

Suhotra Swami

in his

Dyasa Puja

offerings to

Srila Prabhupada

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1984

Introduction

by Suhotra Swami

This collection of homages to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is ostensibly an “internal” ISKCON publication - meaning that it is something of such devotional intensity that a lay reader might have difficulty in understanding its importance. Why, year after year, do the members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement produce such a lavish volume in such small numbers at such great expense? Some outsiders even sense something sinister here. A few years ago a Danish professor and noted critic of the new religious movements pulled a copy of Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā off his shelf, smiled wryly at me, and gloated, “You see, I’ve been doing my homework on your movement. I’ve even got the book not meant for the public eye!”

Certainly this Vyāsa-pūjā book is not meant for the public eye, although obviously some members of the general public will have a chance to look through its pages. This book is intended solely as an offering of loving respect to the lotus feet of our spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, in humble appreciation for the matchless gift of Kṛṣṇa consciousness which he has so kindly bestowed upon us by his causeless mercy.

This offering is not something whimsical or recently invented. The Vyāsa-pūjā celebration is an ancient tradition, rooted in the spiritual civilization of Vedic India in which the mark of success in human life was the acceptance of a guru fully capable of delivering his charges from the cycle of birth and death. A disciple so saved by the divine grace of his spiritual master is thus eternally obligated to his Guru Mahārāja. The yearly offering in humble appreciation of the glories of the spiritual master upon the day of his appearance in the material world is, in one sense, almost an insignificant gesture in the face of the great debt owed by the disciple. Yet again, it is an offering of love, not of physical weights and measures. Since the very nature of the relationship between guru and sisya is one of love, acts of loving exchange such as the Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā celebration are transcendently enlivening for all participants. Thus the bond between the spiritual master and disciple grows tangibly stronger with each passing year.

The loving bond between Śrīla Prabhupāda and his disciples and grand disciples is non-different from the loving bond between Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, loves all living entities equally, even those rotting in this material world. But among all the living entities in various stages of consciousness, Kṛṣṇa reciprocates ecstatic feeling with His devotees. By dint of their pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Kṛṣṇa’s devotees are eligible to live with Him eternally in the spiritual world. Since active loving reciprocation with the Supreme Lord is something incomprehensible to the materialists, the merciful spiritual master, whose heart is churning with love of Godhead, appears in this world to awaken the sleeping

souls and engage them in their constitutional relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda is especially merciful to the fallen souls in that for the first time in thousands of years he brought pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa beyond the borders of India to the lands of the mlecchas and yavanas.

So this is ISKCON, the movement Śrīla Prabhupāda has created: a worldwide network of devotees bound in love to Śrīla Prabhupāda and thus bound in love to Kṛṣṇa. If we speak of the strength or weakness of ISKCON, we are ultimately speaking of the strength or weakness of that love. Indeed, the loving exchanges shared by Kṛṣṇa, guru, and disciple can only be weakened if the disciple breaks his contract with his spiritual master and again takes up his former affairs of ignorant sense gratification.

To guard against such fall downs, the disciple is instructed to worship his spiritual master as his life and soul, for he is our only link to Kṛṣṇa. Thus we honor and obey Śrīla Prabhupāda as our eternal father. For us, he is as good as God, for by his mercy alone are we engaged in devotional service to God.

Thus this book. One who is not very familiar with the principles of devotional service should try to appreciate the fact that it is the disciples themselves who benefit most from offering this book to the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Such a loving offering draws Śrīla Prabhupāda's merciful love to us, just like the simple, heartfelt words of a child attract the loving compassion of the father. Through this exchange of devotional feelings we associate with Śrīla Prabhupāda directly. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has explained that association with a pure sādhu such as Śrīla Prabhupāda is the root cause of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, and indeed the root cause of prema, pure love of Kṛṣṇa. Without Śrīla Prabhupāda's continued merciful association, we would be lost.

If we speak of the spreading of ISKCON around the globe, we are ultimately speaking of the spreading of Śrīla Prabhupāda's love by those devotees who have love for him. These devotees - among whose numbers I unfortunately cannot be counted - are awakening the sleeping souls by their inspired preaching of what they've heard from Śrīla Prabhupāda, and they are engaging them in his service, and thus in the service of Kṛṣṇa. The root of enthusiasm to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness on a large scale is also simply the loving exchange between Śrīla Prabhupāda and his sincere disciples. Thus this book.

Once every year, then, these stalwart preachers sit down before a photograph of Śrīla Prabhupāda, perhaps in a palatial temple in India, Europe, America, or Australia - or in a small back-street apartment preaching center behind the iron curtain, or in some remote corner of East Asia. Looking deeply into their hearts, they attempt to formulate words of praise and submission, remembrance and confession, avowal and supplication, perhaps while struggling to translate their feelings from Spanish or Japanese into the English language.

Once every year, the members of ISKCON stand humbly before the mūrti of Śrīla Prabhupāda and read, or speak from the heart, homages such are found in the following pages. And once every year, ISKCON worldwide is showered by an especially sweet rain of mercy - *samsāra-dāvānala-liḍha-loka-trāṇāya kārūṇya-ghanāghanatvam* - by which the fire of material existence afflicting this entire planet may be extinguished.

Suhotra Swami

1986 Heidelberg

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

PLEASE accept our most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. We are humbly submitting this offering for the pleasure of Your Divine Grace in the hope that we may be purified through association with you on this Vyāsa-pūjā day. We thus may be blessed with a fuller appreciation of your transcendental qualities. Our only hope for deliverance from the jaws of birth and death, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is that we may somehow or other earn your kind and merciful glance upon our wretched selves. So we pray that we may not commit any offense in the performance of this solemn task of relating something of our very limited understanding of your unfathomable glories.

Your position as founder-ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness was defined historically by the wondrous accomplishment of your establishing over one hundred Hare Kṛṣṇa temples around the world during the last twelve years of your activities on this planet. It was also defined legally in 1974 with the declaration that ". . . His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is the founder-ācārya of ISKCON [and] the supreme authority in all matters of the Society. His position cannot be occupied by anyone else" Our prayer today, Śrīla Prabhupāda, is that your position as founder-ācārya of ISKCON be finally established within our, the members', hearts. Only then will this movement be safe from the ravages of schismatic deviations that have rent asunder the mundane religions of the Kali-yuga, for only you can drive the Kali-yuga out of the hearts of all mankind and instill real peace there instead.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you certainly desire that ISKCON be expanded unlimitedly by your followers. That, however, will only be possible if we build upon the foundation you have laid. The foundation of this movement is completely spiritual. Golokera prema-dhana hari-nāma saṅkīrtana. You stated, "We shall have our ISKCON in the spiritual

world." It is not, as māvāvādīs might imagine, that this great movement you have begun is a material means to a spiritual end. Rather, you have established an embassy of Vaikuṅṭha within the mundane sphere. This transcendental fact may only be realized by those who are pure in heart. Only they may expand what you have established, for only they know what you have established. Others perceive but a shadow ISKCON, project their desires and frustrations upon it, and conclude that it is corrupt. But actually it is their hearts that are corrupt.

So to become pure in heart, we must establish you as the founder-ācārya of ISKCON within our hearts, and that means we must follow your example and instructions strictly: "You should never act independently, because guidance in my words is always there. The main guidance is all of us should remain spiritually strong by chanting the minimum number of rounds and following the rules and regulations. The G.B.C. should personally observe strictly all the rules and regulations, and they should become the example to others. Then everything will be all right. Then there will be no fear of being victimized by māyā."

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, we pray that we may eternally remain engaged in service to your lotus feet by taking shelter of the lotus feet of the Vaiṣṇavas who have taken shelter there. We hope that in this way we may become qualified to relish completely the transcendental society you have established, and thus become blessed with pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Your servants in ISKCON Heidelberg,

Suhotra Swami / Avināśacandra dāsa / Haridāsa dāsa / Govinda Mādhava dāsa / Mahābala dāsa / Vrateyu dāsa / Puru dāsa / Viṣṇu-yaśa dāsa / Harijākṣa dāsa / Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta dāsa / Viśvadeva dāsa / Hṛdaya-Govinda dāsa / Arjuna dāsa / Aśvamedhaja dāsa / Hayagrīva dāsa / / Bhakta Thomas / Bhakta Knuth / Bhakta Manfred / Bhakta Mare / Bhakta Frank / Bhakta Michael / Bhakta Lutz / Kastūrikā-devī dāsī / Añjana-devī dāsī / Arundhatī-devī dāsī / Saṅkalpa-devī dāsī / Hemagātri-devī dāsī / Asaṅgā-devī dāsī / Rohiṇī-devī dāsī / Maṅgimaṅjarī-devī dāsī / Brahmarakṣī-devī dāsī / Saumyarūpā-devī dāsī / Rambhā-devī dāsī / Nirākulā-devī dāsī / Jānakī-devī dāsī / Dhanu-devī dāsī / Bhaktin Doris / Bhaktin Petra / Bhaktin Eva Maria / Bhaktin Alice / Bhaktin Monika / Bhaktin Rika

1987

Heidelberg

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

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who is very dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa, having taken shelter at His lotus feet. Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O spiritual master, servant of Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Caitanyadeva and are delivering the Western countries, which are filled with impersonalism and voidism."

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept our most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. As the years go by we can more and more gain an appreciation of what it means that you are the representative of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the founder-ācārya of ISKCON. You are the actual preacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. By your transcendental literature you are powerfully preaching to the conditioned souls.

Just yesterday alone our Heidelberg temple received a few letters out of which two were quite amazing. One came from an aristocratic, well-known countess, ordering more of your transcendental books. She concluded by writing: "And please, I need a cassette where His Divine Grace is singing the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra," "

Another one came from a boy who wrote from prison, where he had been confined because several years ago he had been involved with intoxication: "It is miserable here, no doubt. But by reading Bhagavad-gītā As It Is I have noticed the more I read it the stronger its spiritual light grows. That is my only shelter. I read the Gītā to others who have an ear for it and chant together with them."

That same evening a phone call from one of the most famous German actors, seventy-two-year-old Georg Thomalla, came. "I am reading in the midst of Nectar of Devotion, when I realized that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is what I have been searching for all of my life. Later that morning I went to a park to chant, when the feeling overwhelmed me how much I have been gifted by Śrīla Prabhupāda. I could not help but cry."

You are the true representative of Nityānanda-Rāma by digging a channel to the conditioned souls through which Kṛṣṇa consciousness comes to them. By connecting as many souls as possible to you, our lives get meaning.

