enjoyer. You are seeking out friends to give you protection. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme friend who will give you protection.” If we spread this message all over the world, then I am friend of Kṛṣṇa, I am friend of the persons. Otherwise, I am not friend, because I cannot become friend. I can simply carry...Just like post peon gives you five thousand rupees, delivers. He does not deliver. Somebody else is delivering. He’s simply carrying. That’s all. Similarly, if we simply carry the message of Kṛṣṇa as it is, we become perfect. It is not very difficult. If I simply carry the message of Kṛṣṇa, where is the difficulty? Everything is there. Kṛṣṇa has said everything. Kṛṣṇa says, man-manā mad-bhakto mad-yājī māṁ namaskuru. We carry this message. Just always think of Kṛṣṇa, always offer obeisances to Kṛṣṇa, become a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Man-manā, think of Kṛṣṇa always. We have to carry this message. Where is the difficulty?

So to become a bona fide spiritual master, there is no difficulty, if you simply, if we carry the message of Kṛṣṇa as it is, without any adulteration. So we must find out a person who is actually bona fide spiritual master by this test, that he’s not, I mean to say, adulterating Kṛṣṇa’s message. He’s not playing havoc with the message of Kṛṣṇa in order to introduce himself, his person. He’s simply presenting the message of Kṛṣṇa as it is. Then he’s spiritual master. Nobody else.

[Lecture on The Nectar of Devotion, Vṛndāvana, 31 October 1972]

Still, aren’t there different levels of gurus? Are some more qualified than others? Sometimes we hear that a guru must be on the topmost level of devotional service, and sometimes that devotees on other levels also can be bona fide gurus.

The guru must be on the topmost level of devotional service

The guru must be situated on the topmost platform of devotional service. There are three classes of devotees, and the guru must be accepted from the topmost class. [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 24.330]

The second class devotees accepts disciples

The second-class devotees are therefore meant for preaching work, and as referred to in the above verse, they must loudly preach the glories of the Lord. The second-class devotee accepts disciples from the

section of third-class devotees or nondevotees. Sometimes the first-class devotee also comes down to the category of the second-class devotee for preaching work. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.3.21, purport]

Two types of instructing gurus

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī states that the instructing spiritual master is a bona fide representative of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself teaches us as the instructing spiritual master from within and without. From within He teaches as Paramātmā, our constant companion, and from without He teaches from the Bhagavad-gītā as the instructing spiritual master. There are two kinds of instructing spiritual masters. One is the liberated person fully absorbed in meditation in devotional service, and the other is he who invokes the disciple's spiritual consciousness by means of relevant instructions. Thus the instructions in the science of devotion are differentiated in terms of the objective and subjective ways of understanding. The ācārya in the true sense of the term, who is authorized to deliver Kṛṣṇa, enriches the disciple with full spiritual knowledge and thus awakens him to the activities of devotional service. [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi 1.47, purport]

We may conclude that anyone who is sincerely canvassing on behalf of Kṛṣṇa and is strictly following the process of devotional service received in disciplic succession is a bona fide representative of Lord Kṛṣṇa. However, there are different levels of realization among those who are bona fide, and we should always be prepared to serve all those who are more advanced than we are so that we can also become advanced. Mangoes are all mangoes, but some may be more ripe and sweeter than others.

Even if there are some defects in some devotees, if they are more advanced than we are in devotional service, they must be considered our gurus and we should try to see and appreciate how they are engaged in devotional service. Everyone should try to see in this way. Devotees may be in the position of being gurus to others; however, for them to continue be bona fide gurus they must remain servants to their own gurus.

If we consider the bodily defects of a Vaiṣṇava, we should understand that we are committing an offense at the lotus feet of the Vaiṣṇava. An offense at the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava is very serious. Indeed, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has described this offense as hāī mātā, the mad elephant offense. A mad elephant can create a disaster, especially when it enters into a nicely trimmed garden. One should therefore be very careful not to commit any offense against a Vaiṣṇava. Every devotee should be ready to take instructions from a superior Vaiṣṇava, and a superior Vaiṣṇava must be ready to help an inferior Vaiṣṇava in all respects. One is superior or inferior according to his spiritual development in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. One is forbidden to observe the activities of a pure Vaiṣṇava from a material point of view. For the neophyte especially, considering a pure devotee from a material point of view is very injurious. One should therefore avoid observing a pure devotee externally, but should try to see the internal features and understand how he is engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. In this way one can avoid seeing the pure devotee from a material point of view, and thus one can gradually become a purified devotee himself. [The Nectar of Instruction 6, purport]

We have to learn to discriminate among the different level of devotees—kaniṣṭha, madhyama, and uttama—so we can properly honor and respect them. Although some devotees, by their example and instructions, may help us more than others to advance in spiritual life, still, we can and should consider as our bona fide and worshipable guru any devotee who is following an authorized devotee strictly engaged in devotional service and Kṛṣṇa consciousness and who is more advanced than we are.

Aspiring for your service,
Prahlādānanda Swami

2002: Prahlādānanda Swami

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

You have revealed to us that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the perfection of life and have also shown us the methods to achieve it. The absorption in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness is possible for one who has completely dedicated his life to pure devotional service. Such pure dedication is possible to achieve by service to the Lord's disciplic succession of devotees. In this age, the disciplic succession descends from the yuga-avatāra, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, whose saṅkīrtana mission is concerned with freely distributing pure love of Kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa-prema, to others.

Therefore, if we want to achieve absorption in Kṛṣṇa consciousness we must also become absorbed in service to the mission of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. You stressed that this mission of distributing Kṛṣṇa consciousness is especially concerned with the distribution of transcendental literatures and the establishment of a cultural revolution to convince people that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore, the secret of advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is that through the development of a service attitude to the mission of Lord Caitanya we can become qualified to experience the happiness of the sweet exchanges between the Lord and His associates.

Lord Kṛṣṇa's desire is to make everyone happy, and thus He uses His abilities and energies to benefit others. This is part of His unlimited renunciation. Thus one who is absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and dedicated to preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness will certainly obtain whatever is necessary for his service from the unlimited fountainhead of everything, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Spreading the saṅkīrtana movement does not require anything more than utilizing what we already have and applying this to Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission. To a dedicated and enthusiastic devotee, the Lord certainly gives all the resources and spiritual intelligence needed to properly engage His energies in His transcendental service. However, if devotees misuse the Lord's energy, to teach them how to use His energies more wisely He may sometimes take away their source of material attachment. The conclusion is that there is nothing more auspicious than trying to preach the saṅkīrtana movement. Lord Kṛṣṇa will give His servants everything required to carry on His mission and at the same time elevate them to the spiritual platform of awareness and expertise. For success in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and pure devotional service, we

need only add to our present activities the sincerity and enthusiasm to engage in the mission of the Lord under the guidance of His bona fide representatives.

