

All That Lies Between

*An Appreciation of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta
Swami Prabhupāda*

By Kalākaṅṭha dāsa

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Foreword by Girirāja Swami

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Dedication

To the followers of the followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda's followers.

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Foreword

naivopayanty apacitīm kavayas taveśa

brahmāyusāpi kṛtam ṛddha-mudaḥ smarantaḥ

yo 'ntar bahis tanu-bhṛtam aśubham vidhunvann

ācārya-caitya-vapusā sva-gatim vyanakti

“O my Lord! Transcendental poets and experts in spiritual science could not fully express their indebtedness to You, even if they were endowed with the prolonged lifetime of Brahma, for You appear in two features—externally as the *ācārya* and internally as the Supersoul—to deliver the embodied living being by directing him how to come to You.”

—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.29.6)

In August of 1971 Śrīla Prabhupāda gave me a personal instruction that included a general instruction for all devotees—to write about Krishna. “In the midst of your heavy duties,” he wrote in a letter, “go on writing something glorifying the Lord and put our philosophy into words. Writing articles means to express oneself how he is understanding the whole philosophy. So this writing is necessary for everyone.”

Kalākaṅṭha dāsa has taken this instruction and written about Śrīla Prabhupāda, our spiritual master and the founder-*acarya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Writing about Krishna includes writing about His pure devotee, as Śrīla Prabhupāda, following Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, explains in his introduction to *The Nectar of Devotion*: “When we speak of ‘Krishna’ we refer to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, along with His many expansions. He is expanded by His plenary parts and parcels, His differentiated parts and parcels, and His different energies. . . . So Krishna includes all such expansions, as well as His pure devotees.”

In fact, Krishna may be more pleased when we glorify His devotees than when we glorify Him directly. “My dear Pārtha,” He addresses Arjuna, “one who claims to be My devotee is not so. Only a person who claims to be the devotee of My devotee is actually My devotee.” (*Ādi Purāna*)

As we move through Kalākaṅṭha’s writing, we find—and he notes—that he speaks more about Śrīla Prabhupāda’s devotees and their efforts to serve him than about Śrīla Prabhupāda directly. This is also pleasing to Krishna.

aham bhakta-parādhīno

hy asvatantra iva dvija

sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayo

bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyah

The Supreme Personality of Godhead said, “I am completely under the control of My devotees. Indeed, I am not at all independent. Because My devotees are completely devoid of material desires, I sit only within the cores of their hearts. What to speak of My devotee, even those who are devotees of My devotee are very dear to Me.” (SB 9.4.63)

Kalākaṅṭha dāsa is a devotee of Lord Krishna’s pure devotee Śrīla Prabhupāda, and thus he is dear to the Lord. And by reading this book about Śrīla Prabhupāda and hearing about his greatness and about the service of his devotees, we, too, can be inspired to serve him and can become his devotees—better and deeper devotees—and thus dear to Krishna and our predecessor *ācāryas*.

“By remembering the activities of such a Vaiṣṇava, one becomes purified, along with one’s whole family. And what, then, can be said of rendering direct service to him?” (SB 1.9.33, quoted in NOD 12)

Poetry can help us look at things in new ways. Krishna and devotional service to Him are always fresh, but Kalākaṅṭha’s poems (and his comments about them) make the subject even fresher, and thus we can derive great satisfaction and bliss by reading them and rereading them, and by discussing them with other devotees.

“[P]ure devotees, always merged in knowledge of Krishna and absorbed in Krishna consciousness, exchange thoughts and realizations as great scientists exchange their views and discuss the results of their research in scientific academies. Such exchanges of thoughts in regard to Krishna give pleasure to the Lord, who therefore favors such devotees with all enlightenment.” (Cc Ādi 1.50 purport)

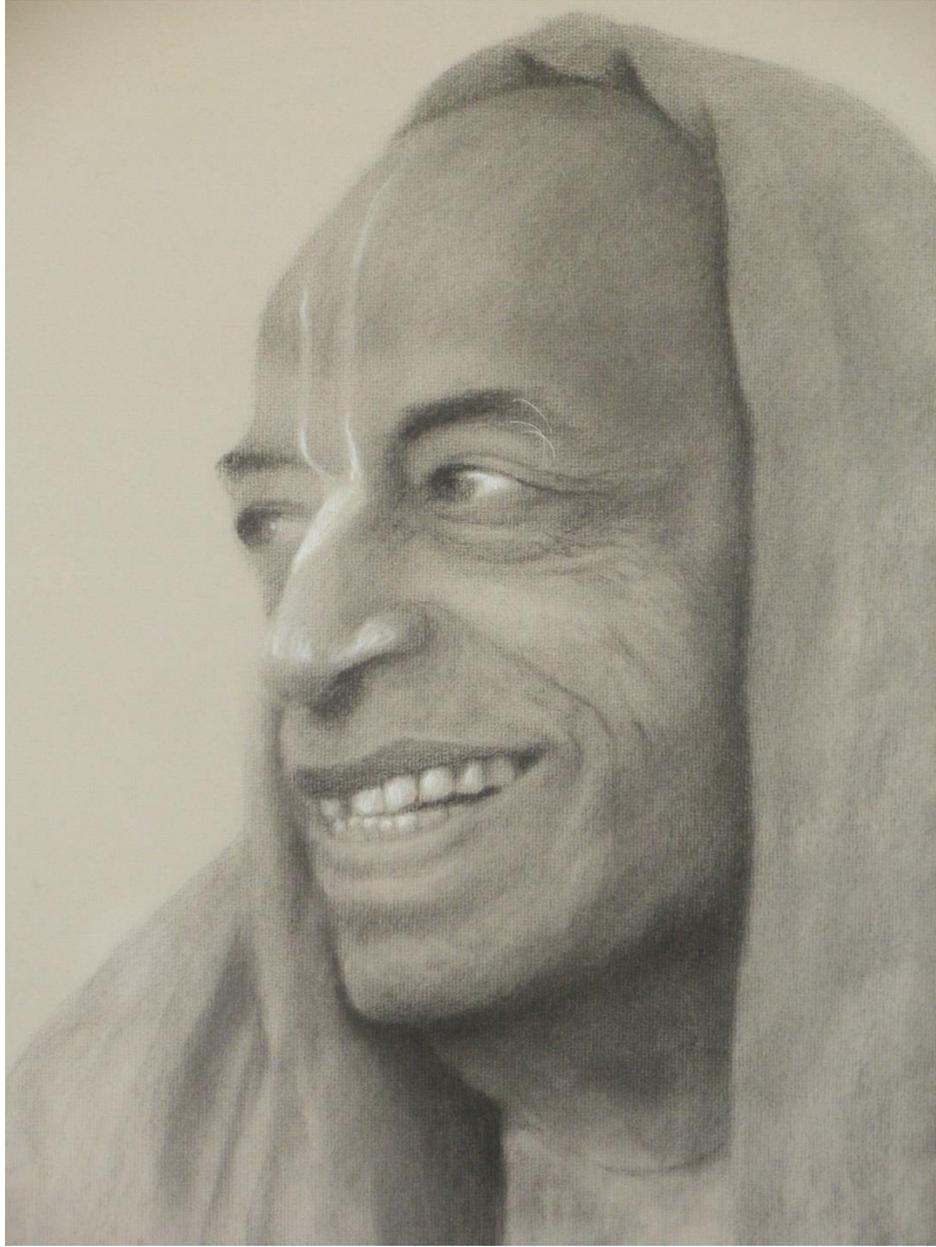
Kalākaṅṭha's life is a shining example of how to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda. He is a responsible householder—husband, father, and grandfather—and at the same time is fully committed to the mission of his spiritual master, always thinking of how to share Krishna's message with others and engage them in Krishna's service. The Gainesville, Florida, center that he heads is one of the most successful in the world, especially with university students, faculty, and staff. We are indebted to Kalākaṅṭha Prabhu for sharing his thoughts and realizations with us in such a heartfelt, candid, and personal way.

Hare Krishna.

Girirāj Swami

Carpinteria, California

August 24, 2013



Introduction

Often it is better to be lucky than smart. When I first heard of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami (Śrīla) Prabhupāda in 1972, I was a confused 18-year-old looking for something, needing help. Somehow I threw in my lot with Śrīla Prabhupāda to see what would happen. That random choice turned into the greatest fortune of my life.

Gurus are supposed to answer our questions, delivering purpose and happiness as we come to better understand ourselves with the help of their superior vision. Prior to reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, I read from and listened to teachers who gave me provocative hints but could not clarify subsequent steps. Their amorphous, frustrating influence sharply contrasted with Śrīla Prabhupāda's wonderfully clear and powerful impact in my life. Śrīla Prabhupāda's vast knowledge, endearing character and ongoing support filled me with joy and purpose. He has done the same for countless others around the world.

In this book you'll find a dozen short poems and some essays chronicling Śrīla Prabhupāda's soothing and ongoing presence in my life. If you never saw Śrīla Prabhupāda or were not alive when he was physically present, a book like this is especially meant for you. Though I was fortunate to see him, I was not an intimate disciple, yet his influence remains strong in my life. Today, though not present before our mundane eyes, Śrīla Prabhupāda, in his books and recordings, the eyewitness accounts of his disciples, and his legions of sincere, dedicated followers, continues to transform lives all over the world.

Though this book is presented with many flaws, such as inadequate Sanskrit editing, may its story of an insignificant servant's encountering and growing in Śrīla Prabhupāda's service encourage you to take full advantage of your opportunity to live and serve with His Divine Grace.



Meeting Śrīla Prabhupāda

They were a bright splash of orange in a drab downtown hell, foreign, exotic, yet urgently relevant with their brash, unspoken statement: “Spiritual life is real!” It was 1972, a time when many young people were questioning traditional American values, none more vividly than the Hare Krishnas chanting in downtown Portland, Oregon.

Passing by on my lunch hour, I stopped and stared. Most people walking past the street corner in front of the Meyers and Frank department store either ignored or avoided the colorful young chanters. Noticing me, a young man in white robes (Dina Bandhu dāsa) walked over and handed me a *Sri Isopaniṣad* and an address card. He said something I couldn’t follow and asked for a donation. I gave him a dollar.

A few days later, on my first visit to the small suburban house-turned-temple, I saw in the otherwise scantily furnished temple room a fancy raised seat holding a large painting of Śrīla Prabhupāda. The painting was graced with a garland of fresh flowers tied at each corner of its frame. Whatever this man was teaching was clearly working; his followers, young men and women, had clarity and a taste for spiritual life far beyond anyone I’d met in my spiritual quest.

These enthusiastic young people taught me that to activate spiritual life one needs a guru, a realized person to inquire from and to serve. I did not know Śrīla Prabhupāda, but the eyes of his students showed both awe and affection for him. This inspired me to try to build a relationship with the man in the painting. I heard about him, studied his books, and served him. Soon I was surprised to feel a genuine affection for him. I also felt happier than I had since childhood.

The devotees explained that, although finding happiness through serving someone else seems counterintuitive, every decent person knows it is true. What is less widely known is that service offered to God is the best, lifting us out of all kinds of self-defeating behavior and placing us on a sane and satisfying path in an otherwise crazy, frustrating world.

Yet what service could we possibly offer to the omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent Supreme? As a poor man pleases even a rich man by giving a cookie to his child, so we can please God by serving and pleasing a servant who loves Him unreservedly. To find such a rare personality as Śrīla Prabhupāda, endowed with pure love of God, is life’s greatest fortune.

On my nineteenth birthday, Śrīla Prabhupāda formally accepted me as a student. At that time he had about one thousand disciples. Some of them had been close with him in his early days in the US and enjoyed intimate personal relationships with him. Many more were like me, connected spiritually but a step removed from him physically.



Eighteen months later I was invited to join the BBT Library Party, a team of eight young men selling Śrīla Prabhupāda's books to academic institutions. This exciting service allowed me to travel widely, and I was fortunate to be near Śrīla Prabhupāda dozens of times in America, Europe and India. Here are some of the most memorable times I saw Śrīla Prabhupāda. They are well documented elsewhere, so here they are described only briefly:

Śrīla Prabhupāda installing Krishna-Balaram in Vṛndāvan and later in New Māyāpura, France.

Śrīla Prabhupāda singing the bhajan '*Parama Karuṇa*' in Atlanta and playing *mṛdanga* in 3 / 4 time when no one else could do it properly.

A colleague asking Śrīla Prabhupāda on a morning walk why anthropologists deny the veracity of Vedic history because of lack of human remains. "Because they burned the bodies," Śrīla Prabhupāda replied. Then he put his forearms together and vigorously waved them up and down. "They are like dogs," he said, "simply digging for bones."