This year some of us had the opportunity to take you on pilgrimage throughout the holy places of Vṛndāvana on an oxcart—just like you desired. We remembered how you had asked us during one Māyāpur / Vṛndāvana Festival: "So, how do you like Vṛndāvana?" All the devotees responded: "Very much, Śrīla Prabhupāda!" Then you said: "Now it is your duty to establish Vṛndāvana in the West."

When we returned to the West and reached our temple after going through the cultural shock of Frankfurt Airport, we realized that in fact you have established transcendental tīrthas in the West. In the śāstras it is said: "Saints of your caliber are moving tīrthas."

If devotees and guests are properly guided to you, who are eternally residing in these tīrthas, they will be introduced to the wonderful world of Kṛṣṇa consciousness through your mercy. How? By your vāṇī! But there is no doubt, we are also missing you very much. You single-handedly wove a network of Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world and expertly protected it against the vicious attacks of māyā. Now you expect us to fight and be steadfast ourselves. "Do as I have done." We are determined to prove ourselves worthy recipients of your mercy, but we continually pray for your powerful blessings to gain the necessary understanding and strength.

Great things could be done: the time is ripe. The conditioned souls are feeling the heat of Kali-yuga increasing. Please bless us with your mercy so that we may be able to distribute more and more books, attract more conditioned souls, increase the preaching of nāma-haṭṭa, and take care of your transcendental institution and projects in all ways that please you.

Your children and grandchildren of the Heidelberg temple,

Disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda

Suhotra Swami / Avināśacandra dāsa / Śacīnandana dāsa / Nikhilānanda dāsa / /
Asaṅgā-devī dāsī / Rohiṇī-devī dāsī / Maṇimañjarī-devī dāsī / Saumyarūpā-devī dāsī

Granddisciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda

Govinda Mādhava dāsa / Viśvadeva dāsa / Hṛdayagovinda dāsa / Tattva-sandarbhā dāsa /
Gopīnātha dāsa / Śrīkānta Sena dāsa / Tejaḥśreṣṭha dāsa / Aśvamedhaja dāsa / Laghu
Haridāsa dāsa / Hayagrīva dāsa / Tribhaṅga dāsa / Marāṇḍaka dāsa / Antarāṅga-śakti
dāsa / Ādiśeṣa dāsa / Śvaphalka dāsa / Gauravāṇī dāsa / Madana-manohara dāsa /
Vrateyu dāsa / Yogeśvara dāsa / Rudra dāsa / Bhakta Babec / Bhakta Andreas / Bhakta
Stefan / Bhakta Jack / Aja / Jānakī-devī dāsī / Īśānī-devī dāsī / Arcanā-devī dāsī /
Saṅkalpā-devī dāsī / Prīti-lakṣaṇā-devī dāsī / Arundhatī-devī dāsī / Hemagātrī-devī
dāsī / Añjanā-devī dāsī / Dhānu-devī dāsī / Abhiṣṭadā-devī dāsī / Kriyā-devī dāsī /
Rambhā-devī dāsī / Kaumodakī-devī dāsī / Rati-devī dāsī / Kāmsa-devī dāsī /
Devarakṣitā-devī dāsī / Bhaktin Simone / Bhaktin Bettina / Bhaktin Inge / Bhaktin
Bianca / Bhaktin Heidi / Bhaktin Annegret / Bhaktin Babette / Bhaktin Stabine

1988

Suhotra Swami

A Petition for Surrender

I am always cheated by my flighty mind. Though devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is surely the only way for me to cross over the raging bhāva-sindhu, I always approach devotional service most whimsically. I totally lack the fixed concentration of a surrendered soul seeking eternal shelter at the Lord's lotus feet.

Even when at last I am to catch a glimpse of all-purifying power of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, I immediately attempt to engage that power for personal sense gratification. For instance, I might chant more than sixteen rounds daily, but think that gives me an excuse to be slack in other areas of sādhana-bhakti. Or, after just one day's successful completion of devotional service, I become vain and think I have earned the right to criticize Vaiṣṇava.

How can I please Kṛṣṇa with this offensive, cheating attitude? And if Govinda is not pleased, how will I be able to control my senses?

There's no doubt about it: in mentality I remain what I was when I was born—a sinful demon. Without Śrīla Prabhupāda's continued mercy, I would not have the slightest inclination to give pleasure through service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By following my selfish ways, I will be put into hell. Somehow I must take shelter of Śrīla Prabhupāda to the fullest extent to be purified of my lust, anger, greed, illusion, madness, and envy.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, my heart is as black as a lump of coal. Guru means “heavy,” so only under the mighty pressure of your lotus feet can my heart be squeezed into diamond of unbreakable determination to serve the Lord of the senses, Hṛṣīkeṣa. Otherwise, how will this fallen Suhotra attain any success in Kṛṣṇa consciousness? My life is simply hopeless without you.

Though I am so lost, so incapable, so ungrateful for all you've given me, you have not rejected me. With a mixture of astonishment at the oceanic kindness of Your Divine Grace, and bitter self-reproach, I prostrate myself at your lotus feet, the refuge of the three worlds. Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, let me surrender to you now.

Your servant,
Suhotra Swami

1989

Suhotra Swami

It's not enough

It's not enough to eulogize, emotionalize, and with wet eyes
Apologize for all the tries that didn't quite materialize.

It's not enough to theorize, fantasize, and finally minimize
What Prabhupāda institutionalized to make us wise and realized.

It's not enough to, eagle-eyed, legal-tie and constitutionalize,
Proclaiming, “Spontaneity must be sanitized, sterilized and
classified.”

It's not enough to be weary-wise, bleary-eyed, on the dreary side,
And shrug my shoulders and take no sides when another God brother
glides down the slide.

It's not enough to find out why, expose the lie, and testify,
And politicize to get glorified, revolutionize to aggrandize.

It's not enough to get analyzed, de-fanaticized, and normalized,
Nationalized and rationalize, "I'm more inspired to live outside."

It's not enough to synthesize, harmonize, and compromise,
And justify with the alibi that we need allies to increase our size.

It's not enough to be internalized, self-hypnotized, and petrified,
and quietly hide in a bubble of pride, opposition safely neutralized.

It's not enough to be mystified, Christified, and blisstified,
An acolyte who's quite contrite, a glowing mite in Kali's night.

It's kind of tough cause I'm so demonized, but I'll make my try
to be utilized
By Prabhupāda, my eternal guide, and leave aside these unfortunate
plights.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept my most humble obeisance at your lotus feet, and thank you for giving
me shelter and service at your lotus feet for one more year of my life in this body. I
pray that I may not become attracted to any position, conception, ideology or activity
that deviates from this shelter.

As my spiritual master, and as founder-ācārya of ISKCON, you so mercifully make
yourself readily available to those, like myself, who are not Kṛṣṇa conscious but who
cannot bear the thought of further entanglement in the material whirlpool. I really
whish I was a better disciple; my problem is that I am so very lazy and immature, but I
am most grateful to you for keeping me in the incubator of the shade of your lotus feet
so that I might gradually develop enthusiasm to serve you.

You once remarked, "Think how busy Kṛṣṇa is. He is in the heart of every living
entity. And yet, Kṛṣṇa is with Rādhārāṇī and all the gopīs simultaneously with His
queens in Dvārakā. This is God." You are the supreme personality of servitor
Godhead; you are completely busy eternally in Lord Kṛṣṇa's service – like Kṛṣṇa, on
many levels and in many places simultaneously. Thus you are always busy with your
ISKCON movement even now, though I'm not able to see you directly. I hope that
someday I can cast off this lethargy that dogs me and, with your kind permission and

assistance, render some substantial service. Really, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I want to fight for you and thus contribute in some way to your glories, as you fought for your spiritual master and glorified him throughout the world. If I could simply die in battle for you, bleeding, gasping, exhausted, but with your name on my lips, I would finally have confidence that I have developed real love for you.

Even when you were physically present before our eyes, I did not have much opportunity to directly see and serve you; I take that as your kindness also, because I was so immature then that I would have made offenses. Apart from a few personal meetings with you (which I treasure in my heart as sūtras codifying the full meaning of the disciple's eternal connection with his spiritual master), I have served you in separation, guided by your literatures and lectures, and also by your representatives, your disciples, who are like śikṣā- and vartma-pradārśika-gurus to me. Though I certainly consider myself unfortunate for not having had more personal association with Your Divine Grace, in another way I find that the way I served you when you were among us prepared me for the way we all are serving you now.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, it distresses me how so many of my God brothers, who did so much substantial service and who were personally favored by you in so many ways, and who were thus most respectable for a distant "peon" like me, have fallen into various traps of māyā, some of which I've indicated in the above poem. But this poem is not meant to criticize them; in a way, they are still teaching me, for it is by their grace that I can see the dangers of these traps of illusion. Thus I am praying that you please guide me in such a way that I may not also become victimized. I am sure that, despite whatever difficulties my wayward God brothers may have come to, in the end they will all be rectified by Kṛṣṇa at your pleas.

I am praying for this help because it appears that I have yet so far to go before I can shake off all the stubborn contaminations that plague my heart. I continually need your protection. I deeply yearn for the day when I can begin to repay you for all you've done for me. It's not enough, but it's all I can do for now.

From an embryonic servant of the servants of Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Suhotra Swami

1990

Suhotra Swami

Deliverance from a Dark Universe

In the beginning of time, on a lotus of gold,
Brahmā, creator, did the darkness behold.
But hearing the Lord, he reflected within,
And receiving knowledge sublime, the destroyer of sin.

Brahmā then spoke, four Vedas to teach,
The form of the cosmos now within easy reach.
A universe new-born, full of hope and quite pure,
Did displace the darkness, as if it would ever endure.

In those days of yore, magnificence prevailed,
Vedic truth the foundation that all beings hailed.
But now the world's filled with error; what is truth we must guess-
It seems that men who are evil are the ones who knew best.

Over a hundred trillion years have past since day one;
The second half of Brahmā's life span has already begun,
In this very moment of his time, which is an age to us,
Darkness has returned, like a blinding cloud of dust.

For Brahmā is the father of wicked beings too,
Like Irreligion and Falsity, from whom descended a brood.
One rules us now; his name is Kali, or Quarrel.

Souls we are, eternal, but spun life after life
Around the wheel of saṁsāra, in torment and strife.
Human birth is the one chance by which to get free,
But human life's just like hell in the Age of Kali.

Maddened with lust, seeking relief in the sewer
Of nasty sense pleasures till we feel death's sharp skewer,
Which lifts us squirming, dripping the filth of our sins,
And drops us in the abyss to wear fur, feathers, and fins.