Your aspiring servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

2003: Prahlādānanda Swami

*nama oṃ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda came to give the world Kṛṣṇa consciousness. What precisely does Kṛṣṇa consciousness mean? Śrīla Prabhupāda has explained the importance of understanding this:

Therefore, one has to seek out such a bona fide spiritual master and, under him, learn what Kṛṣṇa consciousness is, for Kṛṣṇa consciousness will certainly drive away all nescience, as the sun drives away darkness. [Bhagavad-gītā 5.16, purport]

To understand Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we can examine some of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s definitions. Śrīla Prabhupāda originally took the definition of Kṛṣṇa consciousness from a line of a verse by Rāmānanda Rāya, quoted in Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī’s Padyāvalī: kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa-bhāvitā—absorbed in the mellows of executing devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. (Padyāvalī 14, as quoted in Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 8.70)

To be in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one must be absorbed in pure devotional service and experience rasa, or transcendental mellows, by thinking of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

In Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Kṛṣṇa book he writes: “The art of focusing one’s attention on the Supreme and giving one’s love to Him is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” (Kṛṣṇa book, Preface)

Researching Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, I was amazed to see the extent and depth of the definitions given for Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In the Bhagavad-gītā alone we can find a wealth of understanding of these words:

Constantly thinking of Lord Kṛṣṇa. “Thus a devotee of Kṛṣṇa can conquer both sleep and ignorance simply by thinking of Kṛṣṇa constantly. This is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or samādhi.” (Bhagavad-gītā 1.24, purport)

For the benefit of Lord Kṛṣṇa. “Activity in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or acting for the benefit of Kṛṣṇa without expectation of sense gratification, is the highest transcendental quality of work.” (Bhagavad-gītā 2.40, purport)

Full dependence on the good will of Kṛṣṇa. “This transcendental position is achieved in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness when one is fully dependent on the good will of Kṛṣṇa.” (Bhagavad-gītā 2.45, purport)

Directly into communion with Kṛṣṇa. “In Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one comes directly into communion with Kṛṣṇa, and thus all directions from Kṛṣṇa may be understood in that transcendental state.” (Bhagavad-gītā 2.53, purport)

Kṛṣṇa is everything. “The sthita-dhīr muni is always in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, for he has exhausted all his business of creative speculation. He is called praśānta-niḥśeṣa-mano-rathāntara (Stotra-ratna 43), or one who has surpassed the stage of mental speculations and has come to the conclusion that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, or Vāsudeva, is everything (vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti sa mahātmā su-durlabhah). (Bg 2.56 purport)

Knowledge of how to use everything in the service of the Lord. “On the other hand, a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness knows how to use everything in the service of the Lord; therefore he does not become a victim of material consciousness.” (Bhagavad-gītā 2.63, purport)

Only concerned with the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa. “Although the person in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness may apparently be on the sensual plane, because of his being Kṛṣṇa conscious he has no attachment to sensual activities. The Kṛṣṇa conscious person is concerned only with the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa, and nothing else.” (Bhagavad-gītā 2.64, purport)

Engaging all the senses in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa. “One can curb the forces of sense gratification only by means of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, or engaging all the senses in the transcendental loving service of the Lord.” (Bhagavad-gītā 2.68, purport)

Perfect stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. “To understand one’s actual position as the eternal servitor of Kṛṣṇa, without falsely claiming this material body to be oneself and without falsely claiming proprietorship over anything in the world, is the perfect stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” (Bhagavad-gītā 2.71 purport)

Desiring everything for Kṛṣṇa. “If, therefore, lust is transformed into love for the Supreme, or transformed into Kṛṣṇa consciousness—or, in other words, desiring everything for Kṛṣṇa—then both lust and wrath can be spiritualized.” (Bhagavad-gītā 3.37 purport)

Simply meant to serve the Lord. “The living entities are parts and parcels of the Lord, and therefore they are simply meant to serve the Lord. This consciousness is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” (Bhagavad-gītā 3.41 purport)

Direct connection with the Supreme. “In Kṛṣṇa consciousness the soul makes direct connection with the Supreme Personality of Godhead.” (Bhagavad-gītā 3.42 purport)

Deliberate spiritual intelligence. “Thus knowing oneself to be transcendental to the material senses, mind, and intelligence, O mighty-armed Arjuna, one should steady the mind by deliberate spiritual intelligence [Kṛṣṇa consciousness] and thus—by spiritual strength—conquer this insatiable enemy known as lust.” (Bhagavad-gītā 3.43 purport)

Does everything for Kṛṣṇa. “This freedom from the bondage of actions is possible only in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, when one is doing everything for Kṛṣṇa. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person acts out of pure love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and therefore he has no attraction for the results of the action.” (Bhagavad-gītā 4.20 purport)

Engaged in the satisfaction of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s senses. “In material consciousness, the senses are engaged in sense gratification, but in Kṛṣṇa consciousness the senses are engaged in the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa’s senses. Therefore, the Kṛṣṇa conscious person is always free, even though he appears to be engaged in affairs of the senses.” (Bhagavad-gītā 5.8–9 purport)

The body is the property of Kṛṣṇa. “The conclusion is that a person without Kṛṣṇa consciousness acts according to the concept of the material body and senses, but a person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness acts according to the knowledge that the body is the property of Kṛṣṇa and should therefore be engaged in the service of Kṛṣṇa.” (Bhagavad-gītā 5.10, purport)

He himself belongs to Kṛṣṇa. “A person acting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness (or, in other words, in the service of Kṛṣṇa) with his body, mind, intelligence, and words is a liberated person even within the material world, although he may be engaged in many so-called material activities.’ He has no false ego, for he does not believe that he is this material body, or that he possesses the body. He knows that he is not this body and that this body does not belong to him. He himself belongs to Kṛṣṇa, and the body too belongs to Kṛṣṇa. When he applies everything produced of the body, mind, intelligence, words, life, wealth, etc.—whatever he may have within his possession—to Kṛṣṇa’s service, he is at once dovetailed with Kṛṣṇa. He is one with Kṛṣṇa and is devoid of the false ego that leads one to believe that he is the body, etc. This is the perfect stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” (Bhagavad-gītā 5.11, purport)

Steady consciousness. “This knowledge elevates him to the station of knowing the complete science of the Absolute Truth, namely Brahman, Paramātmā, and Bhagavān. He thus knows his constitutional position perfectly well, without falsely trying to become one with the Supreme in all respects. This is called Brahman realization, or self-realization. Such steady consciousness is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” (Bhagavad-gītā 5.20 purport)

Everyone is subordinate to Lord Kṛṣṇa. “This is the sense of Kṛṣṇa consciousness: Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme predominator, and all living entities, including the great demigods, are His subordinates.” (Bhagavad-gītā 5.29, purport)

Engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. “Kṛṣṇa consciousness means, concisely, to be always engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord.” (Bhagavad-gītā 6.10 purport)

Mind always absorbed in Kṛṣṇa’s activities. “Therefore a person working in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the perfect yogi, because his mind is always absorbed in Kṛṣṇa’s activities (sa vai manah kṛṣṇa-padāravindayoḥ). (Bhagavad-gītā 6.15 purport)

Serving Kṛṣṇa with purified senses. “Serving Kṛṣṇa with purified senses is called Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” (Bhagavad-gītā 6.26 purport)

Nothing can exist without Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of everything. “A person in Kṛṣṇa consciousness certainly sees Lord Kṛṣṇa everywhere, and he sees everything in Kṛṣṇa. Such a person may appear to see all separate manifestations of the material nature, but in each and every instance he is conscious of Kṛṣṇa, knowing that everything is a manifestation of Kṛṣṇa’s energy. Nothing can exist without Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of everything—this is the basic principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” (Bhagavad-gītā 6.30 purport)

Steady concentration of the mind upon Kṛṣṇa. “At the end of the Sixth Chapter, it has been clearly stated that the steady concentration of the mind upon Kṛṣṇa, or in other words Kṛṣṇa consciousness, is the highest form of all yoga.” (Bhagavad-gītā 7.1)

Your aspiring servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

2004: Prahlādānanda Swami

*nama oṃ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

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

If we present things as they are, it will be accepted. Without any adulteration. Sometimes, you know, people say that I have done miracles. They say everywhere. But I do not know anything, miracles or magic. If there is any miracle, that miracle is that we present things as they are. That’s all. Without any adulteration. So that should be the principle. Present as it is. It will be accepted. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam lecture, Vṛndāvana, 22 October 1972]

What is the difficulty in presenting things as they are? For one thing, a conditioned soul has no direct experience of reality. How can someone perfectly present things as they are when he or she is not fully situated on the transcendental platform and therefore does not truly know how things really are? The illusionary energy, consisting of the three modes of material nature, covers the conditioned soul’s perception of existence. When the soul acts according to the modes of material nature, the illusionary energy creates a new conception of life for him. Only one who is always acting under the influence of the internal energy of Lord Kṛṣṇa can be fixed in a transcendental conception of life and thus be capable of perfectly presenting reality to others. Aspiring devotees may repeat the words of authority according to their realization, but until they become mature in the process, their perceptive experience of reality remains incomplete and their revelations partial.