Śrīla Prabhupāda becoming overwhelmed with transcendental emotion upon seeing the crowd of devotees in Atlanta and saying, "Lord Caitanya is more kind than Krishna. Krishna demands, '*Surrender to Me sarva-dharmām-parityaja*' ... but Lord Caitanya does not demand."

Śrīla Prabhupāda in Māyāpura speaking about Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva and entering a trance for what seemed like an eternal minute as his audience of a hundred disciples sat motionless.

Śrīla Prabhupāda handing out cookies to the children in Los Angeles after *Srīmad Bhāgavatam* class.

George Harrison nicely summarized the experience of being with Śrīla Prabhupāda; "It didn't matter who was present; he always spoke about Krishna."

Though it was wonderful to see him in classes, *darshans* and morning walks, naturally I always hankered for a more personal exchange with Śrīla Prabhupāda. On most occasions though, with many more senior and responsible devotees around, I had no good reason to see him. It seemed that an ordinary *brahmacārī* would have to be very inconsiderate and self-centered to try to barge in on his guru just to see him.

Once I asked our party leader, Satsvarūpa das Goswāmī, a close disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, whether he preferred serving Śrīla Prabhupāda in person, as he sometimes did, or being out in

the field with us. His prompt, firm reply surprised me: “Serving in sepāration is the higher ecstasy.” Still, I didn’t entirely believe him.

In June of 1975 Śrīla Prabhupāda was in Chicago, and our party was visiting colleges in the area. During a *darshan* one day Satsvarūpa das Goswāmī introduced each of us to His Divine Grace. When Śrīla Prabhupāda looked at me it seemed as if he was looking right *through* me. I had nowhere to hide my sinful character.

His servant Śruti Kīrti Prabhu contends that when Śrīla Prabhupāda looked at someone, he was simply thinking of how to engage that person in Krishna’s service. That observation makes perfect sense to me. It now helps me understand the grave, unfathomable look I saw in Śrīla Prabhupāda’s eyes.

Soon after that wonderful experience, my friend Apūrva Prabhu invited me to help cook and serve lunch for Śrīla Prabhupāda. I accepted, and suddenly, for a few moments, I found myself alone with Śrīla Prabhupāda in his room. Śrīla Prabhupāda looked on silently as the awestruck twenty one-year-old first brought in and then returned to gather his lunch plate.

The next day, Śrīla Prabhupāda mentioned to his servant that he didn’t need so many cooks; he would rather have his disciples out on book distribution. On hearing this, at first I felt discouraged, thinking how I was out distributing books all the time. That feeling quickly passed, and I understood that the happiness of my relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda came from serving him and not from hanging around.

A subsequent experience cemented this realization.

Another friend enjoyed a close relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda, speaking personally with him on many occasions. In 1976, this friend and I were scheduled to meet in France to begin selling Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books to colleges in Europe. Śrīla Prabhupāda was staying at New Māyāpura, the French Hare Krishna farm. My friend arrived there a few days before a major festival. My flight was scheduled to arrive around the same time, but somehow the cheap chartered flight was delayed and delayed, causing me to reach New Māyāpura two days late.

When I finally saw him, my friend shook his head and said, “I just spent the last two days with Śrīla Prabhupāda talking about our service. Where *were* you?”

By this time, hundreds of other devotees had arrived as well, and Śrīla Prabhupāda was no longer available to meet with us. I was bewildered. Why would Krishna do this to me?

Just two years later, in spite of his years of service and many close encounters with Śrīla Prabhupāda, this same friend abruptly gave up Krishna consciousness. That unexpected turn

forced me to deeply recall what Śrīla Prabhupāda had often taught: real connection with one's guru comes through service, not face time.

Service, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, is the most “congenial form of intimacy.” Service was and remains the means to intimacy with Śrīla Prabhupāda, a joyous condition that leads to intimacy with his beloved Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Five years after my first glimpse of his portrait in Portland, Śrīla Prabhupāda left this world. However, his service remains available for any interested soul. For me, in the thirty-six years that have since passed, service to Śrīla Prabhupāda has remained the GPS of my life, a constant source of direction and inspiration.

In one way Śrīla Prabhupāda is even more tangible now, years after his passing. Unlike the early days, we now have all of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and lectures readily available. We also have his detailed biography and a great variety of memoirs about him, making one of the best documented figures in modern religious history. In addition, his followers have matured and better understood devotional service and life in general. Today and going forward, all these resources makes a relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda far easier to acquire and maintain. Knowing him, and knowing more about ourselves, allows us to appreciate Śrīla Prabhupāda in a more practical and meaningful way than ever before.

For example, although as a young disciple I didn't understand these things, after years of studying his life (and living my own) I now appreciate how Śrīla Prabhupāda raised a family, struggled financially, and sought to balance his external and his spiritual life—experiences most of us share. When he was through with all that, he completely gave the rest of his life to inspiring spirituality in others. Always steeped in the ecstasy of his bhakti-yoga practice, Śrīla Prabhupāda persevered through obscurity and poverty, just as he did through wealth and international fame. His message never fluctuated; his character never wavered.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's books are his most prominent legacy. In them he details the ‘techniques of spiritual life’ as received through the *parampara*. His books are clear and thorough, presenting what Harvard PhD Hṛydayānanda Goswāmī describes as “an immovable philosophical object.” To study how he lived and to read his voluminous realizations allows anyone to know him in a deeply personal way.

His life, his example, his books, his teachings, his followers—all this is why Śrīla Prabhupāda remains the most important teacher in the world for anyone wanting to know the truth in life.

On Writing for Krishna

Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted his followers to write. “They should read our *Bhāgavatam*. The purports are there. They should assimilate them in their own words in a literary career.” (SPL, 12/13/69).

However, Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted his followers to write for the proper reason. In *Sri Caitanya Caritāmṛita, Ādi-līla* 9.6, Śrīla Krishnadāsa Kavirāja writes,

“It is by the mercy of all these Vaiṣṇavas and gurus that I attempt to write about the pastimes and qualities of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Whether I know it or know not, it is for self-purification that I write this book.”

In his purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda comments, “This is the sum and substance of transcendental writing. One must be an authorized Vaiṣṇava, humble and pure. One should write transcendental literature to purify oneself, not for credit. By writing about the pastimes of the Lord, one associates with the Lord directly. One should not ambitiously think, ‘I shall become a great author. I shall be celebrated as a writer.’ These are material desires. One should attempt to write for self-purification. It may be published or it may not be published, but that does not matter. If one is actually sincere in writing, all his ambitions will be fulfilled. Whether one is known as a great author is incidental. One should not attempt to write transcendental literature for material name and fame.”

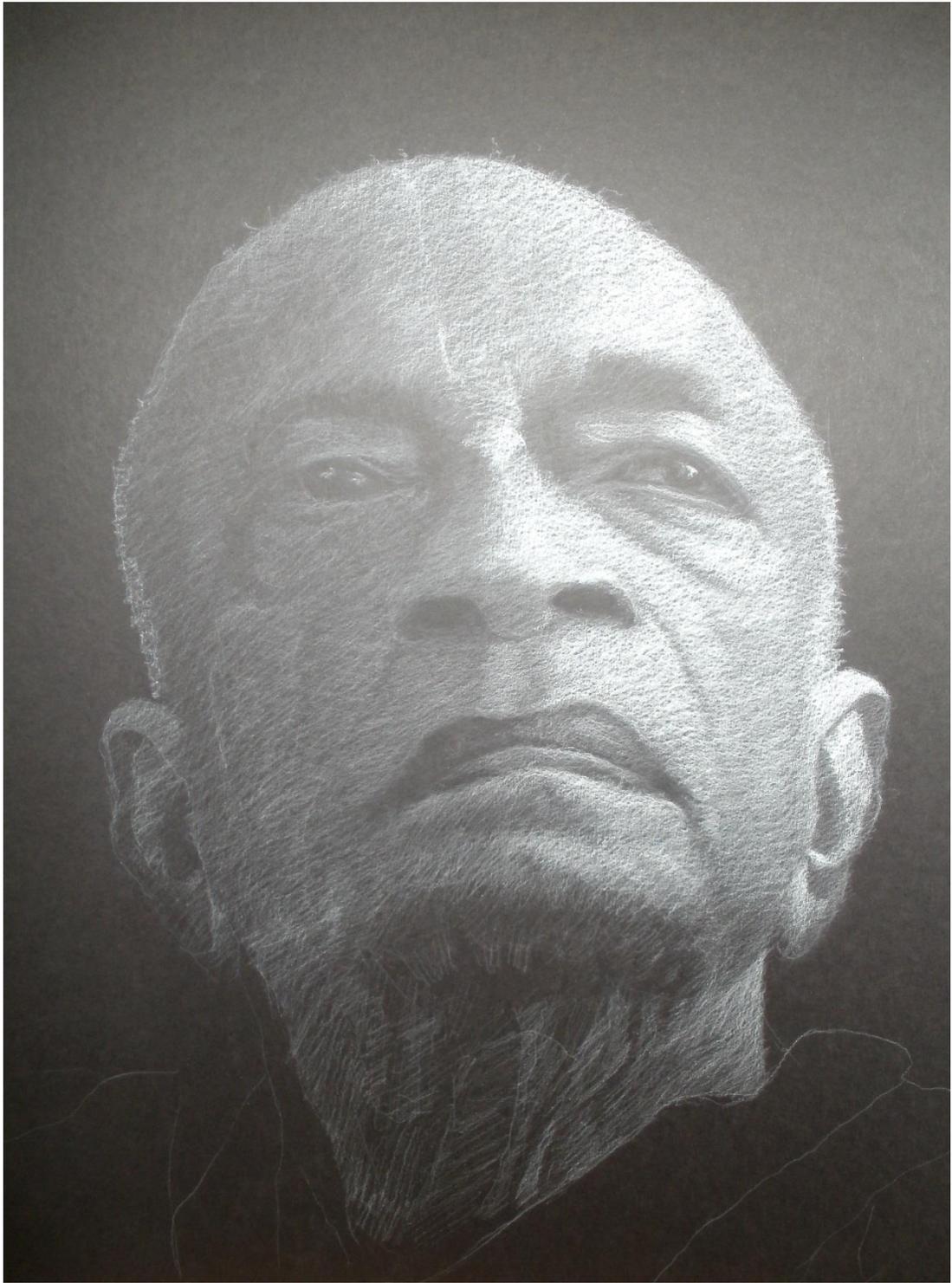
Writing for Krishna is a form of *sadhana* wherein one associates with the Lord and His devotees. Writing for Krishna purifies our minds and hearts. If we write with that purpose—not to “sit down and commit an act of literature”—our writing is automatically successful.

Good prose helps people understand bhakti. Poetry, on the other hand, is artsy and less practical. Yet the *śāstras* describe a devotee as poetic. Why? A poet must choose words carefully—a good practice for anyone. Choosing words well helps one speak well and learn to take pleasure in the use of language.

“Essential truth spoken concisely is true eloquence.” *Śrīla Krishnadāsa Kavirāja*

“I have made this letter longer than usual, only because I have not had the time to make it shorter.” *Blaise Pascal*

“The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and a lightning bug.” *Mark Twain*



Of all types of writing, metered and rhymed poetry demands a most careful evaluation of every word. Working within the boundaries of rhythm and rhyme is great practice for any writer.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote many poems. Two of them were English renderings of well-known Vaiṣṇava *bhajans* that he published in *Back to Godhead* in 1960 (see Appendix). Śrīla Prabhupāda also published a complete poeticized version of the *Bhagavad-gītā* in Bengali known as *Gītār-gān*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Gītār-gān* inspired me to try poeticizing his *Bhagavad-gītā* in English. In 1998 I began rephrasing each translation from Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* into one or more rhyming couplets. It was a wonderful study and meditation, and after a year the book was done. In 1999, Torchlight Books published the final product as *The Song Divine*, a compact introduction to *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*.

Although at the outset I was unsure if I could do it, poeticizing the 700 verses of the *Gītā* turned out to be so enjoyable that I did the same with the First and Second cantos of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Srīmad Bhāgavatam*. That took about two years and was published as *Pastimes of the Supreme Person*. Later I spent five years poeticizing the 3600 verses of the Tenth Canto. That book was published in 2010 as *A God Who Dances*. In general, these books have proven most helpful to those suffering from insomnia, though for me, writing them has been thousands of hours of meditation on the *śāstra* and a most pleasurable *sadhana*.

Turning translated texts to poetry one by one is easier than composing original poetry. What few original poems I have composed are mostly *Vyāsa pūjā* offerings to Śrīla Prabhupāda. This book includes some of these original poems along with comments to explain and put them in context.

