

Notes from a Pilgrim

To All Devotees Of Srila Prabhupada's

Lotus Feet

Please accept my humble obeisances at your feet. An astrologer once commented on Srila Prabhupada's chart that: "Here is a man who can build a house that could shelter the whole world." Those fortunate souls who knew him realized that such qualities certainly existed in him and before his departure in November 1977 almost 10,000 of the world's most highly evolved souls had accepted initiation from him and were working actively to assist him to build that shelter. Hundreds of thousands more had heard him speak or had visited the temples he started. Literally tens of millions in countries and languages the world over had read his books. No one can truly and accurately estimate the effect he had, because some of it was visible and quantifiable and some was invisible [i.e. the purifying and spiritually inspiring results his life and teachings have brought to millions].

Now, most of you to whom I address this communication have your own deep feelings concerning the super-excellent position of Srila Prabhupada in the history of the world's civilization, therefore, I shall abridge my elaboration of his accomplishments for the time being so that I can bring the matter quickly to the point: that is, that 6 years after his disappearance, the work that he so brilliantly and ably began is in disarray and we require to analyze it maturely in the light of the grave responsibility that we have to His Divine Grace as his children and grand-children. I beg to humble myself at the feet of every soul who has some genuine affection for our Divine Master. I speak to you all as your God-brother and friend. I am a person who is well known to many of Prabhupada's family and at least a little

known to most of you, therefore I do not feel as if I am addressing strangers. In as much as I have been close to many of you I can not progress further with these words without petitioning for your forgiveness for all of my offenses, which have been many and grievous. Since you are all followers and partakers of the all-merciful, Footdust of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, I know that it is not theologically possible for you to fail to pardon me. Neither have Gaurangadev and his Apostles ever been known to sentence even a soul as fallen as I to the eternal hell-fire. Although my existence on earth has become, it seems, a burden for certain of you, I beg to request your kind permission to allow me to continue to remain here, at least for a few seasons longer. I say this, at this point not on account of insecurity and paranoia, but because my life and the lives of my followers have been violently threatened on a number of occasions since the day I walked out of Iskcon last March 5. The world has seen often enough the effects of fanatical religious sects whose theological squabbles end up in violence and sectarian discord, so I must petition all of you who read this to at least allow me and those few souls who maintain some love for me to live in peace. I beg forgiveness for my offences to you all, but at the same time, I pray that all of you request Srila Prabhupada to remove from your own hearts all ill-feelings that you may be harbouring towards any devotee of the Lord, especially those who have been so fortunate as to find after a sojourn of millions of lives, the shelter of the Jagatguru, Srila Prabhupada. Factually, the doctrine which Sri Chaitanya Mahprabhu enlightened us with necessitates our practising love for all souls and special love for those who are the Lord's own, having accepted the shelter of his servants. Therefore, I ask all of you to realise that the best way to please Srila Prabhupada will be to act as transparent agents for the Compassionate Heart of our Divine Master in dispensing the blessings of the most munificent Personality, Sri Chaitanyadev, to all souls.

All of us came to the shelter of Srila Prabhupada's feet at different times and for different apparent reasons, yet since it is by the grace of **Kṛṣṇa** that one gets Guru, it must practically be seen that as the supreme controller of us all, the Lord has been with us all from our births, leading and guiding us toward him, individually and together. Each one of us has a view of our own individual spiritual history. We can all give witness to how the Lord has protected us and helped us to grow. However, in the current moment of our history, most of us lack a clear perspective of how the Lord, acting through Srila Prabhupada, is still ~~shepherding~~ ^{shepherding} us all, looking after each soul, yet still aware of the condition of the whole flock. When Prabhupada was with us we felt him close by like a Guardian angel who would not let us stumble either in our personal devotional lives or as a society. During Prabhupada's manifested past times, many major disturbances did, of course, occur. In 1970, 1973, 1975 and 1976, there were major crises caused by the unfortunate inability of the societies leaders to work together cooperatively and free from personal ambition. Srila Prabhupada saved us time and time again from the difficulties and, in his kindness and wisdom, allowed us to continue working, overlooking even the worst of our transgressions as a kind father excuses the immature behavior of his dear children. Unfortunately in the crises at 1979, 1980, 1982 etc., Srila Prabhupada was observing the chaotic behavior of his "representatives" from His transcendent seat. He chose not to be present with us personally to chastise and correct us in these difficulties as he had before, Perhaps, He was hoping that we had grown up? Anyway by his Divine Grace, His dear friend and associate, Srila Bhaktirakṣhak Sridhardev Goswami, was close at hand and he did his able best to assist the orphaned children on a number of occasions, especially in November 1980 preventing a major split. Unable to tolerate interference in their autocratic rule, however, even by so kindly and non-ambitious a **paramahansa** as Sridhar Maharaj, the GBC of what many had by now begun to call the "Upa-Iskcon" (i.e. the faint resemblance of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement) unceremoniously and with a