Yet those who are learned worship this age,
In which the Lord has appeared, our cruel fate to assuage
By giving His name, both the end and the means
Of knowing Kṛṣṇa's within us as our dearest friend.

But I was born far from India, and had not Prabhupāda come
To the brutal Western world, and this movement begun,,
How would I who was dumb, have ever spoken the name?
How see and walk, since I was blind and lame?

How wondrous this miracle: to be delivered by you
From ignorance profound, and to have brought in my view
My spiritual home, where all souls belong,
Far beyond this aging universe, where everything's gone wrong.

You are the pure servant of Kṛṣṇa, and you never fear
To preach boldly forth, for He's your charioteer.
You mix with the fallen, but your motive is pure:
To give them Mahāprabhu-kṛpa, their offenses you endure.

O most perfect of sages, you teach sambandha –jñāna,
Reversing the tide of a civilization so damned,
By technology gone mad. But now we can use it for God,
To print books and expand preaching and expose the whole fraud.

This revolution you've inspired has only just begun;
We're only seeing the first rays of the mighty Kṛṣṇa sun,
Which will rise streaming glory, giving us sight,
To get free of the confusion of Kali's dark night.

To fully know your greatness is beyond my small brain.
If I could just look in my heart, it all would be so plain:
Beyond the anarthas, the residue of sin,
Where the pure soul shines forever, never separate from Him.

For your greatness is the reality, so simple and true,
Of the soul's eternal bond to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the youth
Who so loves His devotee who can do naught else but serve,
That He gives him all the help as only the pure soul deserves.

You've come to us, Prabhupāda, just to prove that He's there,
Within all our hearts. And the test is quite fair:
In this dark age of Kali, let us preach as you've shown,
That Kṛṣṇa will help us, and in the end take us home.

Your servant,
Suhotra Swami

1991

Suhotra Swami

(mistakenly published under the name of H.H. Subhag Swami)

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhū-tale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-svāmin iti nāmine
namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vāṇī-pracāriṇe
nirviṣeṣa-sūnyavādī-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances in the shade of your lotus feet, which give cooling shelter to fallen souls such as myself who are victimized by the blazing fire of saṁsāra.

It is stated in the Kāśī-khaṇḍa of Mahābhārata:

*na cyavante ca yad bhaktā
mahātmyaṁ pralayāpadi
ato 'cyute 'khile loke sa
ekaḥ sarvāvago 'vyayam*

“The devotees of the Lord never annihilate their individual existence even after the dissolution of the entire cosmic manifestation. The Lord and the devotees who associate with Him are always eternal, both in the material and spiritual worlds.”

As Lord Kṛṣṇa eternally exists behind the veil of all things mundane, so do you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, exist eternally with Kṛṣṇa in His inconceivable glory. Those who penetrate that veil and attain Lord Kṛṣṇa by the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra also attain you, His pure devotee. Those who see the eternal Lord in His arcā-vigraha incarnation certainly see you with Him.

Those who are acquainted with the nectarean ocean of Kṛṣṇa’s unlimited divine qualities know that you eternally sport in that ocean. Those who relish Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental pastimes likewise relish your participation in them. Those who have actually developed a relationship with the Lord have a relationship with you.

Even if one is not advanced enough to penetrate the veil of matter, one can still perceive the transcendental influence of Your Divine Grace in this material world. In the last verse of Bhagavad-gītā, Sañjaya says that wherever opulence, victory, extraordinary power, and morality are in superexcellent abundance, there Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the master of all mystics, and Arjuna, the supreme archer, must be displaying their pastimes. I find these same abundances in ISKCON today, a sure sign that your preaching pastimes with Kṛṣṇa as your helmsman (as per your dream on the Jaladuta) continue to unfold in the movement you established.

By the mercy of your ongoing ISKCON pastimes, fallen souls have the chance to engage in the five most potent devotional activities: association with devotees, service to the Deity, hearing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, and living in a holy place. Even if these are done only slightly or with little faith, as long as they are done without offense these activities are so wonderfully powerful that they propel anyone to the transcendental platform.

“My mercy is for everyone,” you once explained, “but you [meaning your sincere followers] are taking it.” Taking your mercy in your physical absence remains pretty

much the same practical affair it was in the “good old days” of your ISKCON founder-
ācārya līlā: Someone meets ISKCON devotees, renders a little service to the Lord (e.g.,
respects His prasādam), buys a book, chants Hare Kṛṣṇa, and finally moves into an
ISKCON temple. And the result of such contact with your ISKCON pastimes is still
the same:

*sādhu-śāstra-kṛpāya yadi kṛṣṇonmukha haya
sei jīva nistare, māyā tāhāre chāḍaya*

“If the conditioned soul becomes Kṛṣṇa conscious by the mercy of saintly persons who
voluntarily preach scriptural injunctions and help him to become Kṛṣṇa conscious,
the conditioned soul is liberated from the clutches of Māyā, who gives him up”
(Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Mādhya 20.120).

From the purport: “Saintly persons (sādhus), Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord, preach
Kṛṣṇa consciousness on the basis of Vedic literature. It is only by their mercy that the
conditioned soul is awakened to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When awakened, he is no
longer eager to enjoy the materialistic way of life. Instead, he devotes himself to the
loving transcendental service of the Lord. When one engages in the Lord’s devotional
service, he becomes detached from material enjoyment.

*bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir
anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālah*

“This is the test by which one can tell whether he is advancing in devotional service.
One must be detached from material enjoyment. Such detachment means that Māyā
has actually given the conditioned soul liberation from illusory enjoyment.” (Śrīmad-
Bhāgavatam 11.2.42)

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am convinced more than ever that the release of the jīvas from the
bondage of illusion depends upon your say so, for you are with Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of
Māyā. When you request Kṛṣṇa to order Māyā to release a soul who becomes attached
to your message as preached by your representatives, that soul’s material life comes to
an end. And if you don’t, that unfortunate soul has no hope of liberation. This is
confirmed by the Lord Himself:

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca
ahaṁ bhakta-parādhīno
hy asvatantra iva dvija
sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayo
bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyaḥ*

“The Supreme Personality said to the brāhmaṇa [Durvāsā]: 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 in the core of their hearts. What to

speak of My devotee, even those who are devotees of My devotee are very dear to Me” (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.4.63).

Śrīla Prabhupāda, whatever faults are visible in me are due to one mistake: my forgetting your continued mercy upon my head. You once said, “As soon as you think, ‘I’ll be able to do it [get released from māyā],’ you are a rascal. You cannot get released; therefore Kṛṣṇa says, ‘I’ll do it.’ ‘Practical’ means it will be done by Kṛṣṇa. Your only business is to surrender to Kṛṣṇa.” And because you are inseparable from Kṛṣṇa, my only business is to surrender to Kṛṣṇa by surrendering to you. With this Śrī Vyāsa-pūjā offering, I re-commit myself to fully surrendering at your ever-merciful lotus feet. Please consider me at your full disposal, and use me for whatever purpose you wish. I ask only that I may be always with you as a servant, an insignificant servant who receives your orders through a chain of command of billions, but your servant nonetheless.

Your servant,
Suhotra Swami

1992 - The Meaning of Vyāsa-Pūjā *by Suhotra Swami*

Śrīla Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsadeva is an empowered incarnation (śaktyāveśa-avatāra) of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Empowered incarnations are devotees who exhibit one or more of seven of Kṛṣṇa’s own śaktis, or potencies. Śrīla Vyāsadeva is invested with the jñāna-śakti, the potency of knowledge, so much so that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has described him as sarvajña (“all-knowing”). “The words spoken by this sage are Vedic evidence,” Caitanya Mahāprabhu has testified to Sanātana Gosvāmī (munira vākya śāstra paramāṇa), “and through his words alone can the materially conditioned souls attain spiritual knowledge.”

More than five thousand years ago Śrīla Vyāsadeva foresaw the present Age of Quarrel, in which human religion, truthfulness, cleanliness, peacefulness, mercy, memory, bodily strength, and life span are steadily cut down until mankind is no better than the lowly beasts. For those who yet retain a spark of inquisitiveness about the blissful state beyond repeated birth and death, the sage compassionately compiled the timeless Vedic wisdom into many volumes of Sanskrit hymns, histories, laws, science, and philosophy. The best of Vyāsa’s works is the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The bona fide student of the Bhāgavatam revives the loving ecstasy of his soul’s inner devotion to Śrī Kṛṣṇa and is transferred from the material realm to Goloka, the supreme plane of transcendental consciousness, where the most intimate forms and pastimes of Godhead are revealed.

But grasping Vyāsadeva’s transcendental message is not a matter of dry academics or intellectual gymnastics. The genuine student of the Bhāgavatam or any other Vedic

scripture must have Vyāsadeva’s blessings before real understanding can blossom in his heart. Therefore the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam directs its readers to offer their respectful obeisances to Vyāsa before beginning their recitation.

Now it may be asked, “How can someone today receive the blessings of a person who lived five thousand years ago?” Śrīla Vyāsadeva, the incarnation of God, is not different from the Supersoul in the heart of everyone. He can thus bestow transcendental knowledge upon anyone from within. Vyāsa is likewise not different from the words he has written; thus those who even today see through the eye of śāstra are blessed by his personal guidance. And because Vyāsa lives still at Uttara Badarikāśrama, in the high Himalayas, great devotees like Madhva, the founder-ācārya of the Brahma-sampradāya, were able to seek him out and obtain his personal blessings.

But for most of us, the blessings of Vyāsa must be received from the current representative of Vyāsa, the spiritual master who comes in disciplic succession from Madhvācārya, Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Our hearts are too polluted by lust to take Vyāsadeva’s counsel from within, and we are too feeble-minded to directly comprehend the meaning of his words (the Vedic scriptures) simply by reading them. It is certainly unlikely that any of us will get his darśana in the snowy wastes above Badrinātha. But Vyāsa can be seen and heard by us in the form (vapu) and teachings (vāṇī) of the ācārya who has been blessed by the power to broadcast the message of Vyāsa throughout the world.

According to the Ādi-parva of the Mahābhārata, the word vyāsa means “one who describes elaborately.” That pure devotee who is empowered to elaborately elucidate the Vedic scriptures represents fully the original Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa. His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda is without a doubt the vyāsa of the modern world, as proven not only by the sheer volume of his writings and lectures, but by their astounding revelatory potency. Vyāsadeva’s purpose in compiling the Vedic literature was to rescue humanity from the folly of materialism; Śrīla Prabhupada has fulfilled that purpose by inspiring tens of thousands of people around the world to abandon wholesale atheism, scepticism, and hedonism for the path of pure devotion preached by Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Each year on the anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupada’s appearance in this world, those whose lives have been transformed by contact with his message offer homage to him. In so doing they are, as Śrīla Prabhupada explained, “offering obeisances to the paramparā system,” worshiping all the ācāryas of the Brahma-Mādhva-Gauḍīya disciplic succession, through whom the blessings to comprehend Vyāsadeva’s Vedic scriptures descend.