May this humble expression of my appreciation for Śrīla Prabhupāda bring to you some of the joy he kindly brought to me. If you, my dear reader, are pleased, so will His Divine Grace, and my purpose in publishing this book is fulfilled.

All That Lies Between

You could have stayed in Vṛndāvana, where chanting is most sweet,
or moved to holy Navadvīpa in spiritual retreat.

Your Godbrothers had temples there with room enough for you
to sit and speak on holidays to a visitor or two.

You could have said, “It’s Krishna’s will—my visa was denied;
I may have failed, but now I know, at least, that I have tried.”
Your patron said you’d die abroad; your Godbrothers just scoffed;
You could have said, “Who’ll meet the boat and guide me safely off?”

You could have had one look at us and said, “What have I done,”
and caught the next boat back to home, unblamed by anyone.
“The Westerners,” you could have said, “Can go to hell and stay.”
Who would have disagreed with you? We were well on our way.

Instead you laid your final years like flowers at Krishna’s feet,
Siddhānta’s smile your hidden guide, Thākura’s vision in reach.
Producing eighty volumes as you guided us along,
You showed us how to cook prasāda and teach Lord Krishna’s song.

And as we teach, the boys and girls from every land on earth

Come forth to serve you, Prabhupāda, renewed in second birth.

I could have been a PhD, had I but stayed in school,
piled up a couple million, built a fancy house and pool.
I could have written novels, legislated laws and rules
or been a famous music star. I could have just been cool.

Instead I laid my youthful years like flowers at your feet;
Malporas caused my interest and *samosas* my defeat.
My dad said, “Son, you’re brainwashed.” My friend said, “You’re a fool!”
My blunders as a Vaiṣṇava were many, triumphs few.

Reflecting on my bygone youth, as one my age is prone,
I wouldn’t trade your glance for gold, your words for precious stones.

This morning on the *japa* trail, the northern star shone down,
so fixed and true, it seemed like you, with *devas* circling round.
But dawn concealed that starry stage and lit a wintry scene
of all I am, and all you are, and all that lies between.

Except for his guru’s request, Śrīla Prabhupāda had every reason to stay put: he was happy living in the holy town of Vṛndāvana; his books were well received; he had options in India, but not abroad; he was elderly (nearly seventy); and the Indian governmental bureaucracy appeared impenetrable. Still, taking every opportunity and pushing through every obstacle, he boarded a freighter and sailed from Calcutta to New York. He suffered two heart attacks en route without medical attention and arrived in America almost penniless. He lived in obscurity

for a year before finally discovering how to reach the hip, decadent young New Yorkers with his message of spiritual purity.

Śrīla Prabhupāda succeeded because of his simple purpose of pleasing his guru (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī) and his predecessors, including Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura, who first envisioned a worldwide *bhakti* movement. He taught one-on-one while codifying his teachings for all time in his books, which today inspire millions of people in a hundred languages.

Before meeting Śrīla Prabhupāda, I lacked any notion of becoming ‘a man of the cloth.’ My upbringing and interests were mostly secular. Disappointments with that life eventually led me to ask if there wasn’t something higher. Śrīla Prabhupāda, through his books and his disciples, answered my question so profoundly as to dwarf anything I had ever experienced. Besides, the food was incredible.

I have tried to give back to Śrīla Prabhupāda by sharing the love he gave me with others and modeling my insignificant life after his. Some parallels are there, but the vast chasm between our two lives always inspires me, as an earth-bound man always feels awe and gains perspective while looking at the stars.

This poem was published in *Back to Godhead’s* Śrīla Prabhupāda Centennial Issue in 1996.



Prabhupāda

Abhay Caran, the fearless one,
Vaiṣṇav father's favorite son.
Tiny *ratha* cart, friends applaud,
youthful *sādhu*, Prabhupād.

Family life renounced by you,
Caitanya tree to plant anew.
Jhansi, Delhi, preaching sod;
faithful gardener, Prabhupād.

Vivid dreams disturb your rest,
Siddhānta calling you to test.
Sleeping world, forgotten God,
Who will wake them? Prabhupād.

Across the sea, amongst the beasts,
You printed books and offered feasts.
Frigid hearts you cleansed and thawed.
Love rekindled, Prabhupād.

"Love of Krishna the highest taste;

Life of flesh, a useless waste!"

Thunderous voice and gentle nod,

give us Krishna, Prabhupād.

New York, Moscow, Melbourne, Rome,

Everywhere, a *sādhu's* home.

Tokyo, London, Allahabad,

jagad-guru, Prabhupād.

Preaching office in Bombay;

Sri Vṛndāvana, place to stay;

Māyāpura, abode of God,

place of worship, Prabhupād.

Sepāration causes pain.

How will ISKCON bear the strain?

Krishna conscious path you trod,

All must follow, Prabhupād.

This is the hobby-writing of a busy young man, inspired by a favorite poem written by his guru. It was an attempt to recreate, for Śrīla Prabhupāda, the simple, quintessential *Vyāsa-pūjā* offering he wrote for his own spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Thākura, fifty years earlier:

Adore, adore ye all the happy day,
more blessed than heaven, sweeter than May,

when he appeared at Puri, the holy place,
my Lord and Master His Divine Grace.

(The entire poem is included in the Appendix.)

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta liked this poem very much and read excerpts to his guests. He especially liked this verse:

Absolute is sentient thou hast proved,
impersonal calamity thou hast removed.
This gives us a life, anew and fresh,
worship thy feet, Your Divine Grace.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's poem is an amazingly sweet and concise philosophical statement. I wrote in a similar format, but instead of philosophy I wrote about Śrīla Prabhupāda's life. At the time (1985), Śrīla Prabhupāda's newly published biography was much on my mind, as were ISKCON's many struggles. My intended message: whatever the struggle, following Śrīla Prabhupāda's example would see us through.

Reading this poem again decades later, I see that this strategy has worked. Trying to serve Krishna, however imperfectly, has kept ISKCON afloat, thanks to the tireless efforts of its leaders and countless sincere devotees. Personally, following Śrīla Prabhupāda has made me a happy and satisfied man, giving me a purposeful and sensible life. In 1985 I could not yet directly see the lasting benefit of Krishna consciousness in my life, but I could see it vicariously in Śrīla Prabhupāda's life.

These are the visible aspects of Śrīla Prabhupāda I sought to recognize in this poem:

His pure birth and life;
His detachment and enthusiasm to teach;
His courage and resourcefulness;
His worldwide scope;
His brilliance in establishing international centers in India;
His continuing presence in the lives of his followers.

"Prabhupāda" was published in 1985 as a *Vyāsa-pūjā* offering on behalf of ISKCON Houston.

A Hundred Times

(At Śrīla Prabhupāda's Puṣpa-Samādhi, 1996)

Again I cross the pot-holed road until it comes in view,
quite certain all of Nadia is staring at it, too,
and thinking of the person whom this lofty dome stands for,
a hundred times a hundred times, times a hundred more.

The massive marble slabs are fine, but finer than their grade,
the love and sweat with which each piece was planned and bought and laid.
May Gangā's reach to touch his feet be turned back to her shore
a hundred times a hundred times, times a hundred more.

Here sits Jagannātha, and over there sits Gaura Kishor;
Siddhānta looks on gravely, while Thākura smiles more and more.
And in the center sits the great ācārya they prayed for
a hundred times a hundred times, times a hundred more.

He lives within an inner shrine of marble, green, and white,
Built high above the blooms he wore before he left our sight.
His gentle bhajans fill the sky and draw me to his doors,
a hundred times a hundred times, times a hundred more.

Above, his stunning pastimes gleam in bright mosaic tile,
each piece a brilliant moment when he made his guru smile.

Below I count them carefully and proudly tell the score:
a hundred times a hundred times, times a hundred more.

Pūjārīs light his incense, and his cooks prepare his dahl;
his preachers sing his glories to the pilgrims, one and all.
His golden footprints bless the head of one whose heart is poor,
a hundred times a hundred times, times a hundred more.

Before the dawn a conch shell roars, and echoes flood the hall;
a tidal wave of sacred sound surrounds the hearts of all.
O Prabhupād! Please glance upon a servant, head to floor,
a hundred times a hundred times, times a hundred more.

Like circles from a single stone tossed in a tranquil pond,
His forceful words surge forth from here, through this world and beyond.
His arms and legs are everywhere, his voice shall grace all shores,
a hundred times a hundred times, times a hundred more.

After Śrīla Prabhupāda left this world in November of 1977, there was much chaos in ISKCON. One of the symptoms was the struggle to build Śrīla Prabhpuada's *puśpa samādhi* memorial in Māyāpura. The design was controversial, and the building money came slowly. Finally, thanks to many sincere devotees, it was complete, just in time for Śrīla Prabhupāda's Centennial celebration in 1996.

After my first trip to Māyāpura in 1975 I had returned a few times, but 1996 was first time I had seen the Samadhi in full. The primitive road had not changed, but while riding on it near Māyāpura it was stunning to see the huge Samadhi, even from a considerable distance. For miles in every direction its graceful white marble dome gently dominated the flat Bengali plain along the side of the Ganges.

‘A hundred times a hundred times, times a hundred more’ is, of course, a fancy way of saying one million times, a figure that suggests my exuberance upon seeing the finished Samadhi. The beauty of the building is the magnetic presence of Śrīla Prabhupāda. He inspired the devotees who built it to sacrifice much of their time, talent and treasure in a deep exhibition of *Prabhupāda-bhakti*. So attractive is Śrīla Prabhupāda in his Samadhi that at times the Gangā over floods her banks, seemingly trying to touch his feet in the inner shrine.

Inside, the larger-than-life statues of the previous *ācāryas* reflect a happy, triumphant mood. An even larger *murti* of Śrīla Prabhupāda sits peacefully on an elevated dais just off the center of the main hall. The dais is adorned with a gorgeous marble canopy of green and white marble rising fifty feet from the floor but still well short of the huge mosaics high above on the ceiling of the dome. In keeping with Vaiṣṇava tradition, this shrine is built above the flower garland Śrīla Prabhupāda wore when leaving this world. Recordings of Śrīla Prabhupāda gently singing *bhajans* play inside and out, creating a most pleasant, auspicious atmosphere.

Incredible numbers of people—up to 100,000 per day—come in to see Śrīla Prabhupāda’s *murti*, to touch their foreheads to his golden-cast footprints, to savor delicate *prasāda* sweets, and to look at the artwork and exhibits. Seeing all this for the first time astonished me, taking place as it was just a hundred yards from the hot, dusty mud-walled hut I’d occupied during my first visit to the simple, rural and mostly deserted Māyāpura twenty-one years before.

During the day, seven days a week, the Samadhi is a flurry of activity. Regular offerings and *āratis*, non-stop tours, and a general, excited bustle combine with the serene atmosphere to create a dynamic spiritual presence. Only in the early morning is the Samadhi quiet. In those days fifteen or twenty of us would gather there each morning at 4:00 AM for *mangala ārati*, singing with no microphone and lightly played *kartalās* and *mṛdangas* in the cavernous, echoing hall. It was the most sweet and intimate *kīrtan* of the day, connecting us deeply in our special *darshan* with Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Outside, the Samadhi is ringed with statues of Vaiṣṇavas performing *harinām sankīrtana*, facing in every direction. That year I and many others left Māyāpura reinvigorated and hopeful for a more settled and effective ISKCON throughout the world.

This poem was published in 1996 as a *Vyāsa-pūjā* offering on behalf of ISKCON Foundation.



Prabhupāda's Victory

Come, my children, and hear the tale
Of Prabhupād's victory, and how he sailed
Alone to challenge the godless West
And give the world Krishna consciousness.

In old Calcutta, British-ruled,
Our young Abhay was fresh from school,
With *khadi* cloth and newly wed.
"Come meet this sādhu!" Abhay's friend said.

Bhaktisiddhānta, straight and tall,
Did not hesitate or stall:
"You're an English-speaking man;
Take Krishna to other lands."

Abhay replied, "But who will listen
while India is ruled by Britain?"
His guru said, "No ruling state
can make Caitanya's movement wait."

On capturing his guru's vision,
Abhay took up Caitanya's mission.
Some forty years then hurried by.
A Swami now, the day arrived,

When, standing on a weathered deck,
he ventured west and turned his back
on all familiar things he'd known,
his friends and his Vṛndāvana home.

On rolling sea, in tiny berth,
no place to stand on solid earth,
his stomach failed, and then his heart.
Would journey's end come at its start?