contempt even for the normal courtesies paid out in human society (what to speak of Vaisnava society) insulted that Venerable Vaisanava in a cruel way, thus, I am sure bringing Srila Prabhupada to tears in his Samadhi. It was just at this time (March 1982) that I myself "left Iskcon" unable to tolerate the situation anymore. Of course, my own leaving had positive personal aspects, but at the same time I want to make it clear to all that I left as a protest to the way in which so many of my God-brothers had been mistreated by the "cult-like" behavior of the Iskcon administrators after Srila Prabhupada's departure. Although the "GBC" has delegated to itself the absolute authority of the Godhead, it unfortunately failed to acquire the unlimited opulences of the Godhead, or even the 26 qualities of the pure devotees, thus leaving all of Srila Prabhupada's followers in a paradoxical nightmare.

Reviewing the most recent Vyas-puja books we find hardly 500 of Srila Prabhupada's disciples still active in Iskcon's good-books. The rest, presumably (since most of us are too young to have died) must still be around somewhere, generally in the group that are condemned with the haughty expression "fringies" by the Iskcon establishment. Srila Prabhupada's broad minded love of all living beings was especially concentrated on his devotees whom he saw as having been sent directly by his Guru Maharaj. How could his "representatives" treat his children with so much disrespect? Clearly, "Iskcon" and "GBC" have become far from synonymous with "Srila Prabhupada" and as inheritors and protectors of his Divine Grace's spiritual legacy, all of his children must, therefore, stand up and work together co-operatively to further the spread of the pure unalloyed Love and Mercy of our Divine Master.

Our God is a living God; our Gurudeva is a living Gurudeva. We do not require a committee to intervene for us. We can call out directly to the mercy Potency of the Lord and receive relief from all of our afflictions and by the process of continuous, unmotivated devotional service we

can get direct connection with Kṛṣṇa's Divine Abode through the transparent agency of our Beloved Master. Śrīla Prabhupada was not a short change artist. That type of preaching was introduced by some of His sons later on. Our connection with Prabhupada is on the spirit plane, born by Divine Grace, nurtured by our faith in His mercy, each flower growing to maturity in its own time and way. We are all good seeds, all growing up in good ground, all under the tender hand of a capable Gardener. Certainly all who strive with a sincere heart will grow to perfection. Does not our kind and merciful Lord tell us so in **Bhagavad-Gita**? Since all of Śrīla Prabhupada's children are assured salvation as a mere by-product of their devotional service, then how is that such a big group of liberated souls can not work together in the Love and Trust society that Prabhupada envisioned for us. The Promised Land is already there awaiting us all, a festive land where every step is a dance, every conversation a song, where all of the trees are desire trees. We simply have to learn how to be citizens of that Higher World of Love.

I, who am an outcaste from the many beautiful temples which my Guru Maharaj founded, not able to take "darshan" of the same Dieties which I in many cases installed and looked after for years, cannot help but feel humbled to think that the Dieties which I served and loved could now consider me to be a loathsome creature, "a snake" I am often called these days from the "Vyasasanas" and in the telephone filled rooms of high ranking Iskcon officials.

How many of us have danced and sang together in the festive days of yore when Prabhupada Himself came and spread His magic amongst us all? Floating in the ocean of the free distribution of His mercy we all came together like brothers and sisters! Now there are a hundred different camps and everyone is ready to shoot arrows of offensive words and abusive feelings at devotees in camps outside their own standards and the teachings of the **sampradaya** are used as weapons by the so-called "acaryas" to make the sincere hearted young followers into little more than

robotized replicas of their hypocritical spiritual masters!