There are two kinds of instructing spiritual masters. One is the liberated person fully absorbed in meditation in devotional service, and the other is he who invokes the disciple’s spiritual consciousness by means of relevant instructions. Thus the instructions in the science of devotion are differentiated in terms of the objective and subjective ways of understanding. The ācārya in the true sense of the term, who is authorized

to deliver Kṛṣṇa, enriches the disciple with full spiritual knowledge and thus awakens him to the activities of devotional service. [Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi 1.47]

Hearing from a transcendental person about the truth and the process by which this truth is revealed is the beginning of spiritual enlightenment. If we try to understand such teachings and instructions and put them into practice under proper guidance, surely the Lord will be pleased, and He will give us spiritual intelligence (dadāmi buddhi-yogaṁ tam). If we honestly repeat what a self-realized soul such as Śrīla Prabhupāda has taught, in proportion to our purity our preaching will have effect. However, an aspiring devotee should not imitate a devotee on the absolute platform; otherwise there will be problems.

When a person realizes himself to be an eternal servitor of Kṛṣṇa, he loses interest in everything but Kṛṣṇa's service. Always thinking of Kṛṣṇa, devising means by which to spread the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, he understands that his only business is in spreading the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world. Such a person is to be recognized as an *uttama-adhikārī*, and his association should be immediately accepted according to the six processes (dadāti pratigrhṇāti, etc.). Indeed, the advanced *uttama-adhikārī* Vaiṣṇava devotee should be accepted as a spiritual master. Everything one possesses should be offered to him, for it is enjoined that one should deliver whatever he has to the spiritual master. The *brahmacārī* in particular is supposed to beg alms from others and offer them to the spiritual master. However, one should not imitate the behavior of an advanced devotee or *mahā-bhāgavata* without being self-realized, for by such imitation one will eventually become degraded. [Nectar of Instruction 5]

Sometimes a less advanced devotee may take up the role of a spiritual guide for others, but Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in the same purport:

One should not become a spiritual master unless he has attained the platform of *uttama-adhikārī*. A neophyte Vaiṣṇava or a Vaiṣṇava situated on the intermediate platform can also accept disciples, but such disciples must be on the same platform, and it should be understood that they cannot advance very well toward the ultimate goal of life under his insufficient guidance.

Taking the role of a spiritual master without an honest and proper understanding is dangerous. A person who is not self-realized may become bewildered by the praise and service which are expected to be offered to someone who is truly an advanced devotee. Śrīla Prabhupāda uses the example of a big fire and a small fire:

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. A devotee must work under the direction of a bona fide spiritual master, not imitate the best devotee.

Bob: Excuse me?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: One should not imitate the best devotee.

Bob: Imitate. Oh. I see.

Śyāmasundara: One time you said that sometimes you feel sickness or pain due to the sinful activities of your devotees. Can sometimes disease be due to that? Caused by that?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You see, Kṛṣṇa says, *aham tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*: “I will deliver you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear.” So Kṛṣṇa is so powerful that He can immediately take up all the sins of others and immediately make them right. But when a living entity plays the part on behalf of Kṛṣṇa, he also takes the responsibility for the sinful activities of his devotees. Therefore to become a guru is not an easy task. You see? He has to take all the poisons and absorb them. So sometimes—because he is not Kṛṣṇa—sometimes there is some trouble. Therefore Caitanya Mahāprabhu has forbidden, “Don’t make

many śiṣyas, many disciples.” But for preaching work we have to accept many disciples—for expanding preaching—even if we suffer. That’s a fact. The spiritual master has to take the responsibility for all the sinful activities of his disciples. Therefore to make many disciples is a risky job unless one is able to assimilate all the sins.

*vāñchā-kalpa-tarubhyaś ca kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānām pāvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ*

[I offer my respectful obeisances unto all the Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord. They can fulfill the desires of everyone, just like desire trees, and they are full of compassion for the fallen conditioned souls.] He takes responsibility for all the fallen souls. That idea is also in the Bible. Jesus Christ took all the sinful reactions of the people and sacrificed his life. That is the responsibility of a spiritual master. Because Kṛṣṇa is Kṛṣṇa, He is apāpa-viddha—He cannot be attacked by sinful reactions. But a living entity is sometimes subjected to their influence because he is so small. Big fire, small fire. If you put some big thing in a small fire, the fire itself may be extinguished. But in a big fire, whatever you put in is all right. The big fire can consume anything. [Perfect Questions, Perfect Answers]

To advance the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, people have to surrender to a spiritual authority. However, if the spiritual authority assumes a position that he or she is unworthy or incapable of maintaining, there will be difficulty.

However, Lord Caitanya’s causeless mercy is such that He advised all bona fide spiritual masters to speak about Kṛṣṇa consciousness everywhere. Therefore, in the line of Lord Caitanya even the sannyāsīs can speak about Kṛṣṇa consciousness everywhere, and if someone is seriously inclined to become a disciple, the sannyāsī always accepts him. The one point is that without increasing the number of disciples, there is no propagation of the cult of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore, sometimes even at a risk, a sannyāsī in the line of Caitanya Mahāprabhu may accept even a person who is not thoroughly fit to become a disciple. Later on, by the mercy of such a bona fide spiritual master, the disciple is gradually elevated. However, if one increases the number of disciples simply for some prestige or false honor, he will surely fall down in the matter of executing Kṛṣṇa consciousness. [Nectar of Devotion, Chapter 7]

For preachers in ISKCON to honestly present things without adulteration, they first of all have to objectively know what level of spiritual achievement they have attained. The GBC body has the duty to see that leading devotees especially are not acting or preaching inappropriately, beyond their platform of actual realization. Then the teachings of the ācāryas that are coming down through our founder-ācārya will not be distorted by ignorance or selfish motives. Śrīla Prabhupāda, speaking about unqualified gurus, said to Tamāl Krishna Mahārāja:

Stick to our principle, and see our GBC is very alert. Then everything will go on, even I am not present. Do that. That is my request. Whatever little I have taught you, follow that, and nobody will be aggrieved. No māyā will touch you. Now Kṛṣṇa has given us, and there will be no scarcity of money. You print book and sell. So everything is there. We have got good shelter all over the world. We have got income. You stick to our principles, follow the . . . Even if I die suddenly, you’ll be able to manage. That’s all. That I want. Manage nicely and let the movement go forward. Now arrange. Don’t go backward. Be careful. Āpani ācari prabhu jīvere śikhāya. [Room Conversation, Bombay, 22 April 1977]

In order for the preachers of ISKCON to be effective they must present without adulteration the teachings of the ācāryas coming down through Śrīla Prabhupāda. Job descriptions and assessments are perhaps the doorways to dutiful behavior and purified actions, which can lead to detachment and transcendental

knowledge, which can lead to pure devotional service and full Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In this way the preaching will become ever more pure and effective.

Prahlādānanda Swami

2005: Prahlādānanda Swami

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

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

In December 1969 I drove with several other devotees from Buffalo, New York, to a harināma in New York City, before going on to Boston for Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's disappearance day. To honor this day, Śrīla Prabhupāda was also on his way to the Boston temple, which was at that time a newly acquired two-story building. The first floor was used for ISKCON Press, the second for the temple room and altar.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived at Boston airport, he was enthusiastically greeted by practically all the devotees from the east coast of the USA. Not having gone to the airport, I waited for Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival in the temple, along with some other devotees. When Śrīla Prabhupāda entered the temple and walked up the stairs to the temple room, his presence filled the entire atmosphere, which became like Vaiṣṇava. Experiencing this divine energy, I had no doubt that Śrīla Prabhupāda was the empowered representative of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

As the faithful servant of his spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda was always absorbed in meditation on his Guru Mahārāja, and through him on the disciplic succession of spiritual masters, on the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, and on the Pañca-tattva. Moreover, in the mood of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he always felt separation from Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and Their associates in Vṛndāvana.