The man quite small, the sea gigantic,
but Krishna calmed the harsh Atlantic.
Thus His son He did protect
as Matsya saved the Vedic texts.

What was to come, no one could tell,
for one who journeyed straight to hell
to speak what his guru had spoken,
ancient teaching chain unbroken.

In Boston's bay he wrote a poem:

“Lord Krishna, I am far from home.
For you, my Lord, I take this chance;
Now kindly make your puppet dance.”

To suburbs first, and then to town,
to Bowery bums strewn on the ground,
to roommate mad on LSD,
the Swami went on fearlessly.

Beneath a giant, spreading oak,
the humble swami boldly spoke:
“Release yourself from māyā's pain
by chanting Krishna's holy name.”

Those who heard were precious few;
First came one and then came two
curious young girls and boys,
joining his unaided voice,

Tasting food he called “prasād,”
meeting with a personal God,
relishing the kīrtan's beat,

sitting at the Swami's feet.

Reaching sudden mystic heights,
through those blissful days and nights,
they abruptly gave up sin
and vowed to not take birth again.

The Swami gave these youthful hearts
temples, schools and farms to start,
and books to print for BBT
to benedict humanity.

Chanting, dancing, madness cured,
growing happy, calm, and pure,
his students called him Prabhupād,
servant at the feet of God.

Like Vāmana, with giant steps,
Prabhupād went east and west.
In India, the people stared
at Western men without their hair,

Who taught them what Caitanya taught:
for all, *bhakti*; *brahman* for naught,

complete with potent references
to the *Gītā As It Is*.

The Swami's worldwide retinue
charmed Indians, and others, too.
Temples sprung up by the score,
the largest in Sri Māyāpura.

In just ten years he spanned the world.
The ISKCON banner he unfurled
greeted every rising sun
with books in every local tongue.

His teachings not to be ignored,
he turned the skeptics to the Lord,
installing Krishna's Deity
to serve with loving majesty.

No one could equal his success
promoting Krishna consciousness.
Completing his great victory,
he went to Krishna's lotus feet.

Prabhupād said all must die,

but ISKCON's in the spiritual sky.

He is there, and Krishna, too.

I'd love to join them. Wouldn't you?

This simple poem was inspired by *Śrīla Prabhupāda Lilamṛta* and vaguely based on Longfellow's "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere." It was published in 1997 as a *Vyāsa-pūjā* offering on behalf of ISKCON Foundation. At the time my children were young, so I wrote as if to address them. My friend Stitha-dhi Muni Prabhu later used part of it in his children's book, *Abhay*.

The River ISKCON

Just as the sacred Gangā flows from Krishna's lotus feet,
Another river comes this way, transcendent, strong and sweet.
This river, known as ISKCON, giving blessings as it flows,
Directly emanates from Sri Gaurāṅga's lotus toes.

Where Śrīla Prabhupād once walked, his footsteps set the course,
and River ISKCON follows them with endless, matchless force.
Though Bhaghīrath brought Gangā down to free his fallen kin,
the river brought by Prabhupād delivers all from sin.

The River ISKCON's waters, though they're filled with mud and foam,
can carry any swimmer back to Godhead, back to home.

While wooden boats and silver fish traverse the sacred Gangā,
the River ISKCON's currents carry *kartals* and *mṛdanga*.

Prasād and *kīrtan-rasa* make the waters swirl and rush;
Desire trees called Vaiśṇavs line the banks and make them lush.
Arising from the desert soil, their faces brightly glowing,
these Vaiśṇavs worship Prabhupād and keep the river flowing.

The boulders in this river are the stones of greed and lust.

The River ISKCON pummels them, reducing them to dust.

The river runs to left or right, whichever way it likes,
and chuckles at the tiny men who throw up dams and dikes.

My children, when I die please burn my corpse, then kindly spread
my ashes in the River ISKCON. Leave your tears unshed,
for Prabhupād's great River ISKCON pours into an ocean
of pristine *bhakti-rasāmṛta* (nectar of devotion).

This poem was published in 1999 as a Vyāsa-pūjā offering for Śrīla Prabhupāda on behalf of *Back to Godhead*. It is an oblique glorification of His Divine Grace, expressing something on my mind at the time.

In those days ISKCON was under attack from two splinter groups, one claiming that ISKCON's leadership had deviated from Śrīla Prabhupāda, the other claiming that Prabhupāda had wanted ISKCON to follow another senior Gaudiya Vaiṣṇava swami. It seemed as if both groups wanted to hijack Śrīla Prabhupāda's legacy.

The majestic Gangā wanders at will through the plains near Māyāpura, unstoppable, superficially muddy but essentially pure, benefitting all. And so it is with Śrīla Prabhupāda's movement. A friend in Los Angeles once described ISKCON in Hollywood terms as, "The Movement that Refused to Die." It's true; ISKCON has survived Śrīla Prabhupāda's physical departure, gaffes by young leaders and all sorts of attacks from outside. This poem expresses ISKCON's resilience and connects it with Śrīla Prabhupāda.

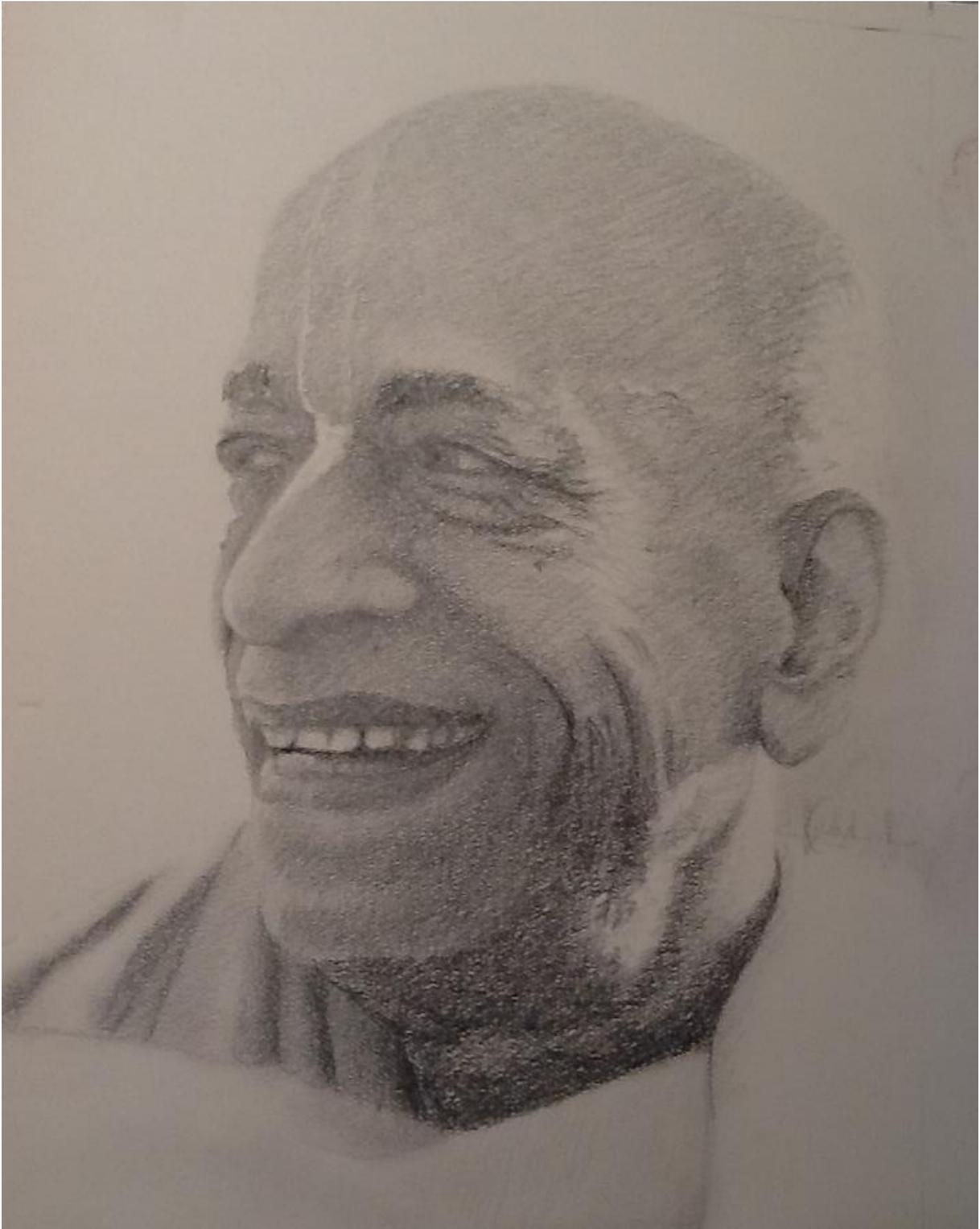
What is ISKCON now, and how does it figure into one's relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda?

ISKCON is more than books, bricks and mortar; it is the best vehicle for his worldwide followers to make a spontaneous daily offering of service to Śrīla Prabhupāda. ISKCON is the only institution he started for wide public outreach; thus in the eyes of the world, ISKCON's success or failure is forever tied with Śrīla Prabhupāda. Certainly its success will please him. For the devotee, serving in an ISKCON environment immediately and automatically connects one with Śrīla Prabhupāda.

As for the critics, why would one need look outside the organization he founded to really serve Śrīla Prabhupāda or to ‘understand his mood?’ Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mood is abundantly clear; he wanted to spread Krishna consciousness, he gave his life for that purpose, and he used ISKCON as his vehicle.

In *Srīmad Bhāgavatam*, 4.28.48, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “The main business of human society is to think of the Supreme Personality of Godhead at all times, to become His devotees, to worship the Supreme Lord and to bow down before Him. The *ācārya*, the authorized representative of the Supreme Lord, establishes these principles, but when he disappears, things once again become disordered. The perfect disciples of the *ācārya* try to relieve the situation by sincerely following the instructions of the spiritual master.”

ISKCON has certainly had its periods of disorder. While some members have given up, others have bravely stayed on and struggled to correct things. By and large they have succeeded. May Lord Sri Krishna bless me to live and die in the association of those who fix ISKCON when it breaks, the ones who rise early, work long hours, bear any burden and blissfully, gratefully carry on Śrīla Prabhupāda’s movement every day. They are Śrīla Prabhupāda’s spiritual creations, his living legacy, his pride and joy. They keep the river rolling.



In Māyāpura

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Because you chose to carry on,

today I rose before the dawn.

With beads in hand, I made my way

to see Lord Krishna, bow and pray.

In Māyāpura, this blessed place,

pūjārīs blew the conch today

and pulled the curtains to the side.

A thousand sets of Vaiṣṇav eyes

Looked straight to Rādhā, dressed to please

and Mādhav, garland to His knees.

Ten thousand Vaiṣṇav fingertips

flew up for Them as Vaiṣṇav lips

Sang out the sacred Vaiṣṇav prayers

as other Vaiṣṇavs everywhere

so gladly kept the same routine,

as you alone had once foreseen.

How many lives have been restored
with praise of Sri Vṛndāvana's Lord?
How many cries of "Nitāi-Gaur!"
In days to come, how many more?

It's all the shadow of one man,
where scriptures urge the wise to stand.
You kindly take and keep command
of those who serve the best they can.

When I wrote this poem I'd been living in Māyāpura with my family for three months, attending the morning *sadhana* program each day. The daily dose of energy, enthusiasm and *bhakti* made me think of Śrīla Prabhupāda. How many times could he have given up? How many huge obstacles stood in front of him? Without him, where would all the thousand devotees at each morning program be? How much poorer and more hopeless would this world have been if Śrīla Prabhupāda had been less determined?

Krishna is described as the cause of all causes. In this case, Krishna caused Śrīla Prabhupāda to go west, and Śrīla Prabhupāda caused us all to take up Krishna consciousness. Nearly anyone in the world today who chants Hare Krishna extensively and follows the four regulative principles can trace their practice back to Śrīla Prabhupāda's voyage on the Jaladuta. It is certainly so for me. Accepting and relishing Śrīla Prabhupāda's influence on my life renews our relationship every day.

The Deity worship in Māyāpura exceeds any other. Each day the full sized Rādhā Madhava Deities, surrounded by their enchanting eight principal *gopi* associates, appear in an extravaganza of colors, patterns and jewels, always fresh, never the same way twice. When their curtain parts, everyone bows, *kīrtan* begins, and ecstatic feelings surge through the crowd. The huge and stirring Panca-tattva Deities appear on another altar, more simply dressed but naturally munificent. The powerful Lord Nṛshimhadeva is on yet another altar. Śrīla Prabhupāda sits on his regal *vyāsāna*, watching it all.