Suhotra Swami
Governing Body Commissioner

1992
Suhotra Swami

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace!

There is a story about a poor widow who was desperate to educate her son so that he might be successful and bring money to the household. For this purpose she borrowed money to hire a tutor.

One day that unfortunate woman listened from another room as the tutor instructed her son in geometry. “Let ABC be a triangle,” was all she heard before she angrily rushed in to rebuke the man. “I pay you ten rupees a month. For that I have been expecting you to raise my boy to higher levels of learning. But today I see that after all this time you have not been able to bring him beyond simple ABC’s! He learned the alphabet long ago. So as you are only wasting his time and my money, I order you to leave my house and never return!” So angry was she that there was no possibility of explaining to her that the ABC’s of geometry are indeed of a higher order of knowledge than she had yet experienced.

In an age of faithlessness brought about by bad experience of religious fanaticism, many so-called intellectuals react to the teachings of Your Divine Grace as did the widow to the tutor’s geometry class. They need only hear the words “God,” “devotion,” and “spiritual world” before rejecting out of hand the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness as just another type of blind faith.

How great is their misfortune! “O my Lord Urukrama,” Brahmā prays in the Third Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, “all these poor creatures are constantly perplexed by hunger, thirst, severe cold, secretion, and bile, attacked by coughing winter, blasting summer, rains, and many other disturbing elements, and overwhelmed by strong sex urges and indefatigable anger. I take pity on them, and I am very much aggrieved for them.” Spiritually numbed by their sybaritic technological culture, modern men and women wallow vainly in up-to-date prejudices against all that smacks of religion, yet are fettered like dogs or pigs by the coils of the threefold miseries (miseries caused by their own bodies and minds, miseries caused by other living entities, and miseries caused by the powers behind nature). Even as they scoff at God and His representatives, ridiculing the contradictions they find among various belief systems and mocking the simple devotion of the faithful, the coils of the threefold miseries

choke off their guffawing and drag them down to swallow the karmic filth of their self-indulgences. And all the while they are pitied by the Lord's pure devotees, who view their struggling from the transcendental platform of unrestricted consciousness.

The proud-blind fools are to be pitied because their knowledge is not knowledge at all but simply self-righteous ignorance, as the widow's "knowledge" of the tutor's lessons was ignorance. This "knowledge" is nothing but a burden that stains the consciousness with pride and delusion, as much as a burden of dung carried in a wicker basket upon the head stains the bearer when it rains.

The great souls—Vaiṣṇavas like Brahmā, Nārada, and Vyāsa—moved by pity for a world filled with fools, took counsel among themselves and petitioned Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's help. And so Lord Caitanya sent you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to relieve these fallen souls of the burden and stain of their modern "knowledge" (indeed, you said that exposing these rascals was your special mission). Your words, razor-sharp with crystalline realization, cut through the coils of the threefold miseries. You so kindly lift the fallen soul up from the muck of his own illusion and invite him to open his eyes and see directly the all-beautiful Lord of the senses, Hṛṣīkeśa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. That soul who does so will surely curse himself (even as he drinks the beauty of the Lord through purified vision) for having wasted countless lifetimes in darkness speculating about the nature of the absolute, as did the blind men about the elephant.

Smilingly, you encourage the astonished soul even further: "Now that you've seen Him, why don't you serve Him?" And by your example, you show that serving Kṛṣṇa is so simple, pure, blissful, and natural. And that soul who follows your example will surely curse himself (even as his senses are flooded with the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's loving acceptance of his service) for having lain spiritually dead for eons together, his consciousness focused by Māyā upon an endless succession of pathetic material bodies that were capable of only twitching with lust and flinching with pain.

And finally you show the newly-awakened soul the greatest wonder of all, that at which the Lord Himself expresses amazement: "As chaste women bring their gentle husbands under control by service, the pure devotees, who are equal to everyone and completely attached to Me in the core of the heart, bring Me under their full control."

All that is described above about the awakening and deliverance of the conditioned souls was manifest by you during your earthly pastimes, and continues to be manifest as your ISKCON movement expands.

Now, among those who were in some way touched by the compassion of Your Divine Grace, there are those who assert that your teachings are only the "ABC's of the spiritual world," which, while certainly vastly superior to the most erudite expressions of materialism, only usher the devotee onto the threshold of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. They would have us move beyond the "alphabet" taught by you to the "geometry" taught by others.

To them too I respectfully dedicate the story of the widow and the tutor, and add the following story as well.

Some herons standing in a bog saw a swan happening by. They had never seen a swan before, and their curiosity was aroused.

“Why are your eyes, beak, and feet so red?” one of the herons asked the swan.

“Because I’m a swan.”

“Well, where do you come from?”

“From the Mānasa-sarovara Lake.”

“And how are things over there?”

“The lake-water is as clear as crystal and tastes like nectar. From it grows a garden of golden lotuses. All around are islands studded with jewels where beautiful trees, plants, fruits, and flowers grow.”

The heron then asked, “But are there big snails there?”

“No,” the swan answered.

Smirking, the herons exchanged glances. Their spokesman told the swan with haughty finality, “If it has no snails, it can hardly be called a lake. From what you say it is not a suitable place for connoisseurs like us. Thank you, swan, for all you’ve told us, but don’t expect us to follow you back home!”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, you have come to transform herons into swans. The spiritual home of the paramahamsas is revealed in your books. If we catch up your taste for serving Kṛṣṇa, we’ll be able to enter your home and serve you and Kṛṣṇa eternally. But to do that, we’ll have to become like swans and lose our taste for snails—anything, whether material or spiritual, of which you do not approve.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I pray in the dust of your lotus feet that I may come to the standard of pure devotional service approved by you, even if it takes me millions of years to attain it.

Your servant,
Suhotra Swami

1993

Suhotra Swami

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

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

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Falling again and again like a stick at your lotus feet, I humbly beg another chance to render some insignificant menial service to Your Divine Grace. I am low. I am ignorant. I am offense personified. Gnashing my teeth and pounding my forehead in the dust sanctified by your holy footprints, I contemplate my inveterate sinfulness. All hopes of liberation fly away in the ten directions. My only hope is your tender compassion for fallen souls such as me. In a lecture, you made the following remarks about this wonderful quality of a pure devotee:

“That is the attitude of devotee ... ‘My dear Lord, You have kindly come to deliver the fallen souls. Please fulfill Your mission. Take away all the souls, conditioned souls of the universe. Don’t leave them, not a single. Please take them away. And if You think that they are not eligible or some of them are not eligible, then please transfer their sinful reaction upon me. I shall go on suffering. But You take away all of them.’ Just see the attitude of a devotee. ‘You take them all.’”

These words so beautifully express an attribute that is seen in no one except that personage who is untainted by fear, pride, and envy, who is liberated by dint of his very unconcern for liberation, who lives only to love and serve Kṛṣṇa and His parts and parcels. How mind-bogglingly fortunate to have been born on this planet during the span of your pastimes here! That I saw you, heard you, and served you personally is a benison that, for me to even begin to value in proportion to its worth, will require me to take countless more births in this material world—for I am sorry to admit that in this life I am too gross and clumsy to receive what you have given without stumbling. I pray only that each of those births be opportunities to render more and more service to Your Divine Grace.

Alas, even in this attempt to express my unworthiness, my stubborn vanity is revealed! “I’m so fallen that I’ll have to take countless more births.” If it is your desire that the fallen souls be delivered, then who am I to say I’ll remain for countless births? May I never forget the lesson in genuine submissiveness before the spiritual master that Your Divine Grace taught me the day after you initiated me into the chanting of the holy names. I was among some hundred and twenty devotees who had come to the airport to see you off to New York. We sat on the floor chanting japa before you as you gracefully adorned a seat in the departure lounge. Suddenly, you looked right at me and said, “Oh, you are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa very nicely!” Mortified, my eyes dropped to the floor and I thought (not said, but only thought), “No, Śrīla

Prabhupāda, I am not chanting nicely.” Beaming like the sun, you lifted your finger skyward like a flag of victory and corrected my inward negativity: “Yes!”

Yes. What is the use of my counting up my next births? There is nothing but service to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. What is the use of wondering where my karma may take me in my next life? There is nothing but service to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. What is even the use of counting up my blessings? There is nothing but service to you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. To hell with my nagging self-centeredness! It is that service to Your Divine Grace alone that can make “a dumb man speak, a lame man cross the mountains, and a blind man see the stars.”

Thank you, Śrīla Prabhupāda. May I be able to say to you these four words one day and really understand their meaning.

Your servant,
Suhotra Swami

1994 Suhotra Swami

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept my humble obeisances in the shade of your divine lotus feet. My heart is parched and dry, devoid of genuine devotional sentiments. Still I shall try to serve Your Divine Grace on this auspicious day of your appearance by offering this small poem.

Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Garden of Pure Forms

Socrates, it is said, thought of the Spiritual Power
As the source of all forms, even the common garden flower,
Which in this world is false, but in that world a fact –
But he didn’t say how we’d get our spiritual forms back.

In the Prīti-sandarbhā, Gosvāmī Jīva informs,
Kṛṣṇa’s effulgence is full of unlimited forms,
Each one very beautiful, the Lord doest bestow
Upon souls He releases from māyā’s false show.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, your mercy, so amazing to me,
Through your pure teachings, these spiritual forms we can see.
Implanting our souls in your garden of service,
You cultivate pure forms, which Lord Kṛṣṇa will harvest.

Your garden is ISKCON, and for ten thousand years
Countless souls will bloom there, free of lust, anger, fear,
To be offered to Kṛṣṇa, their pure love He'll enjoy,
Mañjarīs (means "blossoms") for the Divine Cowherd Boy.

Let's assist Śrīla Prabhupāda in his garden of bhakti,
There's so many soul-seeds, and Kali-yuga's so rocky.
Help me take out these stones, Prabhu sow these seeds over here.
Pour the Prabhupāda-vāṇī nectar right into their ears.

O Prabhupāda, please help me, I'm feeling so weak.
This work is so hard, I'm in need of a break!
"In spiritual things there is no exhaustion," Prabhupāda said,
If I think this work's material, I've got rocks in my head.

Yes, while I tend Prabhupāda's garden, I have to be sure
That I tend my own heart, lest I again become impure.
Weeds and rocks all around me, within and without,
If I stumble, Śrīla Prabhupāda, please bless me with a shout!

While toiling honestly, day in and day out,
Serving in Prabhupāda's garden, we must without doubt
Always chant Hare Kṛṣṇa in great ecstasy.
We'll all go back to Godhead, Prabhu, just wait and see!

And there in Goloka, Prabhupāda leading his group,
Of ISCKON devotees in their original svarūpa,
The Form of all forms will bless all with His view,
Śyāmasundara Śrī Kṛṣṇa, of most beautiful hue.

Suhotra Swami

1995
Suhotra Swami

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

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

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

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

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (8.20.21, purport) you write as follows: “Sometimes we see a devotee offering Ganges water to the Ganges. After taking his bath in the Ganges, a devotee takes a palmful of water and offers it back to the Ganges. Actually, when one takes a palmful of water from the Ganges, the Ganges does not lose anything, and similarly if a devotee offers a palmful of water to the Ganges, the Ganges does not increase in any way. But by such an offering, the devotee becomes celebrated as a devotee of mother Ganges. Similarly, when we offer anything with devotion and faith, what we offer does not belong to us, nor does it enrich the opulence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But if one offers whatever he has in his possession, he becomes a recognized devotee.”

All I have in my possession is the sublime knowledge you have given me. In the same way that a palmful of Ganges water is offered to the Ganges, I shall attempt to offer a palmful of knowledge into the ocean of philosophical truth that is Your Divine Grace with this homage. It is based upon a room conversation you had with a German man and a professor in Mexico City, January, 1975, edited here for brevity’s sake. I’ve made notes on certain points according to my palmful of realization, which exists only by your mercy .

The topic under discussion is “*Why is there anything?*”

Guest (1) (German man): I would like to ask you a question. Once Leibnitz, who is one of the fathers of the Western tradition, formulated the question which was the beginning of metaphysics in a way, Western metaphysics. The question is “Why there is anything?” What is your stand about this classic point?

Note: According to G. W. Leibnitz (1646–1716), the “why” of anything cannot be discerned by studying anything, because the things of this world do not contain in themselves the reason for their existence. The reason for anything is to be found in the being that does contain the reason for its own existence, i.e., the “Necessary Being,” God. The complete reason for anything is knowable to the mind of God, not to the mind of man. Therefore, God’s mind is perfect. But Leibnitz’s argument for God’s perfection does not proceed further, from the cosmological to the transcendental. He posits God’s mind as nothing more than a mirror of this imperfect cosmos. He pleads

that the perfection of the cosmos is that it is mirrored in the perfect mind of God. This perfection is to be approached through abstract mathematics. Leibnitz's attempt to answer the question "why" leads to further "why's." We shall see why it is so in a moment.

Prabhupāda: [chuckles] "Why anything exists?" [laughter] What do you mean by "anything"?

Guest (1): Well, that's precisely the point. What is the purpose? What is the sense, if there is any, or does the very question make sense?

Prabhupāda: No, no, unless understand what is that "anything" ... First of all, you have to understand what is that "anything." Anything ... just like this book, this table, this bell, the electric fan, they are so many things. So you can take any one of them; that is anything. What is your idea of anything?

Note: His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, in these few matter-of-fact sentences, calls attention to a grave shortcoming in Leibnitz's approach to philosophy. A passage from a textbook explains: "Leibnitz's logical doctrine ... remains a logical doctrine with no bearing on the nature of what there is in the world." Leibnitz believed that the mind is not functionally connected to the world of matter. Mind and matter are two chains of events initiated by God, working independently of each other. His "reason for anything" is simply the mathematical harmony of these two chains of events. Such a "reason why" does not pertain to any thing described by words like a book, table, or bell. Therefore it cannot answer questions about the purpose of the objects of our perception. Sense objects are precisely the "anything" that we know.

Guest (1): Oh, reality. Material, external, reality to our ego, our internal reality as well.

Prabhupāda: Internal reality and external reality?

Guest (1): Both. For me, the word "anything" covers both.

Prabhupāda: Yes. So that also we understand, "anything." There are so many varieties of things, and you can take any one of them. That is "anything." But your question should be, "Wherefrom these things are coming?" That should be the proper question.

Professor: What is the reason of this [indistinct] "anything"?

Prabhupāda: Yes. There are so many things, and you can take any one of them. That is "anything." But the real question should be, "Wherefrom all these things are coming?" That is real question, "What is the origin of all these things?"

Note: In the Bhāgavatam (11.22.34), the attempt to establish by argument the reality and unreality of the things of this world is condemned by Lord Kṛṣṇa as useless, although thinkers who are not Kṛṣṇa conscious are unable to give it up. Leibnitz argued that the reality of "anything" is an abstract state of calculation in harmony with calculations about any and all other things. Apart from this, "nothing" is real. But this is only one of many ways to think about "anything" and "nothing." Perhaps "nothing" really exists out there, and "anything" that we take to be real is just a creation of

deluded perception and speculation. Or perhaps “anything” is real, with “nothing” dependent upon our power of perception and thought. These arguments are as endless as they are useless. Therefore Śrīla Prabhupāda turns the guest’s attention to a different concern, which Western thinkers frame with the word “teleology.” The teleological argument for the existence of God asserts that an intelligent comprehension of the things of the cosmos requires the acknowledgment of an intelligent origin of everything.

Guest (1): Well, origin, that is more on the theoretical side. It’s a question, “Why?” But I am, rather, after the purpose.

Note: The guest has not yet grasped the significance of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s reply. The word “teleology” is built upon the Greek root *telos*, which means “purpose,” “goal,” or “end.” Teleology is precisely knowledge of the purpose of anything, which the guest claims he is after. Our Kṛṣṇa conscious teleological stand is that the purpose of anything is known in the intent of its creator.

Prabhupāda: Yes. That is a nice question. But there is the real source of everything. That is in the Vedānta-sūtra ... Perhaps you have read. Vedānta-sūtra, first question is: “Wherefrom all these things come?” So the answer is that *janmādy asya yataḥ*: “Brahman. The original thing is Brahman, or the Absolute Truth, and from Him everything is emanating.”

Note: Śrīla Prabhupāda’s phrase, “there is the real source of everything,” is most significant. The real source can only be Brahman, the unchanging *sat*. *Nāsato vidyate bhāvah*: that which does not endure (the material world) is *asat*, or unreal, and therefore cannot be the real cause of anything. Real philosophy must identify that origin (*ādi*) which is eternal and unchanging. “So science, philosophy, means to find out the ultimate cause of everything. That we are getting from the *śāstras*, Vedic literature, that Kṛṣṇa is the cause of all causes” (Śrīla Prabhupāda lecture, 21 August 1973, in London).

Prabhupāda: Just like physical ... The sun is there, and whole material world is product of the sunshine. What your physical science says? Eh? Eh? Do they not say? It is a fact that sunshine ... due to the sunshine all these material things are there.

Guest (1): Well, it’s more involved than just saying that ... about the meaning of celestial bodies and the meaning of, in particular, of sun and moon and so on ... We can’t see, assuming all the glory of that what happens on the earth due to the existence of those bodies, we do not try to look inside of the structure of these things, as something meant for us. Just universe as it is ... And this question, like the Nietzschean question which I am repeating—that’s not my point—this big question is ... Rarely, directly, we hear the direct answer to that.

Note: The guest doesn’t complete his thought about the “Nietzschean question.” It seems he is referring to Nietzsche’s calling into question the idea that the things of the

world have an innate human-centered purpose or truth to them. In *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche argued that the world is “as a falsehood always changing but never getting near the truth: for there is no ‘truth.’” For Nietzsche, the world is untrue because the world separates humankind from reason, the way a veil separates the face of a woman from the eyes of a man. Yet he wondered (in *The Joyful Wisdom*) if there is truth in this very veiling of the truth: “Perhaps truth is a woman who has reasons for not showing her reasons?” Not knowing that this feminine tattva is Kṛṣṇa’s śakti, Nietzsche could not know her telos, or true purpose: devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. She serves Kṛṣṇa by veiling the truth of the Lord and His energies from the eyes of the nondevotees, and lifting the veil of Māyā from the eyes of the devotees.

Professor: If Indian philosophy ...

Prabhupāda: No, no, it is no Indian or American. It is the philosophy. It is philosophy. The philosophy is not Indian or American. Truth is truth, not Indian truth or American truth. That is not truth. That is relative truth. The Absolute Truth is absolute. That is neither Indian nor American.

Note: As noted before, real philosophy concerns itself with the intelligent origin (ādi) of everything, not with speculative arguments over what is real and not real about anything. All Western philosophy began with Greek philosophy. Greek philosophy began as a dispute between those who argued that the arche, or origin, is chaos and those who argued it is logos. Today, Western materialists still posit chaos as the origin of everything. They shift the sense of the word “chaos” away from the original Greek, so as to mean a state of disorder and unreason, or a void. But the original sense of “chaos” is better reflected in the English word “chasm”: a gap. Chaos is the “gap between,” just as pradhāna is the unmanifest between the spiritual and the material manifestations in Vedānta philosophy. Pradhāna is unconscious and is represented in the state of dreamless sleep, called suṣupti. Similarly, in Hesiod’s *Theogony*, night, sleep, and death are said to represent chaos. Logos has two senses: meaningful sound (this sense of logos is evident in the word “dialogue”), and reasonable thought (as evident in the word “logic”). In Vedānta philosophy, creation is the order brought to pradhāna by the thoughts of Mahā-Viṣṇu, transmitted by śabda, Vedic sound. “This material world is created by the dreaming of Mahā-Viṣṇu” (Bhāg. 4.29.83, purport); “The material energy is coming through the breathing of Mahā-Viṣṇu, who is lying down in the Kāraṇa, Causal Ocean. So, from the breathing there is sound” (Śrīla Prabhupāda *Bhagavad-gītā* lecture, 19 February 1974, Bombay). The idea that intelligent logos is the arche, or origin, is an ancient Greek attempt at “real philosophy,” Vedānta. The opposing idea that everything originates from unintelligent chaos resembles atheistic Sāṅkhya philosophy.

Guest (1): But in what sense do you use the concept “truth” here? Is it in the ontological sense, or is it in somehow in a more pragmatical human sense, refers to human beings or ... ?

Prabhupāda: Yes, it is pragmatic, that you cannot see beyond this wall. That is your insufficient knowledge, or your senses are insufficient. You cannot go beyond this

wall. But that does not mean there is nothing beyond this wall. So if you want to know what is beyond this wall, you have to know from a person who knows it. Yes. Because you cannot see, you cannot know, that is not the end. There must be something.

Note: Pragmatism is a doctrine that favors “value” over abstract “truth.” The value of anything is the effect it has on the conduct of life. Pragmatic evaluation of anything supports regular conduct of life, as expressed in the Greek verb *prassein*, “to do (habitually),” from which the word pragmatic is derived. Nietzsche summed up his view of pragmatism in these statements from Thus Spake Zarathustra: “Many lands saw Zarathustra, and many peoples: thus he discovered the good and the bad of many peoples. ... Much that passed for good with one people was regarded with scorn and contempt by another. ... Much here called bad was there decked with purple honors.” In other words, the values of pragmatism, being human-centered, are inherently relative. In Vedānta philosophy, regular conduct of life means the religious rites prescribed in the Vedas. The Vedas are *apauruṣeya*, not conceived by human beings. Therefore the sacrificial duties given therein are called *setu*, “the bridge” between the relative world and the transcendental world. As Lord Kṛṣṇa explains in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.33), *sarvaṁ karmākhilam pārtha jñāne parisamāpyate*: “All sacrifices of work culminate in transcendental knowledge.” Now a new doubt arises. Transcendental knowledge awaits us on the other side of the bridge of Vedic dharma. Still, while on this side, we must know and embrace the values that support that bridge. Otherwise how can we, who are blinded by the ignorance of our relative human-centered values, value the crossing of that bridge? As Śrīla Prabhupāda said to the guest, “It is pragmatic, that you cannot see beyond this wall. That is your insufficient knowledge, or your senses are insufficient.” Prabhupāda gives a transcendently pragmatic solution to the problem of humanistic pragmatism: “If you want to know what is beyond this wall, you have to know from a person who knows it.” Kṛṣṇa similarly declares in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.34) that knowledge of the transcendental goal of prescribed duties is given by a *tattva-darśī*. Because the *tattva-darśī* sees the truth, he can lead the conditioned soul across the bridge of the Vedas.

Professor: But in the case of a mystical man that has been able to see ...

Prabhupāda: There is no question of mystic. First of all we have to admit that on account of our senses being imperfect, whatever knowledge we gather, that is imperfect. That is imperfect. Therefore, if you want to possess real knowledge you have to approach somebody who is perfect.

Note: Śrīla Prabhupāda uses the word “mysticism” in different contexts. The context here, in which mysticism is rejected, is summed up in the following sentence from the *Bhāgavatam* (1.12.3, purport): “Ardent hearing from the bona fide master is the only way to receive transcendental knowledge, and there is no need for medical performances or occult mysticism for miraculous effects.” The context in which mysticism is acceptable is seen next. “Vedānta is the last word in Vedic wisdom, and the author and knower of the Vedānta philosophy is Lord Kṛṣṇa; and the highest Vedāntist is the great soul who takes pleasure in chanting the holy name of the Lord.

That is the ultimate purpose of all Vedic mysticism” (Bhagavad-gītā 2.46, purport). The Vedic context of mysticism (rāja-guhyam, the secret of all secrets) is explained by Lord Kṛṣṇa in the Bhagavad-gītā (Chapter 9). In text 9.1 He prefaces this explanation by reminding Arjuna, pravakṣyāmi, “I am speaking.” What Kṛṣṇa speaks in the Bhagavad-gītā constitutes real mysticism, for He is Yogeśvara, the master of all mystics.

Guest (1): How can we know that somebody is perfect?

Prabhupāda: That is another thing. But first of all, the basic principle is we have to understand that our senses are imperfect, and whatever knowledge we gather by these imperfect senses, they are imperfect. So if we want perfect knowledge, then we have to approach somebody whose senses are perfect, whose knowledge is perfect. That is the principle. That is the Vedic principle.

Therefore the Vedic principle says, tad-vijñānārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet. You know Sanskrit, yes. “In order to know that perfect knowledge, one should approach guru.” So who is guru? Then the next question will be ... Your question is that, “How I can?”

Professor: Well, this is ... we’ve only come to one of the mentioned theories of knowledge, I think, śabda.

Prabhupāda: Śabda, yes, śabda-brahma. Yes ... just like many thousands of miles away we are getting some radio message and we learn that “Something is happening there. Something is there.” Therefore śabda. This is ... śabda means sound, sound, sound vibration. So that is the real source of knowledge. That is the real source of ... śabda-brahma.

Professor: One of the sources of knowledge or the only one?

Prabhupāda: No, that is the only one. There are others; they are subordinate. But the śabda, knowledge received, śabda, through śabda, śabda-brahma, that is perfect knowledge. Just like the same example: beyond this wall I cannot see, but if somebody there says, “This is the position here”—the sound comes—that is perfect. You cannot see what is going on, but if somebody says, sends radio message or any message, sound, then you know. Therefore śabda-pramāṇa, śabda, knowledge received through śabda, that is perfect knowledge. ... Direct perception. Śabda, you can [have] direct perception. It is not intuition. It is perception. ... So this is śabda-pramāṇa, śabda-pramāṇa, that “In the beginning there was God, nothing else.” So in this way our Vedic principle is: when your knowledge is corroborated by the Vedic version, then it is perfect.

Note: The word pramāṇa in Sanskrit means “source of valid knowledge.” Three kinds of pramāṇa are accepted in the Brahma-Madhva-Gauḍīya-sampradāya. These are śabda (spiritual sound), pratyakṣa (sensory perception), and anumāna (logical argument). The purpose of pramāṇa is pramā (correct cognition); therefore pramāṇa is that by which the truth is ascertained. But the ācāryas of our sampradāya hold that of the three pramāṇas, śabda alone is the best evidence because it alone reveals the truth that lies beyond material perception. Therefore Śrīla Prabhupāda said, “That [śabda] is the

only one. There are others; they are subordinate.” Sensory perception (pratyakṣa) and logic (anumāna) help us only to understand the Vedic evidence in terms of our present condition. But they themselves are unable to reveal eternal truths. As Prabhupāda said, “Śabda, you can [have] direct perception [that] in the beginning there was God, nothing else.” Then in what way are sensory perception and logic accepted as evidence? In that with their help, Vedic knowledge can be demonstrated and confirmed. When employed skillfully, sensory perception and logic reinforce faith in the śabda-pramāṇa (evidence of spiritual sound). Pratyakṣa and anumāna that do not support the śabda as enunciated by the tattva-darśī are to be rejected.

Professor: But why existence of all these things?

Prabhupāda: So? Why? Then the answer will be: “Why there shall not be existence?” First of all you answer this. If you question like that—“Why there is existence?”—then I shall inquire, “Why there shall not be existence?” Therefore the decision should be taken from the Absolute. Your question, my answer, will not solve. If you say, “Why there is existence?” I can ask you, “Why there shall not be existence?” And who will decide this?

The purpose is ... that is experienced by every one of us, what is the purpose of life, what is the purpose, anything. That, everyone, we can understand very easily. The purpose is ānanda. Pleasure. That is the purpose. There is no difficulty to understand what is the purpose. The purpose is pleasure-seeking. Or purpose is pleasure. One who hasn't got the pleasure, he's seeking after it. That is the purpose. Purpose is ānanda. Ānanda-mayo 'bhyāsāt.

That is the Vedānta-sūtra. Everyone of us, seeking ānanda. The scientific knowledge, philosophy, or even driving the car or whatever you are doing—the purpose is ānanda. That is a common factor. Purpose is ... Why I am eating palatable dishes? I can eat anything, but I am seeking that “This sort of foodstuff will please me.” That is ānanda.

Guest (1): That is driving force and motivation of most human activities. But the question, purpose, which Leibnitz was asking for, he was asking on higher plane, in abstraction.

Prabhupāda: Higher plane means you are seeking after pleasure, but that is being obstructed. That is your position. You are seeking pleasure, but it is not unobstructed. Therefore you are seeking higher, where there is no obstruction. Pleasure is the purpose, but when you speak of higher plane, that means you are experiencing obstruction in getting pleasure. So you are seeking a platform where there is no obstruction. But the purpose is the same.

Note: As Śrīla Prabhupāda so often said, “Variety is the mother of enjoyment.” That is why anything and everything is displayed in this world. Unfortunately, the variety displayed on the lower or material plane of existence is “a falsehood always changing but never getting near the truth.” Material variety is nirviśeṣa, without quality, because it is temporary. The varieties of this cosmos sooner or later collapse into chaos. Attempting to adjust consciousness to the nirviśeṣa position by intellectual abstraction will not bring one to the higher plane. To ascend to the higher plane, the

idea of “I am the original enjoyer” must be given up, not the idea of enjoyment itself. On the lower plane, the individual soul posits himself as the original enjoyer. But he is not original. The only obstruction to the happiness of the soul is his failure to admit that because he is not the origin of the variety he is attracted to enjoy, he is not free to do as he likes. Kṛṣṇa is the origin. Real enjoyment is therefore Kṛṣṇa-centered. On the higher plane the soul achieves eternal enjoyment of the endless variety of Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental qualities.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, Lord Caitanya said to Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī that the purpose of Vedānta philosophy is very difficult for an ordinary person to understand. But, ye sūtra-kartā, se yadi karaye vyākhyāna tabe sūtrera mūla artha lokera haya jñāna: if the person who wrote Vedānta-sūtra explains it, its original meaning can be understood by the people in general. The intention of my offering is to establish that you are, dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, are the sūtra-kartā, Śrīla Vyāsadeva, whom we worship on this holy day of your merciful appearance in this world. I know this is true because, though I am an ordinary fallen soul, by hearing your explanations of the Vedic scriptures a glimmer of attraction to real philosophy has taken root in my heart. Now I prostrate myself in the dust of your lotus feet and humbly submit before you on this Vyāsa-pūjā day a request. As a wise man declared, “To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, but so to love wisdom as to live according to its dictates.” Today I pray for such love of this wisdom imparted by you throughout the world, for this wisdom is the Lord Himself (jñānam jñeyam jñāna-gamyam). Please make manifest this transcendental knowledge in my soul, thoughts, words, and deeds, life after life. For then I may be sure to serve you with fixed attention, eternally.

Your ever-insignificant, ever-aspiring servant,
Suhotra Swami

1996
Suhotra Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept my most humble obeisances in the shade of your lotus feet, which cools the fever of material desire in the minds of the fallen conditioned souls.

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

On this most auspicious day of your divine appearance, may a comprehension of all you have done and continue to do for this most unworthy, bewildered, and frail-hearted soul now manifest as the sincerity with which this offering should be made.

Kindly grant me the opportunity, in this life and in unlimited future lives, to personally repay you for accepting me, in Boston twenty-four years ago, as your disciple.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I write this offering in the most holy Śrīdhām Māyāpura, where your divine presence at the Puṣpa-samādhi Mandira is a tangible reality. My visits to you there leave me refreshed, inspired and deeply moved. The massive white marble dome topped by the golden kalaśa is the Meru of this age, the pillar that holds up the world. Gazing upon it, I am reminded of a saying: “One man with courage makes a majority.”

As architecture, the Samādhi Mandir is stunning. But devotees are not so very concerned with architecture. I’ve seen bigger and more ornate structures in various parts of the world, but they hold no sway over my mind as does the Mandir. There can’t be a comparison, because the Mandir was built in sacrifice to Your Divine Grace. Similarly, in the mundane estimation there are so-called great men whose names are household words worldwide. But whatever they did was for sense gratification. What you’ve done is for Kṛṣṇa. And, yes, in appreciation for that, Kṛṣṇa lets wax more and more the transcendental moon of your fame, besides which the fame of the fathers of nations, the learned savants and the heroes, is mere starlight. Soon, doubtlessly, your name will be on lips worldwide. But what sets you apart, what compels us to your lotus feet, what actually establishes you in our hearts and makes us your eternal followers, is simply that all of what you’ve done, big or small, you’ve done for Kṛṣṇa. The pastimes so powerfully depicted in the Samādhi diorama display—your struggles to serve your Guru Mahārāja in India from the 40’s till you left for America; the risky steamship journey you took at an elderly age; your preaching among the hippies; your inaugurating Ratha-yātrā in San Francisco; your flooding the world with your transcendental books—testify to your love for Him whom all the worldly icons of fame forgot, and helped others forget. One man with courage for Kṛṣṇa makes a majority Kṛṣṇa conscious.

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, please instill our hearts with your courage, and please keep us tightly under your protection. I am writing this homage during a lunar eclipse here in Māyāpur. A few nights ago I saw a comet. Two nights before Gaura-pūrṇimā, a ring of light appeared around the moon. Within some days after the next Gaura-pūrṇimā, a huge comet is predicted to pass by the earth. These are all inauspicious portents. With the rise of your movement in the world, the personality of Kali feels threatened. Just when he thought he had defeated religion with material science; just when he thought he had buried the burnt remnants of morality under an avalanche of “free love” and pornography; just when he thought the world had been seduced by the doctrine of “I am God”—you established ISKCON, thereby exposing the cheating of the scientists, the futile nastiness of illicit sex, and The Emperor’s New Clothes of modern man’s claims to supremacy over creation. Kali’s Medusan gaze is now upon us. He has the power to turn the hearts of all ordinary men and women to stone.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, I fear for your society of devotees. I fear for myself in this society. My heart was already stone; and while you shattered it with the powerful hammer blow of your preaching, not all the granite chips fell away. Indeed, I foolishly clung to them. Now, once more feeling the petrifying grip of Kali upon my heart, I know that I must come under your full shelter, that I may not be frozen in my tracks. I know this—but I am weak and wavering. Help me, Śrīla Prabhupāda. Help your ISKCON. The entire material energy is pitted against us. If we remain ordinary men and women, we'll be powerless to serve you. And that, for one who has known service to you, is a fate worse than death. There's only one way to be saved from this: all vestiges of contamination must be resolutely excised and thrown away, and these bodies, minds, and souls must be fully dedicated to your lotus feet.

I am low, fallen, and troubled by the reactions of countless offenses in devotional service. If you do not rescue me, I will be lost. While I have no qualification to expect your favor, I cannot approach anyone else for shelter, as there is no one other than you in whom I can put my faith. Seeing my helplessness, Śrīla Prabhupāda, please do what you think is best.

Before closing, Śrīla Prabhupāda, kindly permit me to directly address the hearers and readers of this offering, be they devotees or the simply curious, whether now be the 1996 Centennial Vyāsa-pūjā Day or any time thereafter. Dear friends, have no doubt that Śrīla Prabhupāda is with us here today at this gathering in his honor. I have no worth that I can see, yet Śrīla Prabhupāda keeps me in his service. You are exalted souls and have so much more to offer His Divine Grace than I ever will. Take his mercy, please. Let us, all together now, cry out from every last recess of our hearts:

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA KĪ JAYA!

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S 1996 CENTENNIAL VYĀSA-PŪJĀ CELEBRATION KĪ JAYA!

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA, OUR ONLY HOPE, KĪ JAYA!

Now let us all resolve to be united in his mission, eternally.

All glories to Your Divine Grace in this Centennial Year of your merciful appearance in this material world!

Your eternal servant,
Suhotra Swami

1997

Suhotra Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,

Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to you, the rarest of rare pure devotees, who astonish this modern world full of proud, sinful

demons by revealing the full potency of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission of renunciation, knowledge, and pure devotion to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Madana-mohana, Govinda, and Gopīnātha.

The gravity of your presence silences the gibbering, gesticulating madness of material attachment. The radiance of your wisdom penetrates and dispels the most soul-darkening ignorance. The sweetness of your love for Kṛṣṇa makes plain the bitterness of lusty affairs and awakens in our hearts the taste for devotional service. Your oceanlike compassion is so broad and deep that it accommodates the entire earth and all its living entities. You are the only hope for the most fallen, and your plan to steal the world away from Kali's grip cannot be thwarted by the envious.

It is said that whatever goes into the holy river Gaṅgā is considered as pure as the Gaṅgā, at least as long as it remains in the Gaṅgā. Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda, my prayer on this auspicious day of your appearance is that the consciousness of all conditioned souls may plunge and swim forever within the holy waves of transcendental sound vibration that Your Divine Grace conducts throughout the world, O Bhagīratha of preachers! I pray that not one rascal, even the most hurtful and impious, remain immune to the current of that almighty flood of nectar in the form of paramparā kṛṣṇa-kīrtana, kṛṣṇa-tattva, and kṛṣṇa-kathā. For if you grant this prayer of mine, then surely I too, at last, shall be carried to the ocean of pure devotional service.

Remaining eternally indebted to you, with no chance of paying you back, though I hope against hope for the strength to try,

Your insignificant servant,
Suhotra Swami

1998

Suhotra Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Your Divine Grace.

On this 1998 Vyāsa-pūjā, I submit myself as a servant who has no other shelter than your lotus feet. I pray for your continued protection in my small attempts to somehow assist you in your mission. You are my only hope.

Thank you.
Suhotra Swami

1999
Suhotra Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace on this most auspicious day of your transcendental appearance, which calms our primeval fear.

What is fear? When I take shelter in my particularity, that is fear. Fear flees from you because you gather particularity (all those jīva-particles) into a basket and offer it up to Kṛṣṇa. It sounds so simple. But who other than you can do that? I fear losing myself to others (but not losing myself to myself—yes, that Māyāvādī contamination lingers in me). If it were not for your soothing voice, I'd have leapt from this basket long ago. I hope I'm not staying in here just to try to subsume others into my particularity, like a black snake swallowing smaller ones—hissing all the while that this is actually what you want—spreading my fear through the ranks. You are fearless. I'm certain that's what I really want, what every jīva really wants: freedom from fear. I'm certain you can give us that, because I'm certain that by offering us to Kṛṣṇa you are giving us Kṛṣṇa's shelter. Please, Śrīla Prabhupāda, please help me overcome my particular fear of this process. It's a worn cliché, but apart from this fear, we have no fear.

Your humble servant,
Suhotra Swami

2000
Suhotra Swami

Dear Śrīla Prabhupāda,
Please accept my most humble obeisances at your lotus feet on the glorious occasion of your Vyāsa-pūjā celebration in the year 2000.

Your One Glance Was Enough

“My weakness cohabiting with temptation...”
These words sum up much about my life.
Yes, much even about that first meeting with you:
When (in weakness) I thought myself too unworthy
To share in your presence.
When (in temptation) I thought your awareness
Limited by your form grasped by my limited senses.

Your one glance was enough
To put all that to flight.
Your one glance was enough
To lay bare my heart.
Your one glance was enough
To make me want to serve you
Again and again
Forever.

Mist, a dragon's breath creeping the fields,
Scatters before the dawning sun.
Night, a shade stalking the forest path,
Recoils before the ascending moon.
But the terrors that leap from mist and night
Are sheltered within a dark behind that dark
That the sun and moon dispel.

Your one glance was enough
To put all that to flight.
Your one glance was enough
To lay bare my heart.
Your one glance was enough
To make me want to serve you
Again and again
Forever.

Your thumbtip, playing across pink rosebud fingerjoints,
Counts the arguments of opposed schools of thought.
My curiosity trembles to know it, but that number
(Whatever it is) is at once erased, a mere cipher,
By a dismissive wave of your hand.
"Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Truth," your voice transmits
Directly into my consciousness.

And so it was, yesterday. Your fiery truth, a spear of the supreme sun,
launched at my heart. Now today the earth, aquarrel with eclipsed minds.
I pray these minds (mine included) may tomorrow shine like the supreme moon
That re-launches the spear of your truth from the catapult of pure reflection
Upon the sweet Lord that Your Divine Grace reveals within the heart.
Śrīla Prabhupāda, you know best that beyond all the noise,
We just want to be loved. But we must learn to love in return.
Wanting love, yet not knowing how to give it, is lust.

Your one glance is enough
To lay bare our hearts.
Your one glance is enough
To make us want to serve you
Again and again
Forever.

Your humble servant,
Suhotra Swami

2001
Suhotra Swami
Amazing

“Amazing” seems not word enough
To sketch all that you do,
But since “amazing” sings the Gītā of
The pure soul, so do I of you.

All the more that you are Kṛṣṇa’s tool
To save us from our plight—
You lift us, drowners, from the sucking pool
And lead us to His side.

Amazing is Your Divine Grace
That keeps us in its ken,
Even though we from your shelter race
To dive in māyā again.

Amazing is your loving heart
In which Kṛṣṇa, the blackish sun,
Shines forth, all darkness to depart,
Revealing the true sense of One:

Not One without devotion,
But One in tender flow
Of purified emotion
That only premānandīs know.

Amazing are your books sublime
That spring forth from your love,
Exposing there’s no reason or rhyme
To materialistic bhāv.

Amazing is the holy name
You sowed everywhere as did Gaura,
Immersing the world in Kṛṣṇa's fame
And opening up the door:

From saṁsāra's woes to the Lord's abode
Where you welcome us in glory—
Amazing, Śrīla Prabhupāda, O golden lode,
From where I mine this story!

Your servant,
Suhotra Swami

2003 Suhotra Swami

My worshipful, all-merciful spiritual master, Your Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda, founder-ācārya of ISKCON, cornucopia of Mahāprabhu-kṛpā, and the Śrīla Vyāsadeva of our age! This insignificant wretch begs a tiny corner of shelter under your fearless lotus feet. Kindly permit me to utter the auspicious prayers voiced by your countless servants, prayers that will continue to be voiced throughout ages to come:

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

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

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

Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this anniversary day of your merciful descent into the realm of human perception, we search our hearts for a monument to you that we can form into words of praise. We might retrieve a memorable pastime of yours; a chastisement that saved and transformed our lives; or a realization that dawned by the divine grace of your books, lectures, or letters. We might come up with a small but brilliant jewellike

moment when you blessed us with your glance, your nod, your smile. We might reflect upon the weighty mission of a lifetime that you ordered us to fulfill.

One thing is certain: when we plunge into our hearts to find this, our yearly Vyāsa-pūjā monument to you, we, like deep-sea divers exploring a sunken fleet of Spanish galleons, turn up treasure after treasure without end. You, Śrīla Prabhupāda, are a mine of wonders.

Today, on this Vyāsa-pūjā Day of year 2003, something that is indeed a priceless monument to your most wondrous nature has, with a life of its own, forced its way up to the surface of my heart. This treasure is that most fortunate host of great souls, the assembly of my Godbrothers and Godsisters: they whom you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, blessed with initiation into the eternal path of kṛṣṇa-bhakti.

Now some of your spiritual children have grown into leaders of your great ISKCON. Other disciples render steady service to your movement from positions of near-anonymity. Many are not actively connected with ISKCON at all. Some have left this world to serve you elsewhere.

Whatever their apparent status might be, the great majority of boys and girls you gathered to your lotus feet from 1966 to 1977 remain faithful to you. Hardly any that I know of committed the mad elephant offense of rejecting Your Divine Grace. I have no doubt that each and every loyal disciple of yours is a “matchless gift,” a spiritual ornament that adorns your eternal form.

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca
aham bhakta-parādhīno hy asvatantra iva dvija
sādhubhir grasta-hṛdayo bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyaḥ*

“The Supreme Personality of Godhead said to the brāhmaṇa: 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.” Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.4.63)

Among the bhakta-janas (“the devotees of My devotee”) mentioned here, some may not be up to the mark of a pure bhakta like you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who are “completely devoid of material desires,” so spotless in heart that Lord Kṛṣṇa is pleased to serve your every desire to serve Him. Nonetheless, the Lord proclaims all the bhakta-janas to be priya, “very dear to Me.”

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.5.19, Nārada Muni declares:

*na vai jano jātu kathañcanāvrajen
mukunda-sevy anyavad aṅga saṁsṛtim*

*smaran mukundāṅghry-upagūhanam punar
vihātum icchen na rasa-graho janah*

“My dear Vyāsa, even though a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa sometimes falls down somehow or other, he certainly does not undergo material existence like others [fruitive workers, etc.] because a person who has once relished the taste of the lotus feet of the Lord can do nothing but remember that ecstasy again and again.”

In the video series “Śrīla Prabhupāda Memories,” we actually witness the truth of this verse. So many Godbrothers and Godsisters—in whose hearts are firmly enshrined the words *nama om viṣṇu-pādāya...*, the prayer that glorifies you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, as forever situated under the lotus feet of Mukunda—are *rasa-grahis!* They can do nothing but remember again and again the ecstasy of your divine association by which they relished the taste of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. According to Śrī Nārada, their status, however it may appear to our imperfect senses, is not material. Whether or not they exhibit the external signs of Vaiṣṇavism, as they relish their remembrances of you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, they are with you. They love you. And loving you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, they love the lotus feet of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Mādhava, who are forever seated upon the throne of your heart.

*tathā na te mādharma tāvakāḥ kvacid
bhraśyanti mārgāt tvayi baddha-sauhṛdāḥ
tvayābhiguptā vicaranti nirbhayā
vināyakānikapa-mūrdhasu prabho*

“O Mādhava, Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord of the goddess of fortune, if devotees completely in love with You sometimes fall from the path of devotion, they do not fall like nondevotees, for You still protect them. Thus they fearlessly traverse the heads of their opponents and continue to progress in devotional service.”

On this day of your appearance, Śrīla Prabhupāda, I fear to be counted as an opponent of my Godbrothers and Godsisters. I tremble at the countless offenses I committed against your treasured family of disciples who even now, decades after your seeming disappearance, continue to taste the ambrosia of your softest of soft, sweetest of sweet, lotus feet. O my dear spiritual master, what must I do to break down the wall of false ego that keeps me aloof from those whose abiding love for you is so plain to see? Śrīla Prabhupāda, why is my heart so forbiddingly cold?

Why, even after my heart warms a bit due to such reflections as this that I’ve just now put into words, do the Arctic winds of impersonalism again blow through its chambers to turn it once more into a *māna-mandira* of solid ice?

Is there any hope for me? Only if my Godbrothers and Godsisters will mercifully forgive me, this *aparādhī* moving among them like an asura disguised as one of the Lord’s cowherd boyfriends!

My dear Godbrothers and Godsisters, so beloved by Śrīla Prabhupāda, on this most fortunate of days that commemorates the appearance of our eternal father, I implore you to have a care for my misfortune. I am a breathing but dead brute stranded upon an iceberg of hard-heartedness. Will you not glance a melting, uplifting ray of mercy my way? Without that mercy, I am lost and drifting in the ocean of birth and death.

All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda and his transcendental family of beloved spiritual sons and daughters!

Praying to be your humble servant and the humble servant of your humble servants,
Suhotra Swami

2004 Suhotra Swami

Dear Srila Prabhupada,
Please accept my humble obeisances at the shelter of your lotus feet. All glories to Your Divine Grace!

You have translated Srimad-Bhagavatam 3.10.12 thus:

*viśvaṁ vai brahma-tan-mātraṁ saṁsthitaṁ viṣṇu-māyayā
īśvareṇa paricchinnāṁ kālenāvyakta-mūrtinā*

"This cosmic manifestation is separated from the Supreme Lord as material energy by means of *kāla*, which is the unmanifested, impersonal feature of the Lord. It is situated as the objective manifestation of the Lord under the influence of the same material energy of Visnu."

What we perceive as the universe (*visva*) is the Lord Himself; and none other than the Lord Himself wills that this universe, which is never a thing different from Him, be yet separate from Him. In your Bhaktivedanta Purport to this verse you explain:

It is something like the tape-recorded voice of a person who is now separated from the voice. As the tape recording is situated on the tape, so the whole cosmic manifestation is situated on the material energy and appears separate by means of *kāla*.

Kāla means "time." Lord Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself to be time in the Bhagavad-gīta. Thus the Personality of Godhead, His objective manifestation as the universe, and the time factor that distinguishes these two are all one . . . and yet different. This subject matter constitutes all that is essential for a human being to know.

I shall now declare unto you in full this knowledge, both phenomenal and numinous. This being known, nothing further shall remain for you to know. (Bhagavad-gita 7.2)

Phenomenal knowledge (jnana) reveals the universe to be the Lord in truth; numinous knowledge (vijñana) reveals the transcendental Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa in truth. (The word numinous is rooted in the Latin numen, "nod," which is said to suggest that phenomena go on by the approval of the divinity at remove, by His mere nod.) Lord Kṛṣṇa mercifully assumed the role of Arjuna's spiritual master to establish the standard of education in phenomenal and numinous knowledge. Since this knowledge is originally revealed by the Lord, a bona fide spiritual master coming in disciplic succession with the mission to teach the same knowledge is to be considered a form of the Lord as His authorized representative. Only by receiving an education from Sri Kṛṣṇa can a fallen soul rectify the mistake that keeps him bound to the cycle of birth and death.

*bhayaṁ dvitīyābhīniveśataḥ syād īśād apetasya viparyayo 'smṛtiḥ
tan-māyayāto budha ābhajet taṁ bhaktyaikayeśaṁ guru-devatātmā*

"When the living entity is attracted by the material energy, which is separate from Kṛṣṇa, he is overpowered by fear. Because he is separated from the Supreme Personality of Godhead by the material energy, his conception of life is reversed. In other words, instead of being the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, he becomes Kṛṣṇa's competitor. This is called viparyayo 'smṛtiḥ. To nullify this mistake, one who is actually learned and advanced worships the Supreme Personality of Godhead as his spiritual master, worshipful Deity, and source of life. He thus worships the Lord by the process of unalloyed devotional service." {Srimad-Bhagavatam 11.2.37}

Kṛṣṇa se tomara, sings Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura about the pure devotee—"Kṛṣṇa is yours and you have the power to give Him to me." Srila Prabhupada, Kṛṣṇa is so much yours that through Your Divine Grace He has sent forth a flood of mercy that covers the whole earth. Your power is such that not only are you giving Kṛṣṇa to every human being on this planet, but you are removing the ignorance that divides us from Kṛṣṇa. Just as Sri Sudarsana Cakra with his twelve spokes sets afire the domains of the asuras, so you, in twelve tours around the globe between 1965 and 1977, set afire the worldwide edifice of modern godless science and philosophy. That fire continues to blaze to this very day. Flood and fire are what you've brought to the world, Srila Prabhupada—a flood of mercy in the form of the cooling, thirst-quenching waves of bhagavat-tattva-vijñana, and an unquenchable, roasting conflagration that consumes all opposing speculations.

Srila Prabhupada, on October 5, 1975, you gave a Srimad-Bhagavatam class in Mauritius. Afterward an Indian gentleman asked you if it is possible for one who has learned and understood this education to depart a few minutes later "in a very ridiculous way" from the teachings he received from God in person. Your reply to this gentleman was that his question was ridiculous, since only an uneducated person acts

ridiculously. You clarified for him that a spiritually educated man like Arjuna might be disturbed by a material calamity such as the loss of his son ("that is temporary," you said), but because he is educated he will never depart from the order of the Lord ("that is final," you said, "that is his victory").

Srila Prabhupada, my prayer on this most auspicious day of your appearance is that before the end of this life I may be counted by you as one of your educated disciples. I pray that, even though I may be disturbed by some material reversal, I may never depart your lotus feet, that I may be convinced to act according to your order, and that I may be victorious by your divine grace.

Your humble servant,
Suhotra Swami