Lord Caitanya is saving the world by empowering His representatives. When we assist Him by desiring to use in His service whatever energies He provides, our perfection of transcendental knowledge and pure devotion will surely come. Therefore, in preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Śrīla Prabhupāda never felt any need to introduce something new, because since time immemorial the path back to the spiritual world had been well defined. In this way, by following Śrīla Prabhupāda's footsteps, executing his instructions, and repeating his words according to our realization, we can be assured of success for ourselves and for others.

That Śrīla Prabhupāda was the representative of the Supersoul and was empowered by Him became clear to me in the beginning of 1969, when Śrīla Prabhupāda was visiting the temple in Buffalo. During that visit, he spoke to an Indian gentleman, Dr. Lal, who had invited the devotees to open a temple there. Dr. Lal was an impersonalist and could not accept that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is a person. Śrīla Prabhupāda used the

example of how the word of the mother is decisive in determining who our father is. Similarly, the Vedas are our mother, and she tells us that Lord Kṛṣṇa is our father. Unfortunately, Dr. Lal could not accept this analogy. Śrīla Prabhupāda patiently repeated the analogy, but when he saw that this gentleman remained unconvinced, he changed the subject, leaving me to wonder why he had not used some other example or argument. However, now I understand that if someone cannot understand or accept something simple, how will he ever accept or understand something more complex? Such clear logic and simple methods are characteristic of one who is in contact with the Supersoul and empowered by Him to preach.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name, form, and qualities were present in Śrīla Prabhupāda's heart, and Lord Kṛṣṇa and His associates were having their pastimes there. The entire atmosphere surrounding Śrīla Prabhupāda was therefore surcharged with an ever-flowing spiritual potency that never failed to enlighten and enliven others with transcendental knowledge and bliss. This spiritual potency manifested itself in Śrīla Prabhupāda's keen intelligence, good qualities, and devotion, which entered into the hearts of his sincere followers, encouraging them to also serve as instruments in Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's divine līlā of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness around the world.

Your aspiring servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

2006: Prahlādānanda Swami

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda created many programs to engage devotees in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and to spread the mission of Lord Caitanya. He stressed certain programs, such as distributing his transcendental literature, establishing gurukulas, and developing farm communities with cow protection — all meant to bring about a cultural revolution to convince people that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Śrīla Prabhupāda often mentioned that if we could not expand the programs he began, at least we should try to maintain them.

And Śrīla Prabhupāda had very good reasons to push on these programs. Developing self-sufficient farms would provide an economic basis by which householders could raise their families free from the degrading influence of modern cities. Establishing gurukulas, as Prahlāda Mahārāja has advised, would give children a chance to become educated in how to perform divine austerities from the beginning of their lives and attain Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And transcendental book distribution would keep the devotees in the cities on the transcendental platform, unaffected by material contamination. In this way, along with other spiritualized activities such as dance, art, music, and theater, a cultural revolution would take place to enable people's dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness — the only real asset anyone has in this world — to fully awaken in their hearts. Such are the timeless words and instructions of ācāryas like Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja

and Śrīla Prabhupāda. Now it is our duty to think deeply how to satisfy them by carrying out these instructions.

There is an intimate connection between our service and our Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If we perform our service according to the orders of our previous ācāryas and take guidance from Śrīla Prabhupāda with the sole intention of pleasing Lord Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees, then the result will be that we will naturally think of Lord Kṛṣṇa always. This, Śrīla Prabhupāda taught, is perfect Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Practical programs such as transcendental book distribution certainly help our patience and enthusiasm to flourish. Conversely, without the growth of practical service, the execution of our daily sādhana — of attending classes, reading books, chanting at least sixteen rounds of japa daily, and preaching — will become increasingly difficult to maintain because all these practical activities and services are food for our devotional creepers.

Surely, developing and implementing such programs as gurukula and even farm communities with cow protection is a challenge in present-day ISKCON. Still, if its leaders and devotees in general understand how essential these programs are for both our personal success and that of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness mission, then, with enthusiastic support and Śrīla Prabhupāda's blessings, these programs will develop and, perhaps sooner than later, flourish in glorification of Śrī Guru and Gaurāṅga.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

2007: Prahlādānanda Swami

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

*nama oṁ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda often advised his followers to read his books. As he wrote to Satsvarūpa Dāsa Goswami in 1976:

Yes, as a Sannyāsi and GBC your first duty is to read my books. Otherwise how will you preach? In order to remain steadily fixed in Krishna consciousness there must be a sound philosophical understanding. Otherwise it will become only sentiment. Whenever you find time please read my books.

Below I would like to offer three suggestions for reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books more effectively.

The Proper Mood

Before reading or studying Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, we should ensure that our mood is appropriate. What is the proper mood? For instance, it is very conducive to cultivate awe and reverence, to be respectful toward the books and their subject matters. It is also very good to approach them with inquisitiveness, enthusiasm, confidence, patience, and a prayerful attitude.

Imagination

Lord Kṛṣṇa appears in this world in many forms. As Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in chapter 22 of Kṛṣṇa book:

It is recommended in the Vedic scriptures that a deity may be made from different kinds of material elements: it can be painted, made of metal, made of jewels, made of wood, earth, or stone or can be conceived within the heart of the worshiper.

Therefore, one method of reading with attention and absorption is to use your imagination — in accordance with the words of the scriptures — to envision and experience within your heart what is being described. Read and experience, for instance, the following description from chapter 35 of Kṛṣṇa book:

When Kṛṣṇa walked on the bank of the Yamunā, He was seen nicely decorated with tilaka on His face. He was garlanded with different kinds of forest flowers, and His body was smeared with the pulp of sandalwood and tulasī leaves. The bumblebees became mad after the fragrance and sweetness of the atmosphere. Being pleased by the humming sound of the bees, Kṛṣṇa would play His flute, and together the sounds became so sweet to hear that aquatic birds like cranes, swans, and ducks were charmed. Instead of swimming or flying, they became stunned. They closed their eyes and entered a trance of meditation in worship of Kṛṣṇa.

By reading and visualizing such passages, we can remember the form of Lord Kṛṣṇa by expanding the verse and seeing Him as Lord Brahmā describes Him in the Brahmā-saṁhitā: dressed in a yellow dhotī, with a peacock feather in His hair, with eyes like lotus petals, carrying a flute, and wearing a vaijayantī garland. By using our imagination we can see many beautiful forest flowers of different colors, smell their fragrances, and also hear the jubilant bees humming around them. And if we pay close attention, within our minds we can hear the enchanting sound of Kṛṣṇa’s flute and marvel at the intensity of love displayed by the birds who are worshiping Him in their trance of ecstasy. Painting spiritual pictures within our minds will make our minds spiritual.

Self-recitation

Probably one of the most important factors in reading is to examine how much we are absorbing what is being said. One way of doing this is to recite what we have read. Read a paragraph, close the book, and try to recite out loud (or sub vocally) what you have read. Self-recitation will reveal the blanks in our remembrance and knowledge and at the same time help us organize and consolidate the information in our minds.

Do not be discouraged if you cannot remember so much. Simply go back and read the paragraph again with the same mood of enthusiasm, confidence, and patience mentioned above. Again close the book and

recite the paragraph or passage once more. Repeat this exercise until you can remember, understand, and perhaps even assimilate or experience what has been said. Studies have shown that self-recitation is particularly effective in helping one absorb and assimilate what one is studying.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

2008: Prahlādānanda Swami

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

In his purport to Bhagavad-gītā 3.13, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes that the process of becoming Kṛṣṇa consciousness is easy:

Therefore, in order for people to become happy in all respects, they must be taught to perform the easy process of saṅkīrtana-yajña, in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Still, in his purport to Bhagavad-gītā 4.10 he described devotional service as a slow process:

So, by the slow process of devotional service, under the guidance of the bona de spiritual master, one can attain the highest stage, being freed from all material attachment, from the fearfulness of one's individual spiritual personality, and from the frustrations that result in void philosophy.