The daily routine takes everyone from one altar to the next, followed by *tulasi ārati*, performed for years by the same dedicated *pūjārī*. The whole experience is stirring and enriching.

Although Māyāpura, ISKCON's capital, excels in the beauty and scope of daily *sadhana*, in a simpler way, the same services go on somewhere in the world, every hour of every day. Somewhere, people of all ethnic, religious, racial and socio-economic backgrounds are at any moment relishing the purity, humility, peacefulness and clarity of *bhakti* as Śrīla Prabhupāda taught it. A hundred years ago--fifty years ago--such a phenomenon would have been unimaginable. And this mighty international tree of *bhakti* has only just begun to take root.

All this is due to Śrīla Prabhupāda. Thoreau said, "An institution is the shadow of a man." As a tree gives shelter from the blazing sun, in this scorching desert-like world, Śrīla Prabhupāda and his institution is a most cooling refuge.

The last line of the poem can be read either as a description of Śrīla Prabhupāda or as a prayer that he continue giving shelter to every sincere person, however faulty he or she may be.

Prabhupāda's Son

When you confront Arjuna's situation,
Unsure if you should fight or just pretend,
And, thinking of Lord Krishna's affirmations,
Toss out the slightest thought of giving in;

If you can do your duty when it pains you,
without a hope of hearing, "Job well done!"
If you accept the fact that some out-gain you,
Without a jealous thought toward anyone;

If in this ugly, brutal world you're able
To offer something lovely to the Lord,
While keeping bread upon your family's table
And making service done its own reward;

If you meet all your worldly obligations
And reap the crop you broke your back to plant,
Aspiring for the highest destination,
and tolerating those who say you can't;

If you can take the blows inflicted on you,

As minimized reactions to your sin,
And turn your pain to strength for serving *guru*,
Determined not to leave the Lord again;

If you no longer crave the worldly tempest
On radio, online or on TV,
And pick up *Srīmad Bhāgavatam* with interest,
And feel yourself quite fortunate and free;

If you can keep a gentleman's demeanor
When every circumstance conspires to rile,
And, thinking of the Lord within, remember
That every spirit soul deserves a smile;

If you no longer think of sex as pleasure,
As everybody does when they are young,
And find yourself contented with the treasure
Of Krishna's holy names upon your tongue;

If you can chant your rounds when some around you
Are setting down their beads and blaming you,
If you can keep your vows when *māyā* hounds you,
Ignoring her advice to chew the chewed;

If you encounter faults among devotees,
Some weaknesses in those you thought were strong,
And sit with them to share some *dahl* and *rotis*,
And realize not all they do is wrong;

If your own faults and follies overcome you,
Obscuring those in others you may see,
If true appreciation flows out from you,
Each time you greet another devotee;

If you can be straightforward in your dealings,
And shed the taste for gossiping and lies,
While working in a way that fosters healing,
Without thinking yourself too good or wise;

If you trust those of greater realization
To guide your own devotion to the Lord,
Make friends with those who share your situation,
And kindly help the novices move forward;

If you can set aside your own conceptions,
And take Gaurāṅga's order on your head,
To help one soul forsake this world's deceptions
And take to Krishna consciousness instead;

If you chant Hare Krishna, loud and often,
And fill your days with service nicely done,
The gatekeepers of Goloka Vṛndāvana
Will welcome you—you're Prabhupāda's son.

This poem was published as a *Vyāsa-pūjā* offering on behalf of the Sri Māyāpura Development Committee in 2002.

As a teenager I was astonished to discover that the opening stanza alone of Kipling's poem, "If" lifted me from the angst common to that age:

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too:

Reading this poem filled my heart with hope and inspiration, all in a flawless meter and rhyme. The simple genius of the words awakened in me the fact that something meaningful could be said in poetry. (See Appendix for the full poem).

"If" became the basis for this *Vyāsa-pūjā* offering to Śrīla Prabhupāda, somewhat in the same mood of character development, and predictably twice as long and more esoteric and abstract than the original.

Some of the stanzas convey my views on what it means to be a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

When you confront Arjuna's situation, unsure if you should fight or just pretend, And, thinking of Lord Krishna's affirmations, toss out the slightest thought of giving in;

The conflicts of our lives may lack the drama of Kurukṣetra, but we do well to remember that they are just as real and daunting, and similarly orchestrated by Lord Krishna.

If you can do your duty when it pains you, without a hope of hearing "Job well done!"

Devotees give much for Krishna yet are often unappreciated.

If in this ugly, brutal world you're able to offer something lovely to the Lord, While keeping bread upon your family's table and making service done its own reward;

This is a 'White Power' stanza, addressing the experiences of male Krishna conscious householders, most of whom wear white cloth when visiting a temple. Raising a family is an incredible challenge. While thus engaged, to maintain Krishna conscious sanity one needs a devotional hobby (art, music, writing, *puja*, gardening—something!) as well as an unshakable sense that, however flawed the outcome, you are raising your family for Krishna.

If you meet all your worldly obligations and reap the crop you broke your back to plant, Aspiring for the highest destination, and tolerating those who say you can't;

More White Power. As you shed blood raising a family for Krishna, you can expect complaints about your devotional time from some family members as well as some smug and hopelessly inexperienced renunciates tossing half-digested *Bhāgavatam* verses your way.

If you can take the blows inflicted on you as minimized reactions to your sin, And turn your pain to strength for serving guru, determined not to leave the Lord again;

Take it all in stride—this is your Kurukṣetra.

If you no longer crave the worldly tempest, reported in the paper and TV, And pick up Śrīmad Bhāgavatam with interest, and feel yourself quite fortunate and free;

A taste for hearing and chanting is both the salary and pension of a life lived for Krishna.

If you can keep a gentleman's demeanor when every circumstance conspires to rile, And, thinking of the Lord within, remember that every spirit soul deserves a smile;

When asked how to recognize his true follower, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "He is a perfect gentleman." What a brilliant summary of the twenty-six qualities of a devotee. Whenever I go out in public I am struck by the dark expressions on people's faces. It seems to me that if a person is remembering Krishna he or she should always be able to muster a smile.

If you no longer think of sex as pleasure, as everybody does when they are young, and find yourself contented with the treasure of Krishna's holy names upon your tongue;

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains that negating a negative does not make a positive. The point of *sadhana bhakti* is to gain a taste for hearing and chanting about Krishna. Following rules and regulations aid that pursuit.

If you can chant your rounds when some around you are setting down their beads and blaming you; If you can keep your vows when māyā hounds you, ignoring her advice to chew the chewed;

Sixteen rounds and four principles inoculate us, no matter what. Few things are more difficult than seeing friends or loved ones give them up.

If you encounter faults among devotees, some weaknesses in those you thought were strong, And sit with them to share some dahl and rotis, and realize not all they do is wrong;

Finding the good in others—something a gentleman always does—cures the pain of seeing others temporarily fall. As is *prasād*, *kīrtan* is also a great relationship-builder.

If your own faults and follies overcome you, obscuring those in others you may see; If true appreciation flows out from you, each time you greet another devotee;

This verse describes the *uttama adhikārī*, one in the advanced stage of Vaiṣṇava character development. The guru Drona sent out Yudhiṣṭhira to find someone less advanced and Duryodhana to find someone more advanced. Both came back empty-handed. Drona discerned that Yudhiṣṭhira was fit to rule the world and Duryodhana was fit to be eaten by jackals.

If you can be straightforward in your dealings, and shed the taste for gossip, hate, and lies, while working in a way to foster healing, without thinking yourself too good or wise;

When our own problems are solved (or, at least seen in perspective, our egos beaten down by a long record of foolishness), we naturally busy ourselves in solving the problems of others.

If you trust those of greater realization to guide your own devotion to the Lord, make friends with those who share your situation, and kindly help the novices move forward;

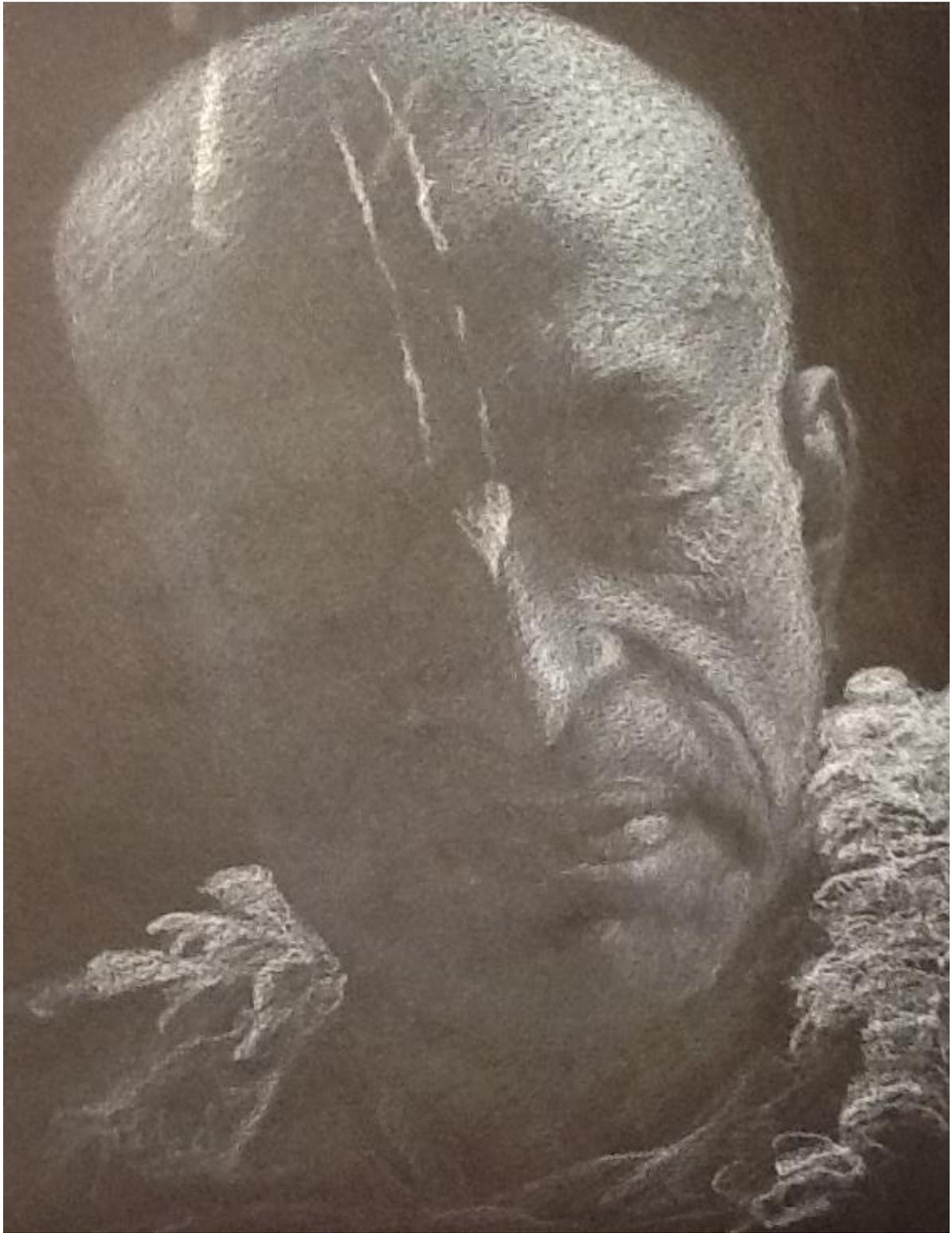
These are the three types of appropriate interaction with devotees as described in the Eleventh Canto of *Srīmad Bhāgavatam*.

If you can set aside your own conceptions, and take Gaurāṅgā's order on your head, and help one soul forsake this world's deceptions and take to Krishna consciousness instead;

Become a spiritual master, as Lord Caitanya ordered. A few days before he left this world I asked our dear Godbrother Sridhar Maharaja for final instructions. He said, "Take the love Śrīla Prabhupāda has given you and give it to others."

If you chant Hare Krishna, loud and often, and fill your days with service nicely done, the gatekeepers of Goloka Vṛndāvana will welcome you—you're Prabhupāda's son.

We hear of various amusing comments Śrīla Prabhupāda made about the possible reactions his disciples may receive from the gatekeepers of Goloka. IF we can do all of the above—and remain loyal to the one who invited us to the dance—in we go.



Ācārya

When you were pushing BTG in Delhi by yourself,
and tasting all the grit and stench, like everybody else,
was Vāyu there, with cool, refreshing air for you to breath?
Did Indra hold your bookbag so your back would be relieved?