Please excuse my strong words but I have remained silent for a long time and now I feel moved by the Spirit of Love which resides within the hearts of us all, to cry out to the revered senior sons of our master whom I have so harshly addressed, "Let my people go!!" It's high time that all of the big men on all of the big seats get off from them for a while and find low seats somewhere where they can get a better perspective of how much limited their realization actually is. Iskcon has become a simple case of the blind leading the blind and the effects of this blindness have been so damaging that no one, even those brave souls who have had the courage to leave the institution have been able to escape from the repercussions.

Especially in America [which in many ways is one of the most open and liberal minded places on earth, and should therefore, be ready for a mature education in the conclusions of vedic thought] devotees of Krsna are practically infamous for their cheating methods and fascistic life style. None of this can be seen as Srila Prabhupada's fault. Neither can it be said that Krsna, the All-attractive, did not have the power to attract the westerners. Nor can we admit that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu the most munificent personalities, had insufficient mercy to touch the hearts of the "mlecchas." If so, then where is the hope in the Kali Yuga?

Everyone is mad after wrangling over quotes from this purport or that, this letter or that, but one hundred "munis" will come forward with one hundred conclusions as to "what Srila Prabhupada really wanted." But is it not said, "Mahajano Yena gatha svapantha," (one must follow in the footsteps of the great souls)? What he wanted was that we become pure devotees of the Vrindaban type, Brijabasis. Did he not descend to us directly from Vrindaban, after all? To develop hearts like the residents of Vrindaban, this was the challenge he gave to us, but instead everyone's advancement is measured in how much Pounds, Shillings,

and Pence he has brought into the society's treasures, and the hearts of the big, big "acaryas" have become just like steel.

Of course, I always remain optimistic that matters will soon change for the better. After all, "Satyameva Vijayate" (truth will always be victorious). The thousands of my God-brothers and God-sisters who have suffered abuse under the tyrannical management of neophyte Iskcon leaders, while at the same time being told that this was being done in the name of their own beloved gurudeva, Srila Prabhupada, will certainly have their day. Prabhupada's transcendental effulgence will shine forth to illuminate everything and both the good devotional acts that we have performed and the "anarthas" (the unwanted things) in our hearts will be revealed. The Lord has promised us that he would protect all surrendered souls. He gave us a fearless shelter against all the wickedness of Kali.

Now I was torn cruelly away from my dear wife Manjuali and my beautiful pure devotee son, Vaisnava Carana Das when my son was only four years old. I accepted this as the grace of the Lord, at the time of the inquisitional meeting in Los Angeles when I was forced to take sannyasa. The G.B.C. told me at that time, "We are Prabhupada, whatever we say is as good as God saying it." I called them all "fascists" at that time and I wept and I pleaded, but they were bent on establishing their false egos as supreme and I had to try to maintain the dignity of the acaryas seat that I was sitting on at the time and the unity of the movement in the near aftermath of Prabhupada's departure. But I cannot feel too much sorry for my own case. Even though my son was later made to see the pictures of his father burned and thrown in the trash can while his Gurukula schoolmates chanted, "demon, demon!," under the direction of "acarya" Bhagavan Das, I cannot really complain. Have not hundreds of my God-brothers and God-sisters gotten similar or worse treatment? Otherwise, why have 90 per cent of Prabhupada's dear children abandoned the temples and hidden themselves away rather than pay obeisances to the corrupt administration?