Especially in Kali-yuga, we can become completely successful in devotional service by chanting the holy names of the Lord. This is an easy process. But chanting perfectly without any offense may take a long time. The process itself may be easy, but understanding and accepting it may come quickly or slowly.

One can attain Kṛṣṇa consciousness or divine life at once, within a second—or one may not attain such a state of life even after millions of births. It is only a matter of understanding and accepting the fact. [Bhagavad-gītā 2.72, purport]

There are three progressive stages of chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, namely, the offensive stage, the clearing stage, and the offenseless stage. Here are some simple hints how to quickly progress through these stages to nally attain perfection.

First, we have to chant with full attention. To do this, we need to clearly chant all the syllables of the holy name.

Second, we should chant in a prayerful mood, calling out to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Lord Kṛṣṇa like a child calling for its mother. This prayerful calling depends upon our faith in the fact that the Divine Couple are persons who can hear us and reciprocate with us.

Generally, a neophyte devotee desires freedom from sinful reactions, a pleasant material life for himself and others, or even complete liberation from material desires and their concomitant miseries. Even if a

devotee approaches the Lord for material gain, the Lord will fulfill such desires in a way that will ultimately inspire that devotee to become more renounced and come closer to His lotus feet. Once we have developed a mood of faithful and prayerful chanting, we can gradually realize that material remuneration and spiritual progress go ill together.

Finally, after fully realizing the futility of material fruitiveness, we can try to chant “happily.” Happily means without any material desires and without any attachment to the mind’s meditation on mundane hankering and lamentation. The material mind may be programmed to generate such thoughts, but the soul can be aloof from them, if it so desires. Then, when the soul understands that the Supreme Lord is eternally the owner of everything and that there is no real use of material gain or any ultimate reality in material loss, it can sincerely ask the Lord for the real benefit of chanting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

In this prayerful mood, remembrance of the Lord and His name, form, associates, qualities, and pastimes comes gradually and spontaneously. At first we will remember a form of the Lord that we are naturally attracted to, such as the form of our worshipable Deity or a favorite picture of the Lord’s pastimes. After having been absorbed in remembrance of the Lord’s form for some time, the Lord will give us the intelligence how to feel His presence “in the transcendental situation.”

This yoga process helps one become free from all kinds of fear and anger and thus feel the presence of the Supersoul in the transcendental situation. (Bhagavad-gītā 5.27–28)

Savoring the happiness of experiencing the Lord with one’s spiritual senses, we automatically become more consistently and more fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Soon after, we will reach perfection, that is, we will enter our original spiritual mood of service and gain direct darśana of the eternal form of the Lord.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s aspiring servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

2009: Prahlādānanda Swami

*oṁ ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-salākayā
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

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

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

Faith is the most important factor in the development of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It is said that the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is essentially about developing faith. In the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad it is said that all

the imports of the Vedic knowledge are revealed to one who has equal faith in both the spiritual master and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

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

What Is Faith?

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

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

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

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

What to Be Faithful To?

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

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

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

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

How Is Faith Developed?

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

Thus, by the gradual process of pure devotional service, performed under able guidance, our dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness awakens, and all our doubts—the causes of neglect of spiritual life, fear of having a spiritual identity, and frustration arising from having no positive, fully satisfying goals in life—will gradually diminish and ultimately be vanquished.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s aspiring servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

2010: Prahlādānanda Swami

*oṁ ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-salākayā
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

*nama oṁ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-presthāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine*

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

The word “instrument” is one of the keys to ISKCON’s success. As Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the Bhagavad-gītā (11.33):

*tasmāt tvam uttiṣṭha yaśo labhasva
jītvā śatrūn bhuñkṣva rājyaṁ samṛddham
mayaivaite nihatāḥ pūrvam eva*

“Therefore get up. Prepare to fight and win glory. Conquer your enemies and enjoy a flourishing kingdom. They are already put to death by My arrangement, and you, O Savyasācī, can be but an instrument in the fight.”

We have a choice: we can become an instrument of either the saṅkīrtana movement or the sense gratification movement. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.9.29):

Brahmājī does not want to become a speculator dependent on the strength of his personal knowledge and conditioned to material bondage. Everyone should know in clear consciousness that one is, in the execution of all activities, an instrument. A conditioned soul is instrumental in the hands of the external energy, guṇa-mayī māyā, or the illusory energy of the Lord, and in the liberated stage the living entity is instrumental to the will of the Personality of Godhead directly. To be instrumental to the direct will of the Lord is the natural constitutional position of the living entity, whereas to be an instrument in the hands of the illusory energy of the Lord is material bondage for the living entity.

In ISKCON, the perfection of anyone’s service is to become an instrument of Śrīla Prabhupāda, the previous ācāryas, and Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. How to become an instrument? We first have to accept that everything is the property of the Supreme Lord and must therefore be used to please Him. In this age, pleasing Him especially means to engage everything in Lord Caitanya’s saṅkīrtana movement. In this way, we should try to convince people that Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is our eternal master and that the real aim of life is reviving our relationship with Him and going back to the spiritual world. Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote to me:

As Krishna sees that you are working very seriously to bring His other children back to the Spiritual Kingdom, then He will become very pleased and will bestow all blessings upon you. Krishna is never ungrateful for our efforts to serve Him, rest assured. (Letter to Prahādānanda, Los Angeles, 29 July, 1969)

On the battlefield of Kurukṣetra, Lord Kṛṣṇa directly instructed Arjuna. But if Lord Kṛṣṇa is not personally present, how will we know what He wants us to do? In his purport to Bhagavad-gītā 18.57, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that if we work according to Lord Kṛṣṇa’s instructions in the Bhagavad-gītā or follow those of His representative, the result will be the same. Without any adulteration, an actual bona fide representative of Lord Kṛṣṇa repeats according to his own realization the message that comes down in disciplic succession.

To become a pure instrument of Śrīla Prabhupāda, one must hear, study, assimilate, and apply the teachings and example he gave. When a devotee renders such sincere devotional service, Lord Kṛṣṇa and our ācāryas will become pleased and will give their blessings. Thus, spiritual realizations will flow within our hearts. However, if one relies on one’s own intelligence and abilities without a humble service attitude or respect for the founder-ācārya and his predecessors, although one may gain some temporary material acquisitions and success, one will not get spiritual realization and make advancement.

As followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda, we must try to become his instruments by basing our lives on his teachings. The GBC must also carefully examine those teachings, and after trying to assimilate them to the best of their ability, they must then present them to ISKCON's members. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

There shall be a Governing Board Committee of trustees appointed by the Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda according to the document Direction of Management dated July 28, 1970. The GBC is to act as the instrument for the execution of the will of His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda. (Amendments for Official Documents, New York, 22 July 1974)

Therefore, the members of the GBC must become learned in Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings. They should know his books like lawyers know the lawbooks. Śrīla Prabhupāda describes this:

That is our Vedic evidence. Whenever we speak something, immediately quote from Vedas. This is our process. If it is accepted by the Vedic process, then it is perfect. Just like in the law court. You are lawyer. You are arguing. When you quote from a judgment, previous judgment, it is accepted. Similarly, when you give authoritative statement in support of your talking, then it is perfect. That is the way. Otherwise, what for these books are there? If it is mental speculation, what is the use of these books? But as soon as we speak something, we immediately support by quoting from Vedic literature. And that is perfect. (Room Conversation, London, 2 September 1973)

Those who serve as initiating spiritual masters in ISKCON must also strive to become perfect instruments of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his teachings. One who believes that he has become the master of his disciples rather than simply a humble servant of his guru and others is bewildered by illusion. In a lecture in Vṛndāvana Śrīla Prabhupāda said:

But the spiritual master does not think of himself as Hari. Although he's offered the respect of Hari, he thinks himself as humble servant of Hari and all others. A spiritual master takes his disciples as his spiritual master. That is the position. He thinks that "Kṛṣṇa has sent me so many spiritual masters." He does not think himself as spiritual master. He thinks himself their servant. Because they have to be trained. Kṛṣṇa has appointed him to train them. Therefore he thinks himself as servant of the disciples. This is the position. (Lecture, Vṛndāvana, 23 October 1972)

Similarly, in The Nectar of Devotion Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

The author of Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, very humbly submits that he is just trying to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world, although he humbly thinks himself unfit for this work. That should be the attitude of all preachers of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, following in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. We should never think of ourselves as great preachers, but should always consider that we are simply instrumental to the previous ācāryas, and simply by following in their footsteps we may be able to do something for the benefit of suffering humanity. (Introduction)

In material illusion, one becomes materially entangled by accepting offerings of followers in a spirit of enjoyment. Hence one's spiritual inspiration diminishes and one's devotional service slackens. Therefore, one of the essential duties of ISKCON's leaders is to protect the devotees from such illusion and make sure that they are using all the assets of the Society in the mission of Lord Caitanya and Śrīla Prabhupāda.

To become an instrument of a spiritual master who is himself aspiring to become an instrument in the hands of his perfect spiritual master is the perfection of one's discipleship. On his arrival in Boston harbor in 1965 aboard the Jaladuta, Śrīla Prabhupāda exhibited this perfection when he wrote:

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. ("Mārkinē Bhāgavatadharmā," Verse 14)

Before departing on His journey to South India, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the perfect example of a devotee, told His followers:

I am simply a dancer, and You are the wire-puller. However You pull the wires to make Me dance, I shall dance in that way. (Caitanyacaritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 7.18)

In conclusion, as members of ISKCON, we should always remember that we are spiritual souls aspiring to become instruments of Lord Kṛṣṇa through following His instructions and those of our previous ācāryas, as presented to us by Śrīla Prabhupāda. Members of ISKCON can always expect material problems and opposition from those who are envious of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. However, if we have spiritual problems, if we are not happy and enlivened in our devotional service, such problems must be due to our lack of realization and application of Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings. We must have the confidence that if we become perfect instruments in the hands of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His followers, all perfection will follow.

Prahlādānanda Swami

2011: Prahlādānanda Swami

Cooperate to Spread Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

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

2012: Prahlādānanda Swami

*oṃ ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-salākayā
cakṣur unmilitam yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

*nama oṃ viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-presthāya bhū-tale
śrimate bhaktivedānta-svāminn iti nāmine*

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

In The Nectar of Instruction Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī advises us to be intelligent enough to distinguish between different levels of devotional accomplishment: from the neophyte (kaniṣṭha-adhikārī) to the intermediate (madhyama-adhikārī) to the advanced level (uttama-adhikārī). Although Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books contain extensive information about these levels of spiritual attainment, it is still rather easy to become confused about one’s own level of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and that of others.

It is said that in Kali-yuga everyone is born a śūdra or lower (kalau śūdra-sambhava). A śūdra is one who identifies with the material body and is dissatisfied because of his or her material situation. A fortunate person, however, comes in contact with a pure devotee and begins the process of devotional service. But even if one sincerely tries to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one’s conditioned nature does not disappear immediately. A neophyte devotee still identifies with the body and will, knowingly or unknowingly, to some degree perform devotional service to fulfill material desires.

In the beginning one generally approaches Lord Kṛṣṇa because of distress caused by one’s sinful habits. But by regulated devotional service one gets the spiritual strength to avoid sinful activities and becomes detached from sinful desires. In this way, the root cause of sin is gradually diminished and all distress is alleviated. Next, the desire for material comfort becomes prominent. But by controlling the mind and trying to engage it in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, one develops good qualities: one becomes friendly to others, and so the miseries arising from envy diminish. And as one’s spiritual vision develops, one’s mind becomes more and more situated in a state of equanimity, and one learns to tolerate one’s own material circumstances and those of others. However, when one realizes that no amount of material satisfaction gives real happiness, a desire for real wisdom increases, a wisdom that awakens spiritual realization.

When one cultivates spiritual knowledge and wisdom, one remains unaffected by the dualities of material existence. From that platform one comes to the mode of goodness and acquires the qualities of a brāhmaṇa. Once situated in the mode of goodness, one understands the value of devotional service and tries to increase one’s enthusiasm to please Kṛṣṇa—“Endeavor executed with intelligence in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is called utsāha, or enthusiasm.” (Nectar of Instruction, verse 3) Such enthusiasm to please Lord Kṛṣṇa inspires the Supreme Lord to reveal Himself to His devotee, and thus the devotee begins to understand the meaning of peace, real knowledge, and happiness. As a result one becomes steady on the intermediate platform as a madhyama-adhikārī Vaiṣṇava. But a devotee should not expect that he or she will immediately progress from a neophyte devotee to a steady engagement on the spiritual platform of consciousness.

Compared to an ordinary person or even an ordinary yogī, or sage, a kaniṣṭha-adhikārī is a rare and highly elevated person. Śrīla Prabhupāda explains this:

Prabhupāda: Kaniṣṭha-adhikārī means he must be a brāhmaṇa. That is kaniṣṭha-adhikārī. The spiritual life, kaniṣṭha-adhikārī, means he must be a qualified brāhmaṇa. That is kaniṣṭha. What is esteemed as very high position in the material world, brāhmaṇa, that is kaniṣṭha-adhikārī.

*arcāyām eva haraye pūjām yaḥ śraddhayehate
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*

The brāhmaṇa means from the material stage gradually he is elevated to the spiritual stage. And below the brāhmaṇa there is no question of Vaiṣṇava. [Room Conversation, Varṇāśrama System Must Be Introduced, 14 February 1977, Māyāpur]

A neophyte devotee should try to come to the intermediate platform as soon as possible. This depends upon the devotee's sincerity and seriousness about achieving the higher platforms of devotional service. Indeed, actual devotional service begins at the level of liberation from the misconceptions of material affection and identification. At the stage of anārtha-nivṛitti in devotional service (giving up unwanted habits), one is liberated from the effects of anārtas and aparādhas (offenses). When one chants at the nāmābhāsa stage, gradually these impurities are removed. One is no longer attached to material hankering and lamentation, and one sees all living entities as Lord Kṛṣṇa's servants and reciprocates with them according to their devotional qualification (or potential lack of it) to engage in devotional service.

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. [Gītā 18.54]

Practicing devotional service on the madhyama-adhikārī platform gives one the spiritual inspiration for spontaneous and other more advanced levels of bhāva-bhakti, prema-bhakti. However, Śrīla Prabhupāda cautions the sincere neophyte not to imitate more advanced devotees, for this will stop devotional progress and will eventually even end the attempt to rise to the level of pure devotional service. If one imagines that one has already reached perfection, why make any further attempt to achieve that perfection?

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu advised us to preach the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Those who follow the instructions of the previous ācāryas and repeat their message to others become dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa will not allow such devotees to remain devoid of spiritual awareness and devotional feelings. Thus, after studying Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, one should practice one's sādhana sincerely and then distribute transcendental knowledge to others, especially in the form of transcendental literature. At the same time, we should learn to give up unnecessary anxieties, material attachments, material desires, and misconceptions arising from misidentification with the material world. We should take shelter of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and have faith in pure devotional service.