When people in the tea stalls said, "No time! I have to run,"
did Sarasvatī grace you with a more persuasive tongue?
When some untended sacred cow turned sharply, goring you,
did Dhanvatari bring you herbs and balms till you pulled through?

Did you find sweat and heatstroke, ridicule and poverty
a blissful cosmic pastime with supportive deities?
Or did you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, just push against the odds,
a simple, frail but focused man, unaided by the gods?

It's easy to say, "*Śaktyāveśa*—he's an incarnation."

It's harder to reach out like you, with such determination.

Religious men may focus, but it sometimes makes them smug.

You knew just how to poke us—but with open-ended love.

Your sacrificial sweat lives on as loving ecstasy

In all your faithful followers who walk in front of me.

To see the spiritual master as an ordinary man ruins a disciple's spiritual life. Yet, as my life winds down, the more I see Śrīla Prabhupāda as a real man who went through real struggles, and the more I stand in awe of him. That's the theme of this poem.

Śrīla Prabhupāda told this instructive story about Christopher Columbus. When Columbus asked the queen for ships so he could sail west, her ministers said, "That's impossible." Of course, she gave him the ships anyway, and when he returned with evidence he had found land, the same ministers sniffed, "All he did was sail west. Anyone could do that."

Annoyed, Columbus challenged them. "No, it took intelligence. I will show you. Let me see if one of you can make this egg stand on its end."

The ministers tried and tried but could not do it. Then Columbus boiled the egg, lightly cracked the big end, and stood it easily. And what did the ministers say? "Well, anyone could do that."

In the same way, some of Śrīla Prabhupāda's critics declared that anyone could have done what he had done, simply going to the West and talking to the hippies. But Śrīla Prabhupāda was exceptionally brilliant and perseverant. His life embodies this quote by Calvin Coolidge:

"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not: nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education alone will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent."

It is easy to adore Śrīla Prabhupāda sentimentally from the sidelines but much harder to get in the battle and fight as he did. The word "ācārya" indicates one who teaches by example, and the example of Śrīla Prabhupāda's life is exquisitely clear. Following his example is not limited to working in ISKCON; many wonderful followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda work outside, doing what they can to help while they care for their families. Their appreciation of Śrīla Prabhupāda rings true.

A poem is meant to be economical with words, saying a lot with a little. However, the second-to-last stanza in this poem is so cryptic that it may be hard to understand:

Religious men may focus, but it sometimes makes them smug.

You knew just how to poke us—but with open-ended love.

The point is that Śrīla Prabhupāda's greatness exceeds even determination. Leaders of many faiths are thoroughly convinced of their beliefs, but that conviction often fails to translate into love. In some cases it is fanaticism. A fanatic places beliefs before relationships. Such unrestrained, uncompromised and unbending belief amounts to another form of impersonalism, for it relegates personal relationships to second priority.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wonderfully balanced unshakable faith in Krishna with the compassion and patience that exist only in the presence of real love. With each passing year his genuine followers show more and more of this extraordinary quality. I pray to follow in their footsteps.

Śrīla Prabhupāda Priyāstakam

(1) Śrīla Prabhupād, Lord Nityānanda’s sharpest tool,

today, Jagāi and Mādhāi aren’t exceptions, they’re the rule.

You are that *senapati bhakta* forecast to appear.

In this world, to Sri Nitāi, how could someone be more dear?

(2) *Mṛdangas, kartals, hari-nāma* and books in endless streams:

Gaurānga’s mighty weapons in His *sankīrtan* regime.

You launched this sacred arsenal throughout our sorry sphere.

In this world, to Gaurānga, how could someone be more dear?

(3) The taste of Rādhā’s love for Krishna prompts Gaurānga’s form,

a taste you knew could also make the troubled heart transform.

“Seek out Sri Rādhā’s grace,” you urged, en route to Boston’s pier.

In this world, to Sri Rādhā, how could someone be more dear?

(4) “Do not disturb the ignorant,” sings Krishna in His song;

“their love for sense enjoyment is exceptionally strong.”

And yet, for Him, you came to us and boldly interfered.

In this world, to Lord Krishna, how could someone be more dear?

(5) When Rādhā and her friends pulled Krishna in His stunning cart,

the Rathayātrā fest began, a boon to every heart.

You blessed a hundred cities with its blissful atmosphere.

In this world, to Lord Jagannāth, could someone be more dear?

(6) When one spreads Krishna consciousness as you did, Prabhupād,
he surely will be greatly tested, as was young Prahlad.

You left for us the Deity who mitigates all fear.

In this world, to Nṛsimhadev, could someone be more dear?

(7) The fearless Śrīla Sarasvatī urged his sons to preach,
but every town and village seemed impossible to reach
until you smashed the barricade and laid the pathway clear.

In this world, to your *guru*, how could someone be more dear?

(8) Though Jesus said to 'Love thy Lord,' his order was obscured;
The Buddha and the Prophet, too, find chaos masks their words.
But you left us your law books with a message crystal clear.

In this world, to your follower, could someone be more dear?

(9) Though using faulty rhythm, tortured rhymes and clumsy plan,
a certain fallen poet sings, as sweetly as he can,
this praise of Śrīla Prabhupād, a subject so sublime
that anyone who listens savors *Krishna prem*, in time.

This poem, published in the first *Śrīla Prabhupāda Tributes* book in 2010, is an attempt to write English poetry in a classic Sanskrit poetic form, with eight progressive and connected verses (*asktakam*), each with a common last line, followed by a ninth verse, a *phala-śruti*, giving a benediction to the reader.

How dear (*priya*) is Śrīla Prabhupāda to Lord Krishna in all His expansions, as well as to his guru and his own followers. Here are some notes on each verse.

Verse 1: The phrase *senapati bhakta* appears as a prediction in the *Caitanya Mangala* by Locan das Thākura, as well as the writings of Bhaktivinode Thākura, referring to a devotee who, like a great military commander, will spread Krishna consciousness throughout the world in the *kali yuga*.

Verse 2: Gaurāṅga, Lord Caitanya, is described in the *Srīmad Bhāgavatam* as coming with His *astras*, weapons.

Verse 3: Aboard the Jaladuta, Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote the Bengali “Prayer to the Lotus Feet of Krishna” with this refrain: “I emphatically say to you, O brothers, you will obtain your good fortune from the Supreme Lord Krishna only when Srimati Rādhārāṇī becomes pleased with you.”

Verse 4: In *Bhagavad-gītā* 3.29, Krishna directs the wise to ‘not unsettle’ the ignorant. In the purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, “The devotees of the Lord are more kind than the Lord because they understand the purpose of the Lord. Consequently, they take all kinds of risks, even to the point of approaching ignorant men to try to engage them in acts of Krishna consciousness.”

Verse 5: Rathayatra exemplifies Śrīla Prabhupāda’s mood of bringing Krishna to the ignorant masses, today in a still uncounted number of gorgeous festivals around the world.

Verse 6: While asking us to take risks for Krishna, Śrīla Prabhupāda introduced the worship of Lord Nrsimhadeva for the protection of the devotees and the Krishna consciousness movement.

Verse 7: This bold mood of serving as Krishna’s military commander made Śrīla Prabhupāda very dear to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura. Sometimes we foolishly imitate this bold mood and offend people, turning them away from Krishna consciousness. *Phalena pariciyate*; to be bold really means to be effective in spreading Krishna consciousness.

Verse 8: An imam at a mosque once advised me to learn Arabic and read and interpret the Koran for myself. I appreciate how Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books reach out to the reader in his or her own language and so clearly express the meaning of the scriptures. Sometimes his books seem repetitive, but in examining the *śāstra* from many angles, Śrīla Prabhupāda leaves little

need or room for interpretation. One friend cautions against taking his books as a “Prabhupāda buffet,” accepting this and rejecting that. They are a cohesive whole, though at various stages of our spiritual life, certain parts will be more appropriate for us than others.

Verse 9: As soaring birds can only fly across a tiny portion of the vast sky, so as much as we try, we can capture only a sliver of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s glories. Yet even these small bits are absolute and sublime.

In Vaiṣṇava writing, the author often names or describes himself in the last verse of a poem. In this case, ‘sweetly singing’ (*kalākaṇṭha*) is taken from a description of the birds on Trikuta mountain, site of Gajendra’s pastimes in the Eighth Canto of *Srīmad Bhāgavatam*.

A Few Things You Taught Us

The spirit drives the body as a person drives a car.

Our bodies sicken, age and die, however great we are.

Yet when we tire and expire, we're not finished yet;

Another body's waiting, and God knows what kind we'll get.

Take all the rest you need, but not at dawn or just before;

Eat all you can digest, and if you're young, perhaps some more;

Get married to a proper mate, if you desire sex;

Protect yourself when needed, but in general, pay respects.

Lamenting over what is done will only squander fuel;

To hanker for some paradise consumes the lives of fools.

The present day is all we have to cultivate success,

and if we give this day to Krishna, surely we'll progress.

Be sure to listen carefully to someone more advanced

and show compassion to those souls of lesser circumstance.

And when you're choosing friends, select some saintly devotees,

for one becomes like one's companions—that is guaranteed.

The *śāstras* are our basis, and our power, purity.

Utility's our principle; our essence, SKP.

In transcendental sacrifice, all things are absolute.

To nourish leaves and branches, pour the water on the root.

Chant Hare Krishna daily and your life will be sublime.

A million dollars can't buy back a moment of lost time.

A Person far surpasses an impersonal supreme.

Discussions of Lord Krishna are the most enchanting themes.

To decorate the Deity infuses one with bliss.

A daily round of sadhana distills one's consciousness.

To cook for Krishna's pleasure turns a drudgery to joy,

for serving Krishna far surpasses merging in a void.

A simple flower, sweetly offered, makes Lord Krishna pleased.

Do not delay to douse a fire, debt or some disease.

And should Lord Krishna send the perfect guru, guide and friend,

the debt you'll owe—and things you'll know—shall never reach an end.

Since the readers of this poem, published in his 2011 *Vyāsa-pūjā* book, are saintly followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda, though his name is not mentioned, I know they will understand it is for him. The poem is personally addressed to him and indirectly refers to him again in the last verse.

As only Ganges water is pure enough to offer to the Ganges, this poem offers back to Śrīla Prabhupāda some of what he gave us.

The spirit drives the body as a person drives a car. Our bodies sicken, age and die, however great we are. Yet when we tire and expire, we're not finished yet; Another body's waiting, and God knows what kind we'll get.

You're not this body; always Śrīla Prabhupāda's lesson #1.

Take all the rest you need, but not at dawn or just before; eat all you can digest, and if you're young, perhaps some more; get married to a proper mate, if you desire sex; protect yourself when needed, but in general, pay respects.

How do we eat, sleep, mate and defend in Krishna consciousness?

Lamenting over what is done will only squander fuel; to hanker for some paradise consumes the lives of fools. The present day is all we have to cultivate success, and if we give this day to Krishna, surely we'll progress.

How might we feel or act when influenced by the modes of ignorance, passion or goodness, as well as the mode of purified goodness?

Be sure to listen eagerly to someone more advanced, and show compassion to those souls of lesser circumstance. And when you're choosing friends, select some saintly devotees, for one becomes like one's companions—that is guaranteed.

Three types of association needed for one's spiritual health, as described in the Eleventh Canto of *Srīmad Bhāgavatam*.

The śāstras are our basis and our power, purity. Utility's our principle; our essence, SKP.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's aphorism ("Books are the basis, purity is the force, utility is the principle and preaching is the essence"), tediously rephrased in clunky rhyme.

In transcendental sacrifice, all things are absolute.

"A person who is fully absorbed in Krishna consciousness is sure to attain the spiritual kingdom because of his full contribution to spiritual activities, in which the consummation is absolute and that which is offered is of the same spiritual nature." (BG 4.24).

To nourish leaves and branches, pour the water on the root.

Pleasing Krishna pleases everyone eventually, though for some family members it may take a few years.

Chant Hare Krishna daily and your life will be sublime. A million dollars can't buy back a moment of lost time. A Person far surpasses an impersonal supreme. Discussions of Lord Krishna are the most enchanting themes.

Here are valuable lessons from Śrīla Prabhupāda packed in two couplets.

To decorate the Deity infuses one with bliss. A daily round of sadhana distills one's consciousness. To cook for Krishna's pleasure turns a drudgery to joy, for serving Krishna far surpasses merging in a void.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's purposes of ISKCON include the phrase, "to teach the techniques of spiritual life." What a pleasure and privilege it is to live in Krishna consciousness. Such simple activities free us from the tyranny of the ever-dissatisfied mind. May we never take them for granted.