There was no greater Advocate of Love, Peace, Harmony, Beauty, Supreme Justice and Mercy than Lord Chaitanya in the history of the universe from the time of Brahma. Prabhupada came forth from Mahabrahma's Homeland in Gaudadesa to Vrindaban and then to America to save us all and take us back to home, back to Godhead. We are the unique children of a marriage of East and West, which the British Colonialists like Rudyard Kipling never thought could take place. We have to come now to understand our identity in the world as a tribe - world wide children of Lord Chaitanya. All other religions of the world are divided on account of doctrinal disagreements and political contaminations, but our Krsna Consciousness Society did not grow up in the dark ages. Can we not show the world by our example that by putting God in the centre a society can be at peace and, therefore the world can be at peace? We have to stop judging each other and simply come together for Hari Nama Samkirtan. Every town and village of the universe must become inundated by the Divine Sound of the holy name of Lord Chaitanya and people must become convinced that a simple life filled with God consciousness is the basis of a natural civilization for our planet. The scientists must be inspired to use their scientific genius to show that man's real evolution is towards greater self-awareness and sensitivity to the presence of God in the universe and in his heart. Historians must be shown that the dialectic theory of historical change can only be understood correctly if we place God in the centre of history and examine the Puranic records alongside man's own haphazard notes and discoveries. We have the challenge from our Divine Master and from Sri Gauranga-Deva to change the hearts of all, to uplift the world from the lower modes of nature which are the source of their sufferings and to help them become infused with Divine Grace, pure goodness (Visuddha-Sattva). Iskcon has practically turned its back on these great challenges and simply merged into the drab skyline of the other multi-national religious conglomerates, a small and dispised little building on the edge of the town, dwarfed by the long established sky-

scrapers of the "respectable" religions and in the neighbourhood of the shantys of the fanatical cults.

We are all well aware that Srila Prabhupada is a Divine Agent of Vishnu the all-pervasive Lord and that the many diverse programs which he revealed during his manifested Lila are all parts of a great plan which the Lord Himself is at the root of. No one disciple has ever been able to gain a perfect perspective of what Prabhupada had in mind when he asked us to accomplish so many different projects in so many different parts of the world. Prabhupada gave so many different instructions to so many different disciples and friends around the world in his many years of preaching. If we can all act together and work with one another in humility then all the pieces of jigsaw puzzle will start to come together and we may begin to note some tangible progress towards achieving the noble goals which Prabhupada and Mahaprabhu have set for us to enlighten and deliver the whole world by dispensing the nectar of **Krsna Prema**.

As free and independent members of a congregation which we came to join out of an expression of our own free will, we have a right to grow towards the goals of our religious life, each in his own way and at his own time. The straight jacket of institutionalized life does little more than separate and alienate the devotees from the people that they should be reaching out to in the world community. Neither have the "ashrams" in most cases provided the supportive kind of emotional environment which a human being requires if he is to live outside of traditional family structures. The Iskcon society's way of dealing with devotees who leave has been so severe that those who fail to "surrender" to rigid and often times arbitrary "ashram" standards generally disconnect themselves from the "ashram" altogether. Rather than finding in the temple a sympathetic pastor and guide, devotees could expect no help if their "devotion had lapsed" or if they were suffering on account of material or emotional need. Devotees who have offered valuable services in the past and who have gained Srila Prabhupada's personal favour have in scores of cases later on been thrown to the

side without even the common help given by an employer to an old employee, what to speak of the love due to a brother.

Therefore, the governing body of Iskcon can no longer claim any spiritual authority over Srila Prabhupada's disciples and neither was it at any time Prabhupada's intention that they do so. Prabhupada's Lotus Feet are very broad and they are eternal. All 10,000 of Prabhupada's disciples along with all of their disciples and all other persons of the universe can find shelter there. Any activity performed by a devotee of the Lord founded in a sincere desire to serve the Lord will be accepted by the Agents of the Lord. The temples started by Srila Prabhupada needed to be administered after his disappearance just as they needed to be during his presence and the G.B.C. members are certainly authorized to administrate those properties and ensure that the "Seva-Puja" goes on regularly. However, just as much as we each had our own relationship with Srila Prabhupada before his departure, we still have that same relationship now. Personal, individual direct. At the same time our responsibility to please him is personal, individual and direct, because in the ultimate issue it is only Sri Guru and Gauranga who will be our judge.

I am sorry to be so long-winded in preface to my positive proposals but in the atmosphere which is now prevailing within the institution's walls, I have had to first of all establish my intrinsic right to preach the **Krsna Consciousness Movement**, a right that each one of us has by the personal order of Lord Chaitanya Himself.