Your aspiring servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

2013: Prahādānanda Swami

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

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

In the Bhagavad-gita Lord Kṛṣṇa glorifies transcendental knowledge as the boat that can help us cross over the ocean of material miseries. Lord Kṛṣṇa also says that transcendental knowledge is one of the fruits of pure devotional service. This knowledge is received from Lord Kṛṣṇa or from his bona fide representatives and is of two kinds: understanding our real self, and understanding the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

To help us achieve this knowledge, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has advised us to use all our resources in the service of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s saṅkīrtana movement. The aim is to become an instrument to convince people that they are all Lord Kṛṣṇa’s eternal servants and that it is in their interest to use whatever they have—body, wealth, intelligence, words, life—in glorifying and serving Lord Kṛṣṇa. When we use all our energies to work cooperatively to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the saṅkīrtana movement will spread and our lives and others’ lives will become perfect. How to use our various energies in the saṅkīrtana movement can be seen in different ways. One way is through properly understanding and using the five gross elements of the material energy.

The Vedic literature tells us that the external material world consists of five gross material elements: ether, air, fire, water, and earth. Furthermore, there are five planets, or grahas, that rule over these five elements: Jupiter, Saturn, Mars, Venus, and Mercury. In turn, these grahas are ruled by five avatāras: Vāmanadeva, Kūrmadeva, Nṛsiṁhadeva, Paraśurāma, and Buddha, respectively. For our purposes, we need to first understand how these grahas influence our behavior. Then we can learn how to best integrate the various energies of the grahas in our lives and in organizing the saṅkīrtana movement.

Ether (ruled by Jupiter) is the element that provides space to hold the other elements. Similarly, Jupiter gives us the “Why?” in our lives and rules optimism, purpose, and the higher goals of life. Among the demigods, Jupiter is Bṛhaspati, the guru of the devas, who gives us the knowledge that comes in disciplic succession and that is meant for our development of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and pure devotional service. Jupiter gives us the bigger picture or the space for our other energies and provides a meaningful direction in which to use them. The highest objective of life and knowledge that Jupiter can give is pure devotional service in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

To realize this knowledge, we have to recognize and do our duty in a detached manner. This aspect is represented by air and Saturn. As air is neutral to the other elements and unaffected by their association, so we have to be detached and unaffected by the material energy as we perform our Kṛṣṇa conscious duties. Saturn, which represents the limitation that the time factor imposes on everyone in the universe, also teaches the tolerance necessary to transcend the dualities of the material energy, such as happiness

and distress, honor and dishonor. Without Saturn's detachment, caused by a realistic perspective on life, the purposes delineated and inspired by Jupiter will not be fulfilled.

To sustain our detachment and further our advancement towards our goal, we require the fiery energy of Mars. As fire illuminates and gives heat, so Mars provides the illumination on our path and the enthusiasm and determination to go forward to achieve our goal despite obstacles. Without sufficient and balanced Martian fire, we'll either be too timid to commit our energies in productive actions or too easily frustrated and angered, thus dissipating our energies in unproductive ways.

To make spiritual advancement, we need patience, conviction, and enthusiasm. When Jupiter's energy makes the goal of Kṛṣṇa consciousness clear, Saturn's patience and Mars's conviction and enthusiasm make our progress along the path of spiritual advancement steady.

A strong and balanced influence of Venus can enhance a devotee's cooperative spirit in the saṅkīrtana movement. This spirit helps create a pleasing, attractive atmosphere that will allow a sense of appreciation for other devotees to develop and will increase the desire to worship the Supreme Lord with devotion.

When devotion increases the loving exchanges among devotees, Lord Kṛṣṇa and the goddess of fortune are pleased, and they award their devotees success in spiritual advancement and all the necessities of life. In this way we can easily remember Lord Kṛṣṇa by understanding how He is the controller and enjoyer of His material and spiritual energies. When properly used in devotional service, Mercury's energy gives this clear perception and intelligence.

Once our perception is clear and our mind present, our consciousness fills up with the happiness of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Kṛṣṇa conscious activities become ever more encouraging, and the means to achieve our goal—kṛṣṇa-prema—become ever clearer.

Because Lord Kṛṣṇa can create within His sincere and surrendered devotees the higher qualities necessary for advancement in spiritual life, such devotees do not need to know about the grahas and astrology. In his books Śrīla Prabhupāda clearly explains all the knowledge necessary for spiritual advancement.

Lord Kṛṣṇa has created the material energy so that the conditioned souls can use His energy in devotional service to gradually come to the position of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If we have a clear goal, the intelligence how to achieve it, patience, determination, and enthusiasm, we can gradually perceive Lord Kṛṣṇa within all things, and our life will gradually become absorbed in the happiness of spiritual existence.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

2014: Prahādānanda Swami

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

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

In the Bhagavad-gītā (4.34) Lord Kṛṣṇa gives us a formula for understanding the truth: inquire submissively from a devotee who perfectly understands the Absolute Truth and render service to him. By such sincere service to a self-realized soul, we can realize that everything we can and cannot perceive is part of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s energies and that everyone is His eternal servant.

Helping others become Kṛṣṇa conscious is the essential service that Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His representative in disciplic succession, Śrīla Prabhupāda, have given us. Whenever we meet someone—anyone—we get an opportunity to pray to Lord Kṛṣṇa in our hearts for the transcendental discrimination and expertise to help that person reawaken his or her dormant Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Lord Kṛṣṇa is most pleased when He sees that His devotees are trying to act with steady enthusiasm as instruments in His preaching mission.

Becoming a qualified servant of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mission will help us progress from the materialistic third platform of devotional service to the liberated second. A neophyte devotee on the third platform of devotional service has to act on the second platform to become liberated. Thus he must first learn to love Kṛṣṇa. There are five powerful devotional processes that help us do this, the foremost of which is offenselessly chanting the holy names.

We also have to engage with devotees in the six loving exchanges mentioned by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvami in The Nectar of Instruction—appropriately, according to each devotee’s spiritual development. To the innocent we have to offer the spiritual gifts of Lord Caitanya, especially in the form of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books, the holy name, and prasādam. At the same time we should not become distracted in our service and mission by improperly associating with those who are opposed to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

With closely related devotees—friends, husbands, wives, children, or others—there is always the danger of material familiarity. To become liberated from the misconception of “I” and “mine,” we have to take guidance from a self-realized devotee in cultivating the vision that we are always a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa’s servants. When Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu told us, “Whomever you meet, try to help them progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness,” this included our friends and family members, too. Only in this way can we truly help ourselves and others. Lord Rṣabhadeva cautioned us not to take up positions of responsibility, such as husband, father, or spiritual master, unless we will sincerely try to help our dependents go back to the spiritual kingdom. Thus, in spiritual life the role of a husband is that of a servant who helps his wife and children develop their Kṛṣṇa consciousness. To advance spiritually, a wife must fulfill her responsibilities in the same way.

For a devotee who aspires to come to the second platform, the platform of the madhyama-adhikārī, meeting nondevotees is also an opportunity to develop a service attitude. To attract people unfamiliar with

devotional principles, Lord Kṛṣṇa makes His devotee attractive in some way. Thus, to reveal the power of devotional service Lord Kṛṣṇa empowers such a devotee with good qualities, like patience, conviction, and enthusiasm. Such an empowered devotee is liberated from material influence and becomes a perfect, eternal servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa's servants. As Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote to me in July 1969: "As Kṛṣṇa sees that you are working very seriously to bring His other children back to the Spiritual Kingdom, then He will become very pleased and will bestow all blessings upon you. Kṛṣṇa is never ungrateful for our efforts to serve Him, rest assured."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's aspiring servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

2015: Prahlādānanda Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

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

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

Under the spell of Māyā's illusions, and based on material considerations, conditioned souls imagine that they have become greater or lesser than others. After all, conditioned souls have come to the material world to compete with one another for supremacy—for the supreme position of God.