A simple flower, sweetly offered, makes Lord Krishna pleased.

Another great counter-intuitive secret from the *Gītā*—when Krishna is pleased, we are pleased.

Do not delay to douse a fire, debt or some disease.

Wisdom from Chanakya Pandit.

And should Lord Krishna send the perfect guru, guide and friend, the debt you'll owe—and things you'll know—shall never reach an end.

I am forever indebted to Śrīla Prabhupāda for being who he is and for sacrificing himself to teach us so much, opening our tight-shut eyes to Krishna consciousness.

The Music That Prabhupāda Played

When you've chanted and danced, had prasād and a class, when the day brings it choices to you, as you ponder your tasks, does your heart ever ask, "What would Prabhupād want me to do?"

He's the guru of choice; he's the pure inner voice; he's intelligent, blissful and kind—and this list could go on like the full Rāmāyan and the whole Mahābhārat combined.

Prabhupād, what to do? How can I best serve you? Is my *sevā* to pay for a clan? Let things rest or protest? Join the crew? Be aloof? Independent or corporate man?

Prabhupād felt this too, so he asked his guru, "How can I, wearing white, serve you best?" And his guru replied, "Preach in English." He tried, and in thirty years found his success.

Now for me, this is sure: life is never secure. Death is busily looking for me. Will I slowly pass on, like my dear Ghanaśyam, or as quickly as dear TKG?

In the time that is left just before Yama's theft, I submit for your pleasure and thought, four tips to survive, so our bhakti may thrive, which he surely would want, would he not?

Number one: keep the house where we've taken our vows, the one Prabhupād built with his hand. Though sometimes it leaks, it's where Prabhupād speaks, and he built it on stone, not on sand.

Number two is to act, in idea and in fact, just as Prabhupād acted himself: treat others with heart, as the Lord's much-loved parts, with concern for their spiritual health.

Number three: the prasād on our plate comes from God, be we infamous, famous or plain. If our diet gets worse, shall we dump it and curse, or submissively shoulder the blame?

Number four, and the last: shall I slop through the past, or join others to build better days? Every dawn brings the chance to drink nectar and dance to the music that Prabhupād played.

One day while going through old papers in the attic I came across the first three stanzas of this poem, scrawled out years before. Though it uses a non-Vedic meter, I decided to finish the poem as a *Vyāsa-pūjā* offering for 2012.

Some months later, my dear friend Giriraja Maharaja called to thank me for the poem and to ask about some of the verses. His call made me aware that some people actually read my *Vyāsa-pūjā* poems but their meaning is not always so clear. That call prompted this book, and I thank Maharaja for making it and for then very kindly writing the foreword and offering editorial advice as well.

There's a popular saying among our Christian friends: "What would Jesus do?" This is also a wonderful question for Śrīla Prabhupāda's followers to ask about him—and not only what would he do, but what would he want *us* to do. How would he want us to serve? How many times have we hankered to ask Śrīla Prabhupāda that question?

In this poem I am reminding myself that, rather than pondering such questions on and on, before we die it is better to do *something* tangible for Śrīla Prabhupāda, so I list four failsafe steps we can always take in his direction.

Number one: Live and serve in the association of ISKCON devotees. Rather than criticizing ISKCON's faults and leaving its *sanga*, work in some way to make it better. ISKCON is our offering to Śrīla Prabhupāda. Nothing pleases him as much as devotees working together to make ISKCON a better and more Krishna conscious Vaiṣṇava assembly.

Number two: Learn how to give love to other people. We may not yet see the spirit souls shining inside of everyone, but we can see everyone as lovable to Krishna, if not to ourselves.

Number three: Take responsibility for our own problems, while remembering that everything is under Krishna's control. Knowing that Krishna loves us even as we struggle, we can accept our struggles as His kind lessons and move forward, remaining happy by forgiving ourselves and others for any shortcomings.

Number four: Avoid the mode of ignorance (lamenting about the past) and stay in the mode of goodness (working for today).

Some other notes: Ghanaśyama refers to my dear friend Bhakti-tīrtha Mahārāja, a great soul beloved to many. I knew him best in our early days in Krishna consciousness, when we lived and distributed books together as *brahmacaris* on the BBT Library Party. He struggled with cancer for many years and kindly recorded his inspiring realizations in his books.

TKG refers to Tamal Krishna Goswāmī, another deeply missed friend, who was as dear and close to Śrīla Prabhupāda as anyone. Before leaving this world abruptly in an untimely accident, he performed decades of unparalleled service for Śrīla Prabhupāda.

In Māyāpura in 2012, while visiting their *samādhi* memorials, it struck me that I am already several years older than these great souls were when they left this world. Still, they will always remain seniors and *śikṣā* gurus to me. How much they accomplished for Śrīla Prabhupāda! They have become timeless, immortal sources of inspiration for all of Śrīla Prabhupāda's followers, reminding us that time is precious and meant for devotional service.

Which brings us back to the question: how best to serve? Śrīla Prabhupāda held a very broad view of devotional service. His last major attempt to help us was his decision, in 1977, to go to the West to establish *varnashrama dharma*, which he called "Fifty percent of my mission." I understand his desire to mean this: Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted to make sure his disciples happily remained in Krishna consciousness, even if they did not remain indefinitely in full-time missionary service.

In the greater scheme of things, whatever service we may do is insignificant, but Śrīla Prabhupada will be pleased if we chant our rounds, follow the principles and remain in the company of devotees, content to hear and chant in the company of devotees. As another departed friend, Parabrahma Prabhu said, "Chant Hare Krishna and be happy," is not a blessing, it's an order." Śrīla Prabhupāda himself said that he would be satisfied if we simply love Krishna.

This poem is less directly about Śrīla Prabhupāda, for it is addressed to his followers. If his followers are successful in spiritual life, Śrīla Prabhupāda will be glorified, so in that sense it is an offering to His Divine Grace.

Chaya Vega Dami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

On this most auspicious occasion of your *Vyāsa-pūjā*, please accept my most respectful obeisances in the dust of your lotus feet.

You were my current age when I was born across the sea,
yet somehow you stretched 'round the world to reach lost souls like me.

O venerable Vaiṣṇava, so I can be of service,
please help me shed and say farewell to these unwelcome urges:

Farewell, O harsh and thoughtless words, propelled by foolish pride.

You're all I have been hearing on your domineering ride.

Sweet Krishna-talk exposes you as ugly, stale and tart
since Krishna's most beloved servant stole away my heart.

Farewell, O ego-centric mind; you now shall be in check.

And even if you stick around, a monkey on my neck,
no longer shall I labor for the projects that you start;
Lord Krishna's most beloved servant stole away my heart.

Farewell, O foolish anger, with your microscopic fuse.

Your older brother lust is also straightaway excused.

You stay where you are useful, like a horse before a cart,

since Krishna's most beloved servant stole away my heart.

Farewell to morbid, rotten food the common man consumes,
unending, luckless corpses on his dinner plate of doom.

What pleases Krishna's taste buds is my culinary art
since Krishna's most beloved servant stole away my heart.

Farewell, O belly's pushings. Your demands exceed the space
required to keep soul and body properly in place.

Your stuffy schemes no longer seem so critical or smart
since Krishna's most beloved servant stole away my heart.

Farewell, the mighty, lurid pull of fleshy, scented globes,
half-hidden by the dazzle of this year's designer clothes.
You've titillated me too long; it's time for us to part,
since Krishna's most beloved servant stole away my heart.

Farewell, O aspirations for a kingdom in this world,
a victory flag of happiness that never quite unfurled.
Vṛndāvana is my target now; I'm ready to depart,
for Krishna's most beloved servant stole away my heart.

Do kindly, saintly persons steal? In this case, it is so,
for though you are so subtle that one doesn't really know,

your words continue, Prabhupād, to cause so many thefts
that every day more people lose the urge for birth and death.

In 1954, the year I was born, Śrīla Prabhupāda was 58 years old, the same age I was when writing this poem in early 2013. Already, physical decline is setting in for me. Amazingly, Śrīla Prabhupāda was 12 years older still when he sailed west from India.

The CNN news network listed Śrīla Prabhupāda, along with Ronald Reagan, as examples of people who succeeded well after age fifty. For devotees, time is a friend; if nothing else, as we age, our appreciation automatically increases for what Śrīla Prabhupāda accomplished.

This poem is based on Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura's *bhajan*, *Ohe Vaiṣṇava Thākura*, which in turn refers to Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī's *Nectar of Instruction*. '*Chaya vega dami*' is Bhaktivinoda's plea to the spiritual master for help in conquering the six urges (speech, the mind, anger, and the tongue, belly and genitals). Age is also a friend in that regard, for it brings a devotee closer to spiritual perfection, when these six urges are subdued.

This poem also reflects this verse from Yamunācārya: "Since my mind has been engaged in the service of the lotus feet of Lord Krishna, and I have been enjoying an ever new transcendental humor, whenever I think of sex life, my face at once turns from it, and I spit at the thought."

The pleasure of Krishna consciousness, given to us by the grace of Śrīla Prabhupāda, makes it possible to lose interest in these six dead-end urges. With the superior pleasure of spirituality, they will no longer control our lives. Specifically;

Discussions about Krishna replace the inclination to chatter endlessly about nothing;

Though the mind continues to make demands, we learn to ignore them until it eventually gives up;

We learn to make anger a servant rather than a master, using it occasionally to make a point but never allowing it to control us;

The tongue learns that it can be satisfied only with foods first offered to Krishna;

The rumblings of the belly, and its insistence on being filled beyond capacity, are tempered by experience and self-control, easing pressure on the genitals, and;

The spectacular pleasure of sex life, a crude, animalistic act endlessly romanticized, will come to be seen as it is: a small bush that appears to be a big tree in the barren desert of this world.

Beyond all that is the general and foolish aspiration to make a comfortable, permanent home in a world of suffering that ever conflicts with our true nature. May we pass the rest of our time in this world chanting Hare Krishna in the company of saintly devotees, humbly serving Śrīla Prabhupāda to the best of our capacity.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda for saving this world and for stealing our hearts on behalf of Lord Krishna. It is a most welcome theft, one for which the victim owes the thief.

Epilogue

These poems represent the best of my written efforts to glorify Śrīla Prabhupāda. Reading back over them, I notice that as I get older, I write a lot more about getting older. I also notice that my approach to writing for Śrīla Prabhupāda has changed; my early poems describe him directly and the later ones more indirectly, through his teachings and his service.

This shift in focus represents a deepening of my understanding of Śrīla Prabhupāda, the difference between *jnana* and *vijnana*. When we internalize Śrīla Prabhupāda in our lives, through his instructions and his service, we cannot forget him for a moment. And if we leave our present body remembering Krishna' servant, that is as good as thinking of Krishna Himself, assuring our departure from the miserable cycle of birth and death that we presently call home.

There is an instructive story illustrating the difference between *jnana* and *vijnana*. A young man born on a farm went to Hollywood to become an actor. However, all the agents turned him down because he lacked experience. Finally, one agent said, "We just had a cancellation, so I can give you a part in a play tomorrow night. You just have one line: 'Hark, the cannons roar!' Can you do that?"

The young man eagerly agreed and took home the script to study, practicing his line over and over again: "Hark, the cannons roar! Hark, the cannons roar!"