I have decided to take upon myself the task of exposing first of all to the Vaisnava community itself and then to the public at large, the exact circumstances surrounding the practical destruction of Srila Prabhupada's preaching work in America and elsewhere. When the devotees at large come to know the details of how a self-motivated clique composed

of a handfull of supposedly "pure devotees" has been responsible for turning our Guru Maharaja's loving family into an institution which practises a medeival kind of mental slavery and makes a habit of offending Deities, devotees and guests alike, they will certainly be perplexed.

Those of you who have known me in the past knew me, I think, as a soft spoken and generally reasonable man. Of course, my current reputation in the society is "as black as sin" as they say, but I want to make it clear that my articles on these subject matters will not be motivated simply by a "sour grapes" philosophy. I am genuinely sorry to see what has taken place and I feel that it is only when the true facts are made known to all the concerned parties that a reform movement amongst the ranks of Srila Prabhupada's disciples both within and without the walls of Iskcon may begin; a movement which may, by the Grace of Mahprabhu, come to ultimatly heal our family of the horrible beast of IMPERSONALISM which has come to eat the devotional heart of Lord Chaitanya's movement.

In future articles I will describe the "real story" behind the sannyasi initiation of 1970 when Srila Prabhupada had to flee America for Japan and India after being held captive by his own disciples, and how the subsequent "festival" at new Vrindaban (1970) led to the beginnings of the G.B.C. "Clique". I shall also show how in 1973 this same clique almost dealt the "death-blow" to Prabhupada's movement leading to the famous telegrams of 1973 in which Srila Prabhupada disbanded the G.B.C. It was also in late 1973 that Tamal Krsna Das, after leaving his post in India, came back to America and, after destroying the economic base of the society by crippling, the at that time prosperous Spiritual Sky company, went on to destroy the unity of the movement in America (and thereby world-wide) by forming the Sannyasi party and starting the infamous "Radha-Damodara wars." His exile to China in 1976 following the Temple President's uprising of that year's Mayapur festival stopped the war but did not heal the wounds of the social

and psycholological disaster that was caused. To be fair I will also include an account of the 1975 "umbrella corporation" fiasco, during which I myself was chastized severely by Prabhupada. I shall also tell the unhappy story of how the west coast zone of the U.S. was carved up into so many feudal states following my transfer to England in 1976 and how this action led to the virtual falling apart of the movement there.

Of course, the events surrounding Srila Prabhupada's Disappearance and the subsequent assumption of absolute power by the 11 persons named to give "diksha" was the turning point of the movement world-wide. The pages describing the practically total inability of these men to cooperate with each other as they carved up the world map with an effort to get as much territory in their illusory zones as possible will read like an ecclesiastical horror story. I shall also describe all the efforts made at reform over the years by my many valiant Vaisnava God-brothers and how these reforms were squashed by the powerful "gang of four or so" on the committee. I feel that my very highly placed position among the inner circle has helped me to gain a much clearer perspective on what actually has gone on in the Governing Body Commission and that in as much as other devotees may not have been properly informed of the actual facts in so many cases they may not have been able to act with a fully enlightened consciousness in dealing with the matters. To say that there is no "freedom of press" in Iskcon is certainly an understatement and wherever the establishment of a society is permitted to keep its citizens in the dark as to the actual nature of its operations by such a strict control over all "media" and by maintaining a virtual ban on any editorial comment by any member that might show disagreement with the ruling elite, the whole show is bound to eventually become corrupt. I am sure that an impartial examination of the facts by sociologists, psychologists and religious historians will lead them to the same conclusions that so many thousands of my God-brothers and God-sisters have already come to: that Srila Prabhupada's pure, enlightened movement has been spoiled by a cadre of

unenlightened men who have created a "dark ages" environment in Mahaprabhu's "Golden Age" movement.

I am also anxious to share with all of you the many beautiful and inspiring revelations that I have received over the last three years. Beginning during my tenure as G.B.C. Chairman in 1979, I honestly believe that Srila Prabhupada began to channel through my heart many important instructions which I then tried to pass on to my senior God-brothers. Their unsympathetic reaction has led me to keep most things quiet for a long time, but I have an obligation to transmit these things to all of you at some point because I truly feel personally in touch with Srila Prabhupada and I know that you all like to hear nectar. Now several years ago one of our best God-brother was practically beheaded for daring to mention publicly the "psychic transmissions" which he had been receiving from Srila Prabhupada in dreams. Needless to say, the chastizement which he (Amogha-Lila Das) received at that time acted to powerfully discourage any one else who might similarly hear Prabhupada's voice directly within rather than through the "Murky via media" of the G.B.C. and the "Gang of four." Still, many thousands of our God-brothers kept their ears tuned to Srila Gurudeva within and, as the saying goes, they voted on the G.B.C. "management" within their feet. Their massive walk-out is already a vote of no-confidence in the G.B.C. Therefore I propose officially and publicly that the G.B.C. be required to gather a list of all the devotees ever initiated by Srila Prabhupada and make an attempt to secure their addresses. Having done so, they should announce to all that they request humbly a vote of confidence from their God-brothers. They should organise Hari Nama Conventions in the major continents and invite all devotees to come forward to re-inlist in active service to Sri Guru and Gauranga. They should offer all devotees respect and reverence and invite them to work together co-operatively, not under the iron thumb of their own already discredited leadership, but through a truly enlightened

conlegium involving all of the mature men and women. This is not a call for "demon-ocracy" as Prabhupada sometimes used to call the "vox-populi". Our God-brothers are not demons, neither are any of them ordinary men. This is a call for "devotee-ocracy", government by love and trust co-operation of free and independent souls. Neither should it be taken that having "left Iskcon" should disqualify one from having a voice in the movement. This is the whole point behind the "no-confidence" vote after all-the one party ("G.B.C. - ocrats") system has failed. It has been so much weakened by the power struggles and purges that it is standing as if on one leg-hairless. That is to say that Iskcon has become a victim of Kali, and those of us who came to its doors to find shelter from the pernicious effects of this age have done well to flee to the four quarters to seek the Golden Age of Mahaprabhu elsewhere. Still we, must all cherish the dream that we will also once again stand together in unity and strength to sing the Holy Names of Gauranga and taste the remanants of our Gurudeva's Mercy. That day will dawn, my brother and sisters! After all, Mahaprabhu prophesized it, Thakur Bhaktivinode prophesized it, and Srila Prabhupada himself gave his full life's energies to see it come to pass. Can any of us leave our bodies happily before we see that promised land together, linked in true brotherhood and satisfied that the Lord's predictions about "every town and village" have at last come true?

Any way, this diatribe is already too lengthy, so I'll close. In my next communication, I will speak more about the details of the stories mentioned in code form above and will also describe my own preaching plans which include the establishment of the **Mahaprabhu New World University** in Nepal. Also I have been receiving many interesting revelations concerning the current political situation in the world and its co-relation with the prophesies of the various scriptures and Srila Prabhupada's own "war remarks". I'm sure that all of this will be of interest to at least those

devotees who have managed to avoid having their brain substances damaged by being too much addicted to the dangerous drug, G.B.C.

I remain,

Your servant,

Jayatirtha Das
(Aliases Many)

Jayatirtha Das was initiated by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada on Jan. 30, 1970. He served as President of the Spiritual sky incense Co. until 1974 when he was named to the Governing Body Commission and given responsibility to administrate the western section of the U. S. and Canada by His Divine Grace. In 1976, he was transferred to England and Northern Europe and at the same time was appointed as a Life-trustee of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. East Africa, South Africa were added to his zone in 1977.

Later in 1977, before the departure of Srila Prabhupada from out mundane vision, His Divine Grace included his name on the list of 11 names which formed the basis of the current "acarya" system in ISKCON. He was also named as the executor of Srila Prabhupada's will in Europe. In 1979, he was elected chairman of the G.B.C. In 1982, he left ISKCON and formed two new societies, the Sri Krsna Chaitanya Sankirtan Sangha, registered in India and the Order of Pilgrims.

The beautiful lakeside area of Pokhara, Nepal is rich in its spiritual history. Guarded by the majestic Annapurna range of the Himalaya, it is a perfect setting for the order of Pilgrims Retreat Centre. A proposal for permission to establish the Mahaprabhu New World University at this site is being presented to King Birendra, the world's only Hindu King.