



# **Ramesvara das interview 1979**

Ramesvara das

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# **Ramesvara interview on history of ISKCON and book changes**

## **First meeting with Srila Prabhupada at 1971 San Francisco Rathayatra**

**Ramesvara:** The first time I met Srila Prabhupada was in 1971 at the San Francisco Rathayatra festival. I had driven up with Karandhar to help organize the festival. And I believe that was the year that Kesava had written that wonderful letter to Prabhupada that Lord Jagannatha was so ill that although we've tried everything to bring Him back to health, we're just not pure enough. And so we don't think He's going to appear for the Ratha-yatra unless Your Divine Grace personally comes. Only by your pure devotion to Lord Jagannatha can the Lord become cured from this transcendental illness. So when Prabhupada was in Europe he got this letter and he canceled his tour. And he flew in for the Rathayatra.

Now I'm not sure if this I know this story took place, but whether it was '71 or '73, I'm not sure which Rathayatra it was. But anyway, Prabhupada was coming, it was 1971. So Karandhar and I had gone up to the festival to organize it. And then Prabhupada arrived the evening before the Rathayatra and the senior devotees went to the airport to pick him up and it was tumultuous, one of the greatest airport arrivals. I did not go myself because I was in the kitchen cooking. But I had been told the description of the devotees throwing yogurt, falling all over each other, throwing flowers, jumping over seats, innocent passengers being pushed aside. And it was just one of those tumultuous, wild airport greet-ings; conchshells

blowing, the whole thing.

So we didn't see Prabhupada that evening because he went to his quarters. And the next morning, I don't know if Prabhupada gave the morning class but I had been dropped off at the field with a small crew of men at around 5 or 6 a.m. so I didn't see Prabhupada that morning either. So I hadn't seen Prabhupada yet. And one by one all the members of my crew were deserting and they were racing down the whole, whatever the name of that road is in Golden Gate Park to get to the start-ing point of the parade to be there with Prabhupada. So by around 9 or 10 in the morning I was left all alone at the park and I was organizing with the karmis, the people in the park, setting up the festival, setting up the prasadam booth and so on. And we were working straight through the parade and then finally the parade came, the carts came, and there was this beautiful transcendental procession of devotees coming from the Subhadra chariot.

The whole park was full, completely full. There must have been between 10 and 20,000 people there in this meadow. And it was completely packed. And right through the middle of the crowd a procession was weaving its way like a beautiful snake, just weaving its way through the procession. And Visnujana Maharaja was there leading the kirtan. And right in the middle of the procession was Prabhupada. And although this was the first time I'd ever seen him, and although he was not as tall as the devotees around him, he stood out so distinctly, it was his effulgence and the transcendental atmosphere around him. It was very distinct.

And everyone could understand that the spiritual master, a great spiritual personality had arrived. So this beautiful procession wove its way all the way to the stage and then there was an introductory kirtan on the stage. And I was still working in the prasadam booth. I just looked up to see the procession and to see Prabhupada, and then I went right back to work. And then finally after the introductory kirtan Prabhupada began to speak. And just before he began to

speak he asked to see the prasadam that was being distributed. So that year the budget for prasadam was very low. And no one had made any preparations for Prabhupada to take prasadam at the festival.

So the devotees from the stage ran up to me because I was the only devotee in the food booth. Everyone else was at the stage with Prabhupada. And they said, "Prabhupada wants to sample the prasadam. Make up a plate." so I made up a plate. It was a paper plate and a plastic spoon and a plastic cup. The plastic cup had some lemonade in it and the plate consisted of grapes and some bread, sweet bread, and a sweet. And I think that's all there was. There were four preparations. There was bread, grapes, a sweet and the lemonade. There might have been one other preparation like ... no, there wasn't a popper, just the bread. Maybe there was a mashed potato or a Gauranga potato, but I even doubt that. It was such a terrible feast.

So I was so disturbed to make up this plate for Prabhupada, I knew it would be very displeasing. So anyway we made up the plate for Prabhupada, the plate was carried to him by some servant, and then gradually...I was still busily working to get everything set up for serving out the prasadam when the word came back that Prabhupada wouldn't...he took one look at it and he wouldn't even touch it, he wouldn't even taste any of it. He was very angry and he gave very strong instructions that never again during a Rathayatra festival should there be such skimpy prasadam. It should be so opulent with subjis and potatoes and all kinds of things.

He was very disturbed. And at one point Prabhupada wanted to drink some water and we didn't have any water in the field. And we were running around. Finally in another park we found a hose, in another meadow, and we filled one of these plastic dixie cups with the hose water and we brought it to Prabhupada; So this wasn't very together and Prabhupada was very disturbed. So finally in the middle of his lecture the GBC came to the food booth to inspect



it because he had been chastised. And when he saw me there all alone he realized that I had not been relieved yet and I hadn't seen Prabhupada. So he relieved me and I went to the stage, I worked my way through the thick crowd and I got right up to the front of the stage.

And there's a beautiful picture of Prabhupada at this Rathayatra festival. It was printed on the back cover of the old Reservoir of Pleasure that we used to distribute. And Prabhupada's face was so beautiful, so golden, glowing. He had a red vyasasana. And when I saw Prabhupada, I just froze and all my feeling of devotion was becoming manifest. And at one point Prabhupada looked at me, he saw me looking at him very intently with whatever little devotion I had. And when Prabhupada looked down on me he didn't smile, he just looked at me in a way that I could understand that he was seeing that I was very devoted. And then he went on...he continued speaking and I just burst into tears. And that was my first actual glimpse of Srila Prabhupada.

## **The beginning of book distribution**

Then the next time I saw Prabhupada was in 1972. At this time our book distribution had just begun. The beginnings of book distribution was almost, you could say an accidental discovery. For some time we all knew that Prabhupada's main work was to translate his books and to have them distributed. And the conception in the Society was that the magazines, Back to Godhead, could be distributed on the street sankirtana party, the Harinama party, but that books could only be sold through book stores or to libraries or to colleges. So the only book distribution that was going on in those early days, '69, '68, '70, was that type of sankirtana where one person was designated in the temple to make appointments and visit librarians and book stores. No one ever thought that you could take a book out on the street the way you take the Back to Godhead

out. So this was going on for a couple of years. Actually it was my service in the first year and a half that I was in the temples, to organize this type of book distribution.