In her prayers, Queen Kuntī says that if a soul wants to free himself of material pride and illusion, he must take shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa and develop a feeling of dependence on Him. On the other hand, she says, there are those who are intoxicated by material consciousness and anxious for material gain, such as wealth, learning, bodily beauty, position, and power. However, they become maddened by the illusionary energy and cannot chant Lord Kṛṣṇa's names feelingly.

The Bhagavad-gītā (13.32) says that the soul is eternal, transcendental, and beyond the modes of material nature. Despite contact with the material body, the soul neither does anything nor is entangled. Since the material energy can only put the soul in illusion but not change his essential nature or eternal position, the soul remains the same in all material circumstances.

From a spiritual point of view, so-called advancement through material gain has no ultimate value. Real progress for the soul is spiritual. Everything else is simply a change from one illusory, conditioned state of existence to another. Thus a soul can choose to either orient his desires toward material consciousness, which will entangle it in illusion, or toward the true, spiritual conception of being Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal servant.

The way a soul orients his desires mainly depends upon what he associates with, because different types of association accord with different subject matters for hearing, chanting, and remembering. Material

association will focus one’s hearing, chanting, and remembering on fulfilling material desires, whereas spiritual association focuses one on the spiritual desire to please Lord Kṛṣṇa. Indeed, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mission focuses on such pure, spiritual desires, especially on the desire to become Kṛṣṇa conscious and help others achieve the same state. The greatest service a soul can render to others is to help them reawaken their real nature as servants of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Lord Kṛṣṇa’s instruction to Arjuna to “just become my instrument and fight” is the same as Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s instruction to everyone to “become a guru and tell everyone about Lord Kṛṣṇa.” The best position in the material world is to become instrumental to Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s mission. As Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura told you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, “this will do good for yourself and others.”

Lord Caitanya didn’t want us to tell only people we don’t know about Lord Kṛṣṇa but also our family members, friends, and acquaintances. Lord Rṣabhadeva especially mentioned that anyone with a responsibility in the material world should try to free his or her subordinates from birth and death by helping them become Kṛṣṇa conscious.

If we remember such instructions from the Lord and His representatives and use our transcendental discrimination and expertise to engage everything and everyone in Lord Caitanya’s saṅkīrtana movement, we’ll become instrumental in changing this world from Narakaloka to Vaikuṅṭhaloka.

Your aspiring servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

2016: Prahlādānanda Swami

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

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

Keeping Śrīla Prabhupāda in One’s Heart

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

In the material world, people have different ideas about success and failure, but only an activity performed with pure devotion and resulting in Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a successful one. Consciously or unconsciously, every living entity is constantly consulting with the Supersoul within their heart. Kṛṣṇa consciousness will come to one who consults with Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and who understands His desires

directly, or indirectly through His representatives, before he or she acts. Such a person will then act out of devotion to please Śrī Kṛṣṇa; otherwise, he or she will be lost in the whirlpool of material misconceptions.

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

2017: Prahlādānanda Swami

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

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

The Secret of Advancement in Spiritual Life

What is the secret of spiritual advancement?

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes in Bhagavad-gītā As It Is (4.34, purport): “Satisfaction of the self-realized spiritual master is the secret of advancement in spiritual life.”

Who is a self-realized soul?

One who has strictly followed another self-realized spiritual master in accordance with śāstra: This first-class devotee is one who has strictly followed the rules and regulations under the training of a bona fide spiritual master and has sincerely obeyed him in accord with revealed scriptures. Thus, being fully trained to preach and become a spiritual master himself, he is considered first class. [The Nectar of Devotion, chapter 3: “Eligibility of the Candidate for Accepting Devotional Service”]

What does giving initiation have to do with self-realization?

An actual guru is śrotriya, one who has heard or received perfect knowledge through paramparā, the disciplic succession. [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.5.31, purport]

Should I follow my initiating guru blindly?

[B]oth blind following and absurd inquiries are condemned. Not only should one hear submissively from the spiritual master, but one must also get a clear understanding from him, in submission and service and inquiries. [Bhagavad-gītā 4.34, purport]

How strictly does one have to follow the ācārya in disciplic succession?

Besides that, any path you follow, you have to follow the regulative principles as they are enacted by authorities. So in our disciplic succession, previous ācāryas, they have advised that you should have your dress like this, you should have your head like this, you . . . So we have to follow that. Mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ [Mahābhārata, Vana-parva 313.117]. Our principle is to follow the footprints of authorities. So these things are not unauthorized. These are being followed from time immemorial. This dress, this tilaka, this chanting. Everything. Just like you see the picture of Lord Caitanya, we are following the same principles. This was being enacted five hundred years ago. The same principle we are following. We are not introducing anything new. We are simply following the footprints of our predecessors. That's all. [Lecture on Bhagavad-gītā 4.39-42, Los Angeles, 14 January 1969]

Can one be a spiritual master if one is not a self-realized soul?

A neophyte Vaiṣṇava or a Vaiṣṇava situated on the intermediate platform can also accept disciples, but such disciples must be on the same platform, and it should be understood that they cannot advance very well toward the ultimate goal of life under his insufficient guidance. [The Nectar of Instruction, verse 5]

What if there are no mahā-bhāgavatas?

A person who is [a] liberated acharya and guru cannot commit any mistake, but there are persons who are less qualified or not liberated, but still can act as guru and acharya by strictly following the disciplic succession. [Letter to Janārdana Dāsa, 26 April 1968]

What if the available guidance is insufficient?

One's effectiveness as a spiritual practitioner and guide for others will depend on one's sincerely trying to understand and follow the teachings of the founder-ācārya. Transcendental discrimination and expertise in one's devotional service is a gift of intelligence and realization given by the Supreme Lord to those who serve His perfect servants with love and devotion.

Your aspiring servant,
Prahlādānanda Swami

2018: Prahādānanda Swami

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

Confused by material concepts of life, souls under the spell of the illusionary energy are to different degrees unaware of Lord Kṛṣṇa and try to satisfy their desire for security and love under the inspiration and guidance of leaders who are also spiritually blind.

Because we're eternal and eternally connected with Lord Kṛṣṇa, we're always eternally secure and should experience unlimited spiritual love and pleasure. In the material world, however, a soul has two problems: he's covered by Lord Kṛṣṇa's illusionary energy and thus unaware of his true nature, and, misdirected by illusion, he accepts leaders equally covered by illusion and misdirected.

But a fortunate soul comes in contact with Lord Kṛṣṇa through books such as the Bhagavad-gītā and learns of his spiritual nature and his eternal relationship with the Supreme. If he's still more fortunate, he comes in contact with devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who can engage him in Lord Kṛṣṇa's devotional service, by which he becomes eligible to receive the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotee and thus attain spiritual enlightenment.

Less fortunate conditioned souls, guided by spiritually blind leaders, will continue to believe that material gain and sense gratification will bring the highest levels of security and love and happiness. Bound by the illusionary energy, such souls remain in the cycle of birth and death to repeatedly suffer under the laws of karma.

Recounting a conversation with Professor Kotovsky, Śrīla Prabhupāda said:

Just like I told Professor Kotovsky that "Your communism, what is the difference between your communism and our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement? You have selected Lenin as your leader, or master, and we have selected Kṛṣṇa as our leader, master. So on the principle, where is difference?" The professor could not answer. [Lecture on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.3.1, Vṛndāvana, 14 November 1972]

As a perfect representative of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda is a perfect spiritual leader. Śrīla Prabhupāda not only perfectly repeated Lord Kṛṣṇa's message, but he also perfectly lived His message. Because Śrīla Prabhupāda had an intense desire to give Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy to the fallen souls of Kali-yuga, Lord Kṛṣṇa is fulfilling that desire through Śrīla Prabhupāda's representatives in the form of his books, lectures, ISKCON, and his devotees.

Truly fortunate are those who come in contact with what Śrīla Prabhupāda offers and then accept it. The more they follow Śrīla Prabhupāda, the more fortunate they become. The more fortunate they become, the more they become empowered to spread that fortune to others.

Prahādānanda Swami