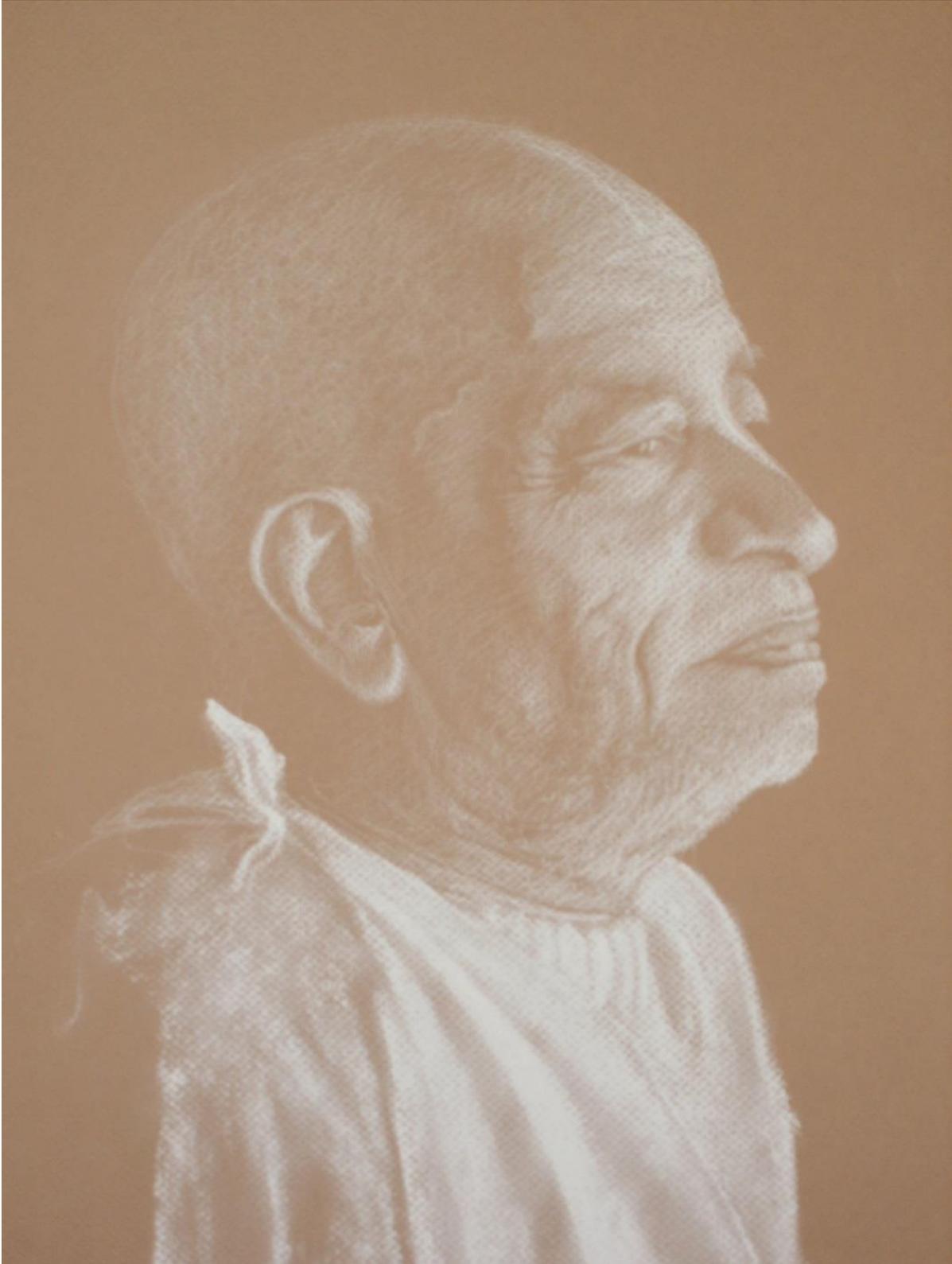
The next night, on stage and in costume, he listened carefully as the main actors recited their lines, leading closer and closer to his big moment. Suddenly there was a loud explosion offstage. Startled, the young man said, "What the hell was *that*?"

Similarly, we may go through the motions of bhakti but miss the main point: becoming attached to the spiritual master and remembering to serve him in all circumstances. To become attached to Śrīla Prabhupāda marks true advancement and realization in Krishna consciousness.

When asked about his spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda once said, "What can I say? He was a Vaikuntha man." I did not know Śrīla Prabhupāda personally and intimately, nor do I know his eternal relationship with Krishna, his *svarūpa*. No longer does any of that seem relevant. Anyone at any time can be blessed by Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions and service and realize great benefit in their life.

Impersonalists think only of themselves and their own elevation and liberation; saintly Vaiṣṇavas think only about pleasing guru and Krishna by liberating others, even if it means they must remain in the material world. Such a service mood is in fact the only sustainable position of liberation. This was the mood that Śrīla Prabhupāda, as the Founder/Ācārya of ISKCON, established for all his sincere followers for all time.

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, for accepting, instructing and engaging me in the blissful, loving service of Lord Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thank you also for leaving behind everything needed to sustain that service for generations of your faithful followers all over the world.



Appendix

Śrīla Prabhupāda's 1935 Vyāsa-pūjā Poem.

1. Adore, adore ye all the happy day,
more blessed than heaven, sweeter than May,
when he appeared at Purī, the holy place,
my Lord and Master His Divine Grace.

2. Oh! my Master the evangelic angel,
give us thy light, light up our candle.
Struggle for existence a human race,
the only hope, His Divine Grace.

3. Misled we are, all going astray,
save us, O Lord, our fervent pray.
Wonder thy ways, to turn your face,
adore Thy feet, Your Divine Grace.

4. Forgotten Krishna, we fallen souls
pay most heavy the illusion's toll.
Darkness around, all untrace,
the only hope, His Divine Grace.

5. Message of service Thou hast brought,
a healthful life, as Caitanya wrought.
Unknown to all, it's full of brace,
that's your gift, Your Divine Grace.

6. Absolute is sentient thou hast proved,
impersonal calamity thou hast removed.
This gives us a life, anew and fresh,
worship thy feet, Your Divine Grace.

7. Had you not come, who had told
the message of Krishna forceful and bold?
That's your right, you have the mace,
save me, a fallen, Your Divine Grace.

8. The line of service as drawn by you
is pleasing and healthy like morning dew.

The oldest of all but in new dress,
miracle done, Your Divine Grace.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Poeticized Bhajans (BTG 1960)

Jaya Radhe Jaya Krishna Jaya Vṛndāvana

Glory to Rādhā and Krishna in Vṛndāvana

Equally to Govinda Gopinātha and Madāna mohana.

Śyamakunda Rādhākunda hilly Govardhāna

Kālindī Jāmuna river and forest Mahāvana.

Keśighata Bansibāta and dozens of garden

The places of pastimes by Nanda's son

Glory to Nanda Yaśodā and cowherdsmen

Sṛidama and friends who follow amen.

Glory to Vrisabhānu his wife beautiful

Glory to the full moon and the town of bull.

Glory to Gopīsvara at Vṛndavana fixed

Glory to the Brahmin who Krishna mixed.

Glory to Rāmāghata and Rohinī's son

Glory to all who reside Vṛndāvana.

Glory to the Brahmin's wife and mermaid

Who in devotional service respects paid.

Glory to the arena where dance performed

Rādhā and Śyama who bumper stormed.

Glory to the zest of excellent mellow.

Paramorous feeling in-trance of kilo.

It's Krishnadāsa poet who chants

Lotus feet of Jahnavā he remembers.

Gaurāṅga Bolite Habe Pulaka Sarira

I wish my eyes flow in tears

As my heart Gaurāṅga it hears

Harī thy name could I say

Nitāicand thy blessings may

Curb my desire to Lord it over,

Let my body in ecstasy shiver

Let my mind freed of matter

May I see Vṛndavana scatter

May I know what Rūpa is

Who unfolds to me the loving pair

Let my mind fixed up in them

Narottama shall not despair.

Other Writing Influences

If

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too:
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream---and not make dreams your master;
If you can think---and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same:.
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings,
And never breathe a word about your loss:
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings---nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much:
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And---which is more---you'll be a Man, my son!

by Rudyard Kipling

(Note: Other followers of Śrīla Prabhpuada have appreciated this poem; in one of his recordings, Titikṣava Karunika Prabhu set part of it to music).

Wind Up

(In the early 1970's the progressive music group Jethro Tull, led by Anderson, released their album "Aqualung," said to have the theme, 'The difference between God and religion.' It was very unusual for popular music to address such weighty subjects. Ian Anderson was an entertainer, not a guru, but his songs inspired me to look for God beyond the church. His song, "Wind Up," was a favorite).

When I was young and they packed me off to school
And taught me how not to play the game,
I didn't mind if they groomed me for success,
Or if they said that I was a fool.

So I left there in the morning
With their God tucked underneath my arm --
Their half-assed smiles and the book of rules.

And I asked this God a question
And by way of firm reply,
He said, "I'm not the kind you have to wind up on Sundays."

So to my old headmaster (and to anyone who cares),
Before I'm through I'd like to say my prayers:

I don't believe you,
You have the whole damn thing all wrong.
He's not the kind you have to wind up on Sundays.
Well you can excommunicate me on my way to Sunday school
Or have all the bishops harmonize these lines.

How do you dare tell me that I'm my father's son
When that was just an accident of birth?
I'd rather look around me, compose a better song,
'Cause that's the honest measure of my worth.

In your pomp and all your glory you're a poorer man than me,
As you lick the boots of death born out of fear.

I don't believe you,
You have the whole damn thing all wrong.
He's not the kind you have to wind up on Sundays.

by Ian Anderson

The Alarming Spread Of Poetry

(In this essay, for which I could not find a date, Wodehouse defines, in his humorous style, the difference between metered poems that rhyme and 'free-verse' poetry, as well as the fate of poets in the modern world).

To the thinking man there are few things more disturbing than the realization that we are becoming a nation of minor poets. In the good old days poets were for the most part confined to garrets [*attics*], which they left only for the purpose of being ejected from the offices of magazines and papers to which they attempted to sell their wares. Nobody ever thought of reading a book of poems unless accompanied by a guarantee from the publisher that the author had been dead at least a hundred years. Poetry, like wine, certain brands of cheese, and public buildings, was rightly considered to improve with age; and no connoisseur could have dreamed of filling himself with raw, indigestible verse, warm from the maker.

Today, however, editors are paying real money for poetry; publishers are making a profit on books of verse; and many a young man who, had he been born earlier, would have sustained life on a crust of bread, is now sending for the manager to find out how the restaurant dares try to sell a fellow champagne like this as genuine Pommery Brut. Naturally this is having a marked effect on the life of the community. Our children grow to adolescence with the feeling that they can become poets instead of working. Many an embryo bill clerk has been ruined by the heady knowledge that poems are paid for at the rate of a dollar a line. All over the country promising young plasterers and rising young motormen are throwing up steady jobs in order to devote themselves to the new profession. On a sunny afternoon down in Washington Square one's progress is positively impeded by the swarms of young poets brought out by the warm weather. It is a horrible sight to see those unfortunate youths, who ought to be sitting happily at desks writing "Dear Sir, Your favor of the tenth inst. duly received and contents noted. In reply we beg to state...." wandering about with their fingers in their hair and their features distorted with the agony of composition, as they try to find rhymes to "cosmic" and "symbolism."

And, as if matters were not bad enough already, along comes Mr. Edgar Lee Masters and invents *vers libre* [*'free verse' poetry*]. It is too early yet to judge the full effects of this man's horrid discovery, but there is no doubt that he has taken the lid off and unleashed forces over which none can have any control. All those decent restrictions which used to check poets have vanished, and who shall say what will be the outcome?

Until Mr. Masters came on the scene there was just one thing which, like a salient fortress in the midst of an enemy's advancing army, acted as a barrier to the youth of the country. When one's son came to one and said, "Father, I shall not be able to fulfill your dearest wish and start work in the fertilizer department. I have decided to become a poet," although one could no longer frighten him from his purpose by talking of garrets and starvation, there was still one weapon left. "What about the rhymes, Willie?" you replied, and the eager light died out of the boy's face, as he perceived the catch in what he had taken for a good thing. You pressed your

advantage. "Think of having to spend your life making one line rhyme with another! Think of the bleak future, when you have used up 'moon' and 'June,' 'love' and 'dove,' 'May' and 'gay'! Think of the moment when you have ended the last line but one of your poem with 'windows' or 'warmth' and have to buckle to, trying to make the thing couple up in accordance with the rules! What then, Willie?"

Next day a new hand had signed on in the fertilizer department.

But now all that has changed. Not only are rhymes no longer necessary, but editors positively prefer them left out. If Longfellow had been writing today he would have had to revise "The Village Blacksmith" if he wanted to pull in that dollar a line. No editor would print stuff like:

Under the spreading chestnut tree
The village smithy stands.
The smith a brawny man is he
With large and sinewy hands.

If Longfellow were living in these hyphenated, free and versy days, he would find himself compelled to take his pen in hand and dictate as follows:

In life I was the village smith,
I worked all day
But
I retained the delicacy of my complexion
Because
I worked in the shade of the chestnut tree
Instead of in the sun
Like Nicholas Blodgett, the expressman.
I was large and strong
Because
I went in for physical culture
And deep breathing
And all those stunts.
I had the biggest biceps in Spoon River.

Who can say where this thing will end? *Vers libre* is within the reach of all. A sleeping nation has wakened to the realization that there is money to be made out of chopping its prose into bits. Something must be done shortly if the nation is to be saved from this menace. But what? It is no good shooting Edgar Lee Masters, for the mischief has been done, and even making an example of him could not undo it. Probably the only hope lies in the fact that poets never buy

other poets' stuff. When once we have all become poets, the sale of verse will cease or be limited to the few copies which individual poets will buy to give to their friends.

By P.G. Wodehouse, 1881-1975

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