So in 1971, a devotee in San Francisco named Premarnava dasa and another devotee named Buddhimanta dasa, they had the idea that they could go with the hardbound deluxe Krsna Book volumes that had just been printed and distribute them in front of a grocery store. And the way they got this idea was very interesting. One day they were coming home from some Harinama party and they had a few hardbound Krsna Books in the vehicle and they stopped at a gas station. And when it came time to pay for the gas, one of them just had the idea to bring out the Krsna Book and show it to the person. And as they began preaching and they saw that the gas station attendant was very interested in the book, they suggested that instead of paying him for the gas he take the book. And he agreed! So that was astonishing. And from that incident they got the idea to try taking the Krsna Books to the grocery store or the supermarket which was across the street from the San Francisco temple. Now this isn't the first time Krsna Books were distributed.

The first time Krsna Books were distributed was the day they arrived, which was I think the 1970 Rathayatra. And all the advance copies during that festival were sold, including Prabhupada's personal copies. But since that time nobody had done anything with Krsna Books other than the stores and the libraries. So this was in 1971, some time in the late spring, early summer, (typist note: check this date) that this accidental discovery of selling a Krsna Book to an individual person rather than to a store or library was made. And then they went to the store the next day and they stood out there and I can't remember if it was Premarnava or Buddhimanta, but one of them sold three or two Krsna Books.

So the temple presi-dent was Kesava, he immediately phoned the GBC in Los Angeles, Karandhar, and told him that this is an astonishing thing, a miraculous thing has just taken place. And

Karandhar encouraged him to try making different experiments. So Kesava organized his men such as Buddhimanta, Premarnava, Yogescandra, Sarvadarsana, Nimai, there was a Chinese boy named Sankaracarya, something like that. There was a group of...Sridhar, the ISKCON Sridhar Swami, and others. And he started telling them to keep trying this. So they thought about it and they concluded that the best way to do it would be going door to door, get people at their homes. So they started going out and lo and behold, devotees were selling one or two or even three Krsna Books in one day. And Buddhimanta was the king. He would sometimes sell 5 and one day he sold 7!

So when he heard this news in Los Angeles, this was like the fulfillment of all of our dreams, to distribute Srila Prabhupada's books. So we immediately organized our door to door parties. And they did the same thing in the San Diego temple and the same thing in the Denver temple. And so all through the summer of 1971 and the fall of 1971 we were perfecting our techniques of selling the hardbound Krsna Books door to door in sets. And Kesava was the most innovative person in the whole period. He would sometimes offer the people at the door a poster—we were printing these color posters from Dai Nippon and make deals with them, "I'll give you a poster and a pack of incense and a set of Krsna Books, volume 1 and 2, for just \$10," and so in this way the excitement was building.

And it got to the point where we were selling literally hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of Krsna Books a week. Each temple was selling 20, 30, or 40 a day. And the temples invoked were again San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Denver and a little temple in Phoenix that had only four devotees and they were into it. All the temples in this western zone were completely getting intoxicated by going out and selling Krsna Books. And Karandhar was the GBC at the time and he was writing letters to Prabhupada and Prabhupada was becoming overjoyed and money was finally beginning to come into the American BBT.

Prior to this period, the American BBT was receiving an income from all over the world for book sales of about \$2500 a month. After this period the income rose to several thousand dollars a month. And by the end of the first year, over \$40,000 had come in just from the Krsna Book sales. So this was a very exciting breakthrough. So in 1972 the next breakthrough took place. And Kesava's men discovered that there is something better than door to door. And that was going out to the malls. The Supreme Court decision which shut down malls and shopping centers to all religious and political pamphleters and solicitors took place in 1973.

So in 1972 there was no court ruling. And so the malls were just letting the devotees come out in their dhotis. And the word came down from San Francisco that these malls are ten times bigger than door to door. It's just like having door to door come to you. It's like people coming to you instead of you going to them. So then we started breaking into the malls and the stores. And then we realized that in addition to the Krsna Books we could take out the paperback books like Easy Journey to Other Planets and Krsna Consciousness, the Topmost Yoga System. So in this way book distribution was beginning to take place.

Then in 1972 Prabhupada came to America and he came to Los Angeles and he was very very pleased that the book distribution was beginning to take off like this. And this was the second time I had seen Prabhupada. At that time he was traveling with his secretary, Syamasundar, and every day they were giving...they were having this philosophy class in Prabhupada's quarters. And different devotees would go up every day to hear the philosophical presentation by Syamasundar of the western philosophers and Prabhupada's reply. And I remember right at this time, in order to organize the book distribution, Karandhar and I developed a central warehouse and accounting system for the first time. And we presented this to Prabhupada and he said that this is revolutionary.

He said something to the effect that this is the...here's the exact

quote, no, this is not the exact quote, but this is similar to the kind of thing Prabhupada was saying at this period: “Do not hesitate in using your American intelligence in order to distribute these books. That is Krsna’s gift to you so please utilize it.” Prabhupada thought this warehouse system and central accounting system was going to greatly enhance his book distribution program. And the basic system was we would have a warehouse in Los Angeles and a second warehouse in New York where ISKCON Press was still printing the paperback books. The big books were being printed by Dai Nippon in Japan.

And Prabhupada had actually gone to Dai Nippon himself and impressed them so much that he personally got them to give us the credit which we needed because we had no money at the time to print. The first printing was based on Prabhupada personally going there. So we had the warehouse system in Los Angeles and New York, we would have a manager of each warehouse, the plan was ultimately to have 5 warehouses. And there would be central accounting from one office in Los Angeles and central ordering from one office in Los Angeles. And then the Los Angeles office would release, would give the instructions to the warehouses to release the books. It was a very efficient and up to this point nothing so efficient had existed.

## **Establishment of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (BBT)**

So Prabhupada was extremely happy. And it was right around this time, 1972, that Prabhupada actually formed legally the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. He wrote the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust agreement in which he turned over all the rights of publishing and distributing his books, all royalties to this Trust. And himself and Karandhar and Bali Mardan were the first trustees. This is I think in May of '72. So my second meeting with Prabhupada was just

seeing him give the classes in the morning and knowing that he was having these classes upstairs in his quarters.

It put me in so much anxiety. I wanted to much to attend these meetings. But Karandhar instructed me that it's a much higher service to serve the order of the spiritual master in separation. So every day, practically with tears in my eyes, I would run off to the BBT warehouse, fill the orders and ship the books to the temples. So during this period we would be calling up temples all over the movement, especially in America and Canada, very inspiring and exciting BBT newsletters were being written by Karandhar at that time to enthuse the entire Society to take this up. The mood was just go out and present the book, the book sells itself. There's no trick, there's no gimmick, there's nothing you have to plan, don't waste any time, just try it and you'll see.

## **Discovery of traveling sankirtan**

Also in 1972 we discovered the third major breakthrough in book distribution which was traveling sankirtana. And the way this was discovered was that some of our brahmacaris were seeing that they were getting too entangled in the whole temple morning program, a late prasadam breakfast, and so on and so on. And so they proposed that they would take a vehicle and fill it up with Krsna Books and drive to an area where it takes too long to drive back and forth every day from but within the city. And just camp out there for a week. So this was so exciting. No one had ever done this, a party camping out from a temple.

And I remember every night they would call in and tell us how they had done and they would tell us the things they would need. They would ask for someone to bring out the maha-prasadam, someone to bring out Tulasi leaves, different things like that, it was very exciting. And by the end of 1972 we had become convinced that traveling sankirtana produced even bigger results than the door to

door program or the mall program. Because the brahmacaris would be so much more absorbed since there was absolutely nothing else to think about. The whole concentration of the program was book dis-tribution, and everything else served that purpose.

## Sankirtan Newsletters

**Ramesvara:** So in this way we would send out newsletters, trying to explain all of our discoveries and realizations how to make everyone feel that book distribution is the number one priority, how to organize the traveling parties. And so by the end of 1972 there were quite a number of temples that were involved in book distribution.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Would Prabhupada get those newsletters also?

**Ramesvara:** Yes. Every one of those newsletters were sent to Prabhupada and some of the newsletters had quotes from Prabhupada's comments from the previous newsletter. And also some direct replies were mailed by Prabhupada to Karandhar. So if one checks the Karandhar file of newsletters, 1971-1972, that he mailed out and if one checks the Prabhupada letters that Prabhupada mailed to Karandhar, 1971-1972, you'll see exactly what Prabhupada's response was and the whole mood of book distribution in those days. It was extremely euphoric to say the least.

Actually the devotees acted as if they were intoxicated. Coming back from a day of door to door sankirtana selling 5 Krsna Books, we considered that there was no higher ecstasy. We considered that this ecstasy wasn't even available in the heavenly planets. That even the demigods would be envious of such ecstasies. And we used to write newsletters to that effect. There's one especially that would be very nice to refer to February 11, 1972, the BBT newsletter that Karandhar wrote and the date of the traveling sankirtana letter, March 10th, 1972. These were the dates.

In March, 1972 we wrote a newsletter explaining to the Society our discovery of traveling sankirtana. In February we wrote that newsletter explaining to the Society the intoxicating euphoric ecstasy of just going out and distributing Krsna Books, placing a Krsna Book in someone's hand, the unimaginable, miraculous, overwhelming consideration that on some conditioned soul's coffee table in his living room a Krsna Book would be found. So we were actually very very excited. We were acting like young boys, just we were losing actual gravity, we were losing control of ourselves in our excitement.

## **Discovery of the Christmas Marathon**

The big breakthrough came at the end of 1972. The previous year we took advantage of the Christmas season by selling Krsna Books door to door. But it did not dawn on any person in the Society how significant the Christmas season was for book selling. The book distribution increased in the 1971 Christmas distribution by only 20%. So it didn't have an astonishing effect. But by the end of 1972 we were literally intoxicated with the idea of going out on sankirtana. The ecstasy was so great that devotees from all different departments would finish their work and at the end of the evening they would all crowd into the sankirtana office in Los Angeles just to observe devotees in ecstasy coming back from sankirtana, telling sankirtana stories, reading out loud Prabhupada's books, honoring maha-prasadam, laughing like madmen. Literally laughing like madmen.

You don't see anything like that today. It seemed to us that Lord Caitanya was actually causing us to be in extraordinary ecstasy in order to establish book distribution. We had that feeling. So by the end of 1972 we had three programs going. We had door to door going, we had the store program going and we had the traveling parties going. And I remember it was on December 22nd



that we accidentally discovered the Christmas marathon. It was in Los Angeles. We were sending all the devotees to department stores'. And discount stores. And they would stand in front of them, in front of the entrance and exit doors with their dhotis, and mainly they would distribute Back to Godheads and small books and collect donations. We noticed a great increase in the number of people going, the store hours were staying...the stores were staying open till sometimes midnight.

I remember the very first day, December 22nd, 1972, I was standing in front of this Burbank Zody's. And we were having this huge transcendental competition. This was very much a part of the early book distribution. We were in those days giving all kinds of transcendental prizes and turning it into a whole wonderful sporting, competitive event. The top book distributors would get the nectar Deity pictures. Or nectar pictures of Prabhupada coming from India, which in those days were so rare. Or even more popular, the top devotee of the week would get the maha plate, the lunch maha plate for an entire week, for the following week. And every day he would arrange his schedule so that he would come back from sankirtana to eat the Deity plate, that was directly on the altar, and then go back out. So we had all kinds of competi-tions and prizes.

So going into this December, we were having in-tense competitions in Los Angeles. And it was building up to a feverish pitch. So I had been dropped off at this store in Burbank which is called Zody's. And I had brought with me 400 magazines, two boxes. And by 2 o'clock in the afternoon I realized I was going to run out of magazines within about an hour. So I was in so much anxiety. I was practically shaking uncontrollably, I was in that much anxiety. I called up the temple and I got Karandhar on the phone and I started crying and I begged him, "Please, you have to find somebody to drive all the way up here with another two cases of maga-zines. Because I'm going to run out in a hour."

And Karandhar told me that there's no one around but he'll try to

find someone. I was so insistent and so overwhelmingly pleading with him that he agreed to do it. That was rarely done. I'd never heard of it before that someone would actually come out from the temple to refill a distributor who had run out of literatures. So by around 6 or 7 o'clock in the evening this very elderly devotee named Usik driving at about 20 miles an hour finally pulls up, or maybe it was Madhukanta. Yeah, it was Madhukanta, it was Karandhar's secretary, Madhukanta. And I had been out of literature for four hours and I was in so much anxiety that the conditioned souls weren't getting their literatures and I wasn't going to win the competition for that day.

And I remember Madhukanta drove up, got out of the car, waved his hand, "Hi, Ramesvara. " Before he even said a word I had jumped into the front seat, grabbed the keys out of the ignition, ran to the trunk, threw him a nasty glance, I was so mad at him for coming so late, whipped open the trunk, hurled the boxes out on the sidewalk, ripped them open with my bare hands, and I just started distributing. And he was just dazed. I was so feverish. And he just got in his car and started driving back to the temple at 20 miles an hour. So that night by around 10 o'clock I had collected about \$350 and I had distributed about 650 magazines. And I was convinced that this was the new world's record in ISKCON and nobody was possibly going to beat me this day. And even though the store was still open till 12, it started slowing off and I was thinking, "Maybe I should go back. Undoubtedly everybody's back already. Nobody's ever stayed out past 8 o'clock. And they'll all be waiting up for me. And I shouldn't keep them waiting up. "

So in this way my mind was convincing me to go back. So by 11 o'clock the store was completely dead. I got in the car and started driving back. And on the way back I passed this other Zody's called Hollywood Zody's on Sunset and Western. And I was torn. Because that store was crowded and it was going till midnight. Should I stop? Then due to false ego I decided, "No, I'd rather be a hero and be the champion and let everyone know it." So I just kept on driving. So I

finally arrived at the temple at about 10 to 12 and I burst into the sankirtana room and the only person there was Madhukanta. And I said, "Oh, no, everyone went to bed?" And he said, "No, nobody's back yet." I was the first one back!

That was the discovery of the first Christmas marathon. It was completely unplanned, no one had ever instructed anyone to stay out that late. We just did it spontaneously. The whole mood of book distribution in those days was just completely spontaneous. We were pioneering. Everything was a new discovery, a new experience, a new ecstasy. And we were feeling that Prabhupada was so pleased and that was the motivation. We were literally intoxicated and we took that to be the mercy that you get when you please your spiritual master. We were literally giddy over this book distribution.

So that night by around 1:30 when all the devotees had finally come back and counted up, this one girl Manjuali had beaten me for the day because she had stayed out till her store closed while I didn't. We were so overwhelmed. No one had ever distributed this many books before in the history of our movement. A big day was considered like 25 to 40 books, Krsna Books. We were distributing something in the area of 5 or 6,000 literatures a day for a three day period. It's unimaginable that one...The entire printing of Back to Godhead was something like 15 or 20,000 copies a month. So here was one temple distributing almost 18,000 literatures in just three days. Just such a quantum leap from everything that had ever happened before in ISKCON this Christmas marathon.

Anyway at 1:30 in the morning we were all sitting around looking at the sankirtana map. We couldn't sleep, we were so agitated to go back out. Where can we find any conditioned souls? So we woke up Karandhar by our noise and our laughter, raucous laughter like some drunken party. And he came stumbling in, wiping the sleep out of his eyes. And when he saw us and realized what was going on and looked at the sacks of laxmi, he just burst out laughing and

he sent us all to bed, told us, “Get ready for tomorrow. ” So this way we performed this three day marathon, 22nd, 23rd and 24th, December 1972. And we wrote a letter to Srila Prabhupada.

This was the first letter I’d ever written to Prabhupada. On December 27th, 1972, explaining to Prabhupada a little bit about Christmas in America and I wrote, “I beg to accept the shelter of your lotus feet and learn how to discharge devotional service from you, obeying your orders with faith and devotion. At the end of the three days, the Los Angeles devotees had distributed more than 17,100 literatures including more than 13,000 Back to Godheads. We also collected more than \$9,500 for your book fund and more than 350 softbound Bhagavad-gitas from the Macmillan Company were sold.”

So Prabhupada wrote me back a letter on January 9th which is the first letter I ever got from Prabhupada. 1973 This letter is the first real response from Prabhupada to the book distribution explosion. Actually when Prabhupada got my letter, I later learned, he was so astonished, he sent a telegram to Brahmananda Maharaja who was in Africa saying, “I can’t believe this news. Do you realize what happened?” Prabhupada was so happy, he was calling different secretaries, informing them of this amazing event, that 17,100 literatures had just been sold by one group of devotees in just three days in one city. So this letter is in the files.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Where was he?

**Ramesvara:** Prabhupada was in Bombay. “I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated December 27th, 1972, and with great happiness I have read your figures of the amounts of books sold during three-day period, December 22nd-24th, 1972. It is scarcely believable that more than 17,100 books could have been sold by one temple in three days time! That indicates to me that people are at last becoming serious...”

He goes on to describe how unique his books are and then he praises the devotees, “the boys and girls in Los Angeles and all over the

world who are understanding and appreciating this unique quality of our transcendental literature and voluntarily they are going out to distribute despite all circumstances of difficulty. By this effort alone they are assured to go back to home, back to Godhead.” And he goes on to praise the distribution of transcendental knowledge as the highest service to humanity. So getting a letter like this gave us just a tremendous impetus to dedicate our entire life and soul to book distribution. He told us in this letter than by just going out and making the effort you’re assured of going back to Godhead. He gave us a guarantee to go back to Godhead.

## **Tripurari joins the temple and energizes the book distribution**

The next thing that happened in our book distribution was that this incredible devotee named Tripurari joined our temple. And seeing the ecstasy and the mood of the sankirtana devotees, even though he was a householder, he immediately wanted to join the sankirtana party. He started going to the supermarket right across the street from the temple and was selling a phenomenal number of Easy Journey to Other Planets every day. No one had ever sold so many little paperback books. Then he started going out to all the private department stores and discount houses and teaching the devotees how to distribute little paperback books at these stores. And we were writing letters to Prabhupada about the results. And now we were distributing sometimes 2,000 books a week and it was becoming very steady. It was becoming established.

There was a routine. You like the morning prasadam, you go out all day, no lunch, you come back in the evening for evening maha-prasadam. And you spend the whole day out at these stores distributing. So we had gotten into a routine. We had a regular sankirtana party, sankirtana spots, vehicles, the whole organization of san-kirtana just naturally fell into place. In March of 1973,

Prabhupada arrived in Los Angeles. Now at this time, every day I would type up a report about the sankirtana scores and the latest nectar, who went out, how much they distributed, and like the best sankirtana story of the day. And who was supposed to go out the next day. I would type this up every night and post it on the boards outside the prasadam room so all the devotees in the temple would know what's going on. So when Prabhupada arrived, I thought of giving these daily reports to his secretary and I think it was Sruti Kirti. His servant was Sruti Kirti and I think his secretary was Brahmananda Swami. So late at night we would present to Prabhupada a daily report.

## **The discovery of airport sankirtan**

Now it was just at this time that we had discovered airport sankirtana. The discovery of airport sankirtana is very interesting. The discovery of big book distribution outside of the door to door method or the going to a store and selling 5 or 7 big books a day took place in early '73. There was a lecture being given at the University of Long Beach by an impersonalist named Baba Ramdas I think his name is, the man that wrote that book, Be Here Now. So we sent Tripurari Maharaja, Vrndavana Vilasini, Lilasakti, Mukanlal and his wife Tilak. And Tripurari Maharaja had this idea that the people going would be spiritually inclined. So they took the Macmillan Bhagavad-gitas with them. We'd never gone to a special event like that and it was an evening event.

I remember when they came back. It was in the middle of Bhagavad-gita class. I was giving the class in the temple room and all of a sudden like lightening the door bursts open and there they are standing there. They were all in...Tripurari Maharaja was in his western clothes and the girls were in their saris and they just ran into the temple. And you could see that something very very special had taken place because their faces were glowing. They couldn't

even speak, they were just like dazed or stunned. And Tripurari Maharaja ran up to the Gaura-Nitai altar and just pulled out this brahmana thread, practically sliding to the altar on his knees and just started chanting gayatri.

And the whole temple was getting agitated to hear the news. So we finished the class very quickly and we ran up to him and he told us that he had just distributed something like 17 Bhagavad-gitas, the full unabridged Gitas, 1,000 page paperback Gita, he just distributed 17 of them in 2 hours. And Lilasakti had done 13 and Vrndavana had done about 11 and Tilak did about 11 and Mukanlal did about 9. Nothing like this had ever been done before. And we were just astonished that you could sell big books like that to people.

Shortly after that experience, when I was driving to sankirtana, down the San Diego freeway, seeing the sign to the Los Angeles airport, Tripurari Mahraja just decided, "Oh, why don't I just try that?" Because the whole mood of sankirtana was just go out anywhere and try it. Just try anything. The world was a lark, we could go anywhere, do anything we wanted. So in that mood, that spontaneous mood, he went into the Los Angeles airport. Of course at that time it was illegal for anybody to be selling anything there. So he would have to sneak in, sneak out. And he had such a wonderful experience the first day, he sold about 10 or 15 books. He realized people are traveling, they have money, they have leisure time, and so on, it was the perfect place to distribute books.

Not only that, but the books distributed at the airport would go all over the world to towns and villages and cities where we don't have temples and aren't going to for many years. Let the books enter first. So the realization of distributing books at a transportation terminal like an airport and later it expanded to the bus terminals and the train terminals and even eventually it got down to the docks, so the realization of distributing books to transportational terminals as being like a hub where the world passes right in front of you. And you can distribute to people from cities and nations of all over

the world. So this was intoxicating, this idea that we could reach the world from one place. So we started going to the airport. And it was very daring. The mood of this type of sankirtana was very adventurous and daring and bold. You had to go in western clothes wearing a wig.

The police would be looking for you so you'd have to not let them see you. Sometimes we would stand in a line waiting to buy a ticket and distribute to the people in front of us and behind us. And as soon as we would get close to the ticket teller, we would just move to the back of another line and repeat the same thing. And the guards would be seeing people carrying the books and they'd be looking for the person who was selling them and they could never find them. It was almost like some *yogamaya*. At one point in Los Angeles airport, all the police and all the security guards would be looking for the airport distributors. We never had any arrests. It was...they were almost invisible. It was a mystical thing. And they would produce unbelievable scores.

## **Distributing many books at the same time**

Now at this time the first six volumes of the Srimad-Bhagavatam from Dai Nippon had arrived. And so we were distributing all six at a time, each book for \$5. Somebody would give a \$30 donation and he would walk away with 6 books in his hand. The 1.1, the 1.2, the 1.3, the 2.1, the 2.2, and the 3.1. And the idea of distributing an entire set of Bhagavatams at one time was pioneered in Los Angeles airport and the news flashed all over the world that we're doing 6 Bhagavatams at a time. And it was just the most...another breakthrough, another intoxicating idea, another discovery. That you could get that kind of donation from people and get them to actually walk away with all those books. So it got to the point where the devotees were up to 30, 40, 50 big books a day per devotee. It



used to be an entire temple on its best day would do that. Now one man was doing that.

So this was the mood and this was what was going on when Prabhupada arrived in March, '73.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** How were you feeling that that increasing understanding and what was going on? Were you actually realizing that that was what Prabhupada had in mind all along? How were devotees relating that?

**Ramesvara:** Our realization was that Prabhupada is empowering his surrendered disciples that they could sell any of his books to any type of person. In the beginning we were very conditional about who we could approach, who we could sell the books to. But as we experimented and practiced, we realized that Prabhupada was actually empowering us. Because the ecstasy that we were feeling from the distribution, we always, and there was never a time when we did not understand, we always understood that that ecstasy is coming from Prabhupada. That is a little drop of Prabhupada's pleasure that his books are being distributed to these fallen souls. And the devotees were in so much ecstasy. And more than anything else it was that ecstasy that kept the thing going and kept bringing the devotees to one discovery after another, one experiment...and being bold. No one thought of taking 6 books at a time and presenting it to a person. But there was so much ecstasy, that you felt you could do anything. That was the mood.

You could do anything, you could get away with practically anything for Prabhupada. You could stick 6 books in somebody's hand and get him to buy them. That kind of boldness didn't exist one year ago. The ecstasy of book distribution had increased within such a short period of time. Actually just from the time of the Christmas marathon '72 to March '73 we were already up to that. And all the credit was being given to Prabhupada.

## **Prabhupada inspires the book distributors**

Everyone felt completely connected to Prabhupada. And that's what we preached to get other devotees around the movement to take it up. That there's no better way to be connected to Prabhupada. He's given his life to printing, to writing them, we should give our life to distributing them. It was the perfect relationship. So in March '73 we started giving these reports to Prabhupada, these daily reports that we were typing up. Every night. I was too shy to present them personally. So I would go to Prabhupada's quarters and at the bottom of the stairs I would give them to either Brahmananda Maharaja or Sruti Kirti.

They would bring them up to Prabhupada who would be lying down taking his evening massage. And during massage Sruti Kirti would be massaging and Brahmananda would be reading. And I would wait at the bottom of the stairs for their reply. What did Prabhupada say? How did he react? What did he think? Any drop of nectar. We were hanging, we were at any word, we were living for Prabhupada's pleasure. That was our mood. We were just Prabhupada's men, we were intoxicated in...we were experiencing love for Prabhupada. We would do anything for him. And any word that he would send us we would cherish it as the greatest treasure. That was the mood. So I would wait up, usually till about 11 or 11:30 to get the report when they were finished massaging Prabhupada. And some of the reports were so sublime. At first Prabhupada would just laugh and chuckle.

Once he asked, "Who is this boy Ramesvara?" I went into ecstasy when I heard that. Prabhupada's finally...not finally but Prabhupada knows I exist. Just that thought that he knows I exist put me in ecstasy. And one day Sruti Kirti told me that they were reading the report to Prabhupada and he entered into a state of ecstasy. In his bed his eyes were closed as he was hearing the report and he was

literally rolling from one side on his back all the way to the other and back and forth, rolling from side to side on his back. And these were ecstatic emotions. And Prabhupada with his eyes closed, the ocean of smile, oceanic smile, he said with his eyes closed almost in trance, “We will smash all the bogus yogis and incarnations,” as he was hearing of his books being distributed. And when we heard that, we were just stunned to hear of Prabhupada being in so much ecstasy over this humble service that we were rendering.

We felt so much reciprocation, it increased our love so much. It increased our commitment and our praying to dedicate our life to book distribution so much. It was so important that Prabhupada acknowledged and encouraged us. Otherwise we couldn't have gone on. We were doing it for him. And every time he made a gesture, wrote a letter, made any statement at all about it, it increased it 10,000 times the mood. So finally on March 20th, 1973, Prabhupada took one of those sheets of paper and in his own hand writing wrote a note back to us and told them, “Give this back to them.” He knew the effect it would have would be electric.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** You were the only one waiting downstairs?

**Ramesvara:** No, I would be the only one waiting. Everyone would be asleep. And the note said, “My dear boys and girls, you are working so hard for broadcasting the glories of Lord Krsna's lotus feet and thus my Guru Maharaja will be so pleased upon you. Certainly my Guru Maharaja will bestow his blessings thousand times more than me. And that is my satisfaction. All glories to the assembled devotees. A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami.” Then, underneath that he wrote, “N. B. Everyone should go with the sankirtana party as soon as possible.” And then he dated it 20. 3. 73. So when we got this, we were determined to get every person in the temple out on sankirtana. We went wild. It was a great time.

Actually during one of Prabhupada's classes, during that visit, one of his Bhagavatam classes, it was the most astonishing class, it had

a tremendous impact on the sankirtana. I remember I wrote the exhort of it in my BBT newsletter. It was a class describing how one who glorifies Krsna, one who engages in Krsnakathamrta, he becomes eternal. He becomes free from the influence of Yamaraja. In this class Prabhupada explained how at the time of death of a devotee the devotee is not dying at all. It's just like going to sleep for a little while and when you wake up you open your eyes and standing right in front of you is Krsna and you're in the spiritual world. And the way Prabhupada was speaking in this class, the whole temple room was mesmerized. It was such an electric class. So in the middle of the class, Prabhupada starts talking about the Bhagavatam.

And he starts saying that there is nothing like it, there is no literature anywhere in the world like the Bhagavatam. There is no comparison, there is no competition. He began speaking like that. And after describing the Bhagavatam he said, "Therefore, we are instructing all of our students, distribute books, distribute books, distribute books. Greater mrdunga." Then he explained the example of the mrdunga. "Somehow or other it is going from door to door, from hand to hand. If they even touch it they are benefited, such is the great greatness of the Srimad-Bhagavatam." So he went on and on talking like this right in the middle of a lecture and I and Tripurari Maharaja were standing. Tripurari wasn't sannyasa yet. We were standing right next to Prabhupada on his vyasasana and we just froze. And the whole temple room froze. And everybody was looking at us and looking at Prabhupada. And there was such an amazing relationship going on.

We were just, we were beyond speechlessness, we were just hearing the words of the person that we loved and were ready to sacrifice our life for speaking so heavily about distributing books. That lecture was a turning point in terms of the mood of the temple and the mood of the sankirtana in general. And we immediately published that lecture and sent it out in the BBT newsletter all over the world. So the BBT newsletter was also drumming up the

support. Karandhar had started it and at this point he was letting me continue it. Then the next thing that happened was in late July of 1973. By now the Krsna trilogies had arrived.

## The Mayapur-Vrndavana Trust

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** One thing on that chapter. It says here Prabhupada started the Mayapur-Vrndavana Trust Fund then. Do you know...

**Ramesvara:** Yes. The exact same time that Prabhupada prepared the BBT Trust agreement with Karandhar and a lawyer, the lawyer is related to this devotee named Sruti dasa. Right at that time, Prabhupada prepared the Mayapur-Vrndavana Trust agreement. They were both prepared at the same time, the original trustees were Gopal Krsna, Karandhar and Atreya Rsi. But I wasn't really connected with that at that point so I don't have anything to say about it. It was just something the temples were supposed to give monthly donations to.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** But he didn't connect it to like being a natural expansion of the book distribution?

**Ramesvara:** Nope. We couldn't think of anything but book distribution. It was the number one activity. Nobody had ever been to India, nobody had ever been to Mayapur. We didn't know anything about it and although we had heard about the world headquarters, nobody that I knew had too much realization about it. We were caught up, swept away by the waves of the ecstatic book distribution. Because every time you turned around, every month something new was happening, something bigger. Literally, practically every month some new level had been achieved that had never been achieved before.

## **Paperback Krsna books and concert sankirtan**

So later in 1973 with these paperback Krsna trilogies, this was another breakthrough. The paperback Krsna book with George Harrison's introduction. We had already become so absorbed in distributing Krsna Books. Now the paperbacks, we were distributing them three at a time. Everybody was getting the entire Krsna Book set all at once. It was during this period in the summer of '73 that we made another discovery.

We discovered distributing books at a concert. And this was another one of those accidental discoveries. I was distributing in my dhoti the Krsna trilogies in front of this bookstore on Hollywood Boulevard called Pickwicks. And it was the end of the day, about 5 o'clock and I was finished distributing. It was a Saturday. I was running the BBT warehouse by now so I can only go out on the weekends. So I distributed about 70 trilogies that day, 70 individual books and this devotee, elderly devotee named Usik came to pick me up.

And we were driving home and he was weaving from Hollywood Boulevard to Sunset and he came up behind a place that I'd never heard of before called the Hollywood Palladium. And there was a huge crowd of people in this huge parking lot, running out of their cars and lining up. And when I saw it, I just spontaneously wanted to jump out. And I told Usik to stop the car, stop the car. And I was literally holding on to the window, the closed window, "Stop the car!" It was so funny that it reminded Usik of a dog, you know, like seeing his master and clawing at a window. And he said, "O.K., down Rover, down Rover. It'll just be a minute, I'll let you out." He made a joke like that. So I jumped out of the car, I ran to the trunk and I had two shoulder bags, these big ugly brown shoulder bags and my dhoti. And I filled one bag up with packs of incense and the other bag up with Krsna trilogies.

I stuffed about 35 or 40 trilogies, as many as I could carry. And I told him, "Just go back to the temple. I don't know what this is, I'm going to work the line and I'll call you as soon as I'm done." And he just said, "All right." It was a big annoyance that he would have to go all the way back and then come back out again, but he agreed. I just ran up to the line and just started working my way down the line. I found out it was a concert and everybody wanted to buy incense. And as soon as I told them about George Harrison and the Krsna Books, everyone wanted to buy one of those. And within an hour I had sold every book in my bag and I still had some incense left so I kept collecting with the incense.

So we had discovered concerts. And so all during the summer we were now sending out our troupes to go to these concerts. And we had these girls that could go out and in hours they could sell 300 Krsna Book paperbacks. They were so fast. They would run up to cars in the parking lot and there would be 5 or 6 people in the car. And they would just go right up to the driver before they could get anybody out and they'd say, "Here's one for you, here's one for you, here's one for you," they'd give everybody a book in the car. Then, "Now what volume do you have? Volume 1? And what do you have? 3? And you've got 2? O.K., you need a 2, you need a 3," and they would just start loading everyone up. And they would sell to cars like that. And it was incredible, it was just incredible.

Then later that summer, Tripurari had made another discovery. He went to a concert at the same Hollywood Palladium and he was working the line. And the line kept getting closer and closer to the door. And before he knew it he was right at the door. And just spontaneously he bought a ticket and went in. And he got inside and the people, the guards told him, "Just leave your bags here. You can't carry things like this inside the concert." So they made him take off his two book bags which were full of books. He was wearing western clothes. So he snuck back while they were busy taking people's tickets and stole his book bags and he went in-side the hall of the concert and just sold out both book bags full of books.

So in this way the fever was building with these paperback Krsna Books. And then we wrote a letter to Prabhupada in late July, July 29th, 1973, explaining to Prabhupada how we were distributing every week in Los Angeles at least 2,000 Krsna volumes a week and how like one day we distributed 600 books in just one day at a con-cert, a new world's record and so on. And then we told Prabhupada, at that time we had decided to send Tripurari to another temple. I can't remember, I think it was New York. Yes, it was New York, and then right after that it was Chicago.

And this was the first time we were ever sending out a devotee from one temple to another temple to train up people in the other temple in the art of distributing books. So we mentioned that to Prabhupada, that we're sending out our best men, our best distributors to train others and that Karandhar...I wrote to Prabhupada, "Karandhar said that this is the mercy of Sri Sri Rukmini-Dvarakadhisa, that we can send out so many devotees to other centers. It is the real opulence of New Dvaraka." And we prayed for his blessings that this program of sending out our best men would work.

So Prabhupada wrote a letter to me in August 3rd; '73, in response to this. And I take this letter as one of the most important letters and important instructions that Prabhupada ever gave, at least to me. And he writes in here, "There is no doubt about it, to distribute books is our most important activity. The temple is a place not for eating and sleep-ing but as a base from which we send out our soldiers to fight with maya. Fight with maya means to drop thousands and millions of books into the lap of the conditioned souls. Just like during wartime the bombs are raining from the sky like anything." And then to encourage me Prabhupada said, "So you are the expert in this field." And he said he noted the contents of my letter with great pleasure.



## **Book distributors wearing western clothes**

So whenever Prabhupada wrote those things to me I knew they were just to encourage me. But even though I knew they weren't real, they were just to encourage me, I did become very encouraged. And then he wrote, "I like also your program of sending out your best men to teach the others. That is the actual process of Krsna consciousness, to train others. Continue this program so that in the future every devotee in our movement will know the art of distribut-ing books. This is approved by me." So these were the kind of letters that were coming from Prabhupada and we were now into late '73, early '74. There was a big controversy at the end of '73 about whether our men will become contaminated by wearing western clothes and wigs. And Prabhupada decided at the end of the controversy that it was approved. And he wrote his purports in the Caitanya-caritamrta about wearing western clothes, how it's a spiritual principle.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** It has here that he would have been there during the Christmas marathon of '73. December 2nd to January 13th of '73.

## **Karandhar (first BBT manager) bleeps**

**Ramesvara:** No, it's impossible, that's impossible, because at the end of 1973 Karandhar bleeped and Prabhupada was in Hawaii. And Jayatirtha and myself flew in a state of shock to Prabhupada and we landed there in January of '74, the first week of January to tell Prabhupada.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** January 14th he's in Hawaii.

**Ramesvara:** No, he couldn't have been in Los Angeles when Karandhar was bleeping. Oh, yeah, he might have been in Los An-

geles briefly on his way somewhere and Karandhar was driving him around. But Karandhar did bloop at the end of '73 and Prabhupada was not there when he blooped. So there's something wrong with your dates there. So the event of Karandhar's leaving was of course a major incident in my relationship with Prabhupada.

## **Ramesvara becomes BBT manager**

Because I had been the only other devotee working with Karandhar on developing the BBT from '71 till the end of '73. So it was natural that Prabhupada asked me to carry on or to take over Karandhar's duties since I was the most familiar with them. And previously under his direction I had arranged for all of Prabhupada's books to be copyrighted legally. So I had a little experience dealing with some legal aspects of the BBT. So in January '74 when Jayatirtha and I flew to see Prabhupada he was in a hotel. Bali Mardan was there, his Chinese wife was there, and I can't remember when they got married, it must have been in '73. Prabhupada did that wedding in '73 in Los Angeles. I don't think it's worth putting in the book so I won't talk about it. Well, that's up to Gurupada. If he ever wants to know the details of how the wedding was arranged, I can give him all the details.

So Jayatirtha introduced me to Prabhupada. Actually in terms of my personally being with Prabhupada and meeting with him, there was a morning walk in '73 when Prabhupada smashed me. This isn't really going to make it in the book as a major thing. But he did smash me. It was my first morning walk with Prabhupada and Jayatirtha had brought me along. I had always been too shy. I was always writing the notes to Prabhupada and the letters. But Jayatirtha brought me along, he wanted interesting conversations for Prabhupada's entertainment and pleasure. That was the mood on the morning walks. So I started telling Prabhupada book distribution stories, how we're meeting all these especially bogus

impersonalists and tricking all of them into taking his Bhagavad-gita and Srimad-Bhagavatam. So Prabhupada turned very gravely and stopped and he said, "What do you say to them?"

And then I explained to him how we get them to take his books. And then Prabhupada said, "Is that all you say to them?" And I said, "Well, yes, because we want to go as quickly as possible to distribute as many as possible. We just say a little bit, get them to take the book." and he cut me short and said, "Don't you know my books? Don't you know how to preach?" And it was getting very heavy. And then Prabhupada said, "Do you ever attend classes? Don't you read my books?" So at that time I was literally a fanatical person for every...I used to give every evening class and half the morning classes. So I told Prabhupada I attended those classes. regularly and that's how I studied his books. So then Prabhupada said, "Do you know this verse?" And he quoted a Sanskrit verse.

Now the Macmillan Gita had only come out a few months ago and very few devotees in our movement knew any Sanskrit verses. So everyone on the morning walk felt great sympathy for me because none of them knew the verse either. I mean, nobody knew verses. But Prabhupada just said, "Do you know this verse?" And then I said, "No, Srila Prabhupada." And he just was very silent and then he looked away from me and he just went on walking and said, "Our men need to study our books." So after that I was so terrified and I felt so unworthy. So I didn't get that physically close to Prabhupada during that year.

But in '74 after Karandhar blooped, Jayatirtha and I had to fly to Prabhupada. Of course Prabhupada knew me from the letters that he was writing. So Jayatirtha told Prabhupada something about my background, that I was a lifetime celibate, that I had never had any relations with women. And Prabhupada told me that if I can maintain that then it's guaranteed that I will get some great blessing from Krsna. And he was encouraging me to always remain brahmachari. And how Prabhupada took the news

of Karandhar's leaving, Karandhar was a big man, big leader in ISKCON. Prabhupada didn't seem to be phased. In 1970 when the sannyasis left, Prabhupada cried. But Prabhupada wasn't phased, he was silent.

What he was feeling, he kept it internally, he didn't show emotion. He listened to the report, he heard how he had been falling down and how he couldn't go on and he just kept asking us, "So, what is to be done now? How will things go on?" So we proposed that Jayatirtha would cover his GBC duties and I would cover his BBT duties and Prabhupada approved. And so that was the changing point in my relationship with Prabhupada. All of a sudden I was now the manager of the BBT that was printing all of his books. So at this point my letters to Prabhupada include all kinds of BBT business. Now in the spring of 1974, Prabhupada came to Los Angeles again, do you have that? That date? I have him definitely coming in the spring of '74.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** July.

**Ramesvara:** O. K., so maybe it was July then.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** 8th to 15th, right after San Francisco Rathayatra.

**Ramesvara:** Right, O. K. So then before that then, that's July. So before that I wrote letters to Prabhupada in April. This was the first time that an annual report of sale of books from the American BBT had ever been issued. And we reported that over 4 million books had been sold to the temples in one year. Over 4 million literatures in one year had been distributed. And also in April of '74 another very major event took place.

## **BBT Library Party & selling full sets as standing orders**

In March of '74 was the first GBC meeting in Mayapur and at that time Hridayananda Maharaja had been assigned the field of South America. So Hridayananda Maharaja, up to that point for the last 6 months had been in charge of a small book distribution party in America that consisted of himself, Ganasam who is now Bhaktitirtha, and Mahabuddhi. And Hridayananda Maharaja had designed a catalogue for library and mainly for college professors. And he had this idea to sell Prabhupada's books to the academic world. So when he got transferred to South America, he and I were very close friends and I had been helping him finance some of his things, his catalogue, I had been giving him the books, so he asked me to take over his party and watch over it.

So in April I had this idea that since they're already going to the libraries and the professors and they're, already presenting Prabhupada's books, why not present the idea of buying the whole set like an encyclopedia? So I called up the boys and they got pretty excited about the idea and I asked them to try it. So they tried it and in late April they called me up after about a week or two. And they gave me the most astonishing report I had ever received in my life. And the significance of their success I got a glimpse of. And I was just overwhelmed. And that very day, as soon as they hung up the phone I typed the letter to Prabhupada. And I gave him a detailed report on April 28th, 1974, about this party which I called the BBT Library Traveling Party. And I don't know if this letter is in the files but this was a very important letter. Prabhupada used to pull this letter out and have it read to his guests who were taking his darsanas in the evenings. He very much liked this letter.

The highlights of it are, "I have wonderful news from our BBT Library Traveling Party. They have only been working on library book distribution for several weeks and already they have taken

orders from 2 important college libraries for the entire set of Srimad-Bhagavatam and Caitanya-caritamrta. The main objective of the party is to take orders from libraries for books not yet in print on the basis of the books we have already published. Yale University and Temple University in New Haven, Connecticut and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania respectively have now ordered 60 volumes of Your Divine Grace's Bhagavatam set and Yale also ordered 12 volumes of Your Divine Grace's Caitanya-caritamrta set." At that time we thought the Caitanya-caritamrta would be 12 volumes.

"In addition they are making important contacts among big professors. Professor Hein of Yale has personally purchased many of your books from them and is presently preparing a bibliography on Indian philosophy books in the English language for all college professors and wants to include all your books. He will give us a separate letter recommending these books and intends to use your Nectar of Devotion in his class. He is well known in his field and is close friends with Professor Dimmock. Professor Bibhuti Yadav(?) is the head of the Indian religion section of the theology department of Temple University. He has personally purchased all of your books and will be using some of them in his class on bhakti ecstasies. He recommended the college library to order the entire set.

Another professor, Lawrence McKinnon, of Saint Joseph College in Philadelphia has personally ordered the entire set of Srimad-Bhagavatam and entire set of Caitanya-caritamrta for himself. Here is an excerpt from a letter describing him written by our library party. And then I quoted this letter from Mahabuddhi and Ganasam. "Today, by the mercy of Lord Krsna, I was able to take a very special order from a philosophy professor who teaches existential and Indian philosophy at Saint Joseph College in Philadelphia. The professor, Mr. McKinnon is a priest and quite a scholar. He speaks 7 languages, has traveled around the world and he is a Sanskrit scholar.

When I showed him the books he became instantly exhilarated.

Immediately he went for his check book. He was very impressed with the magnanimous translation and extensive purports supplied by Srila Prabhupada. He is leaving for Germany in two days and he requested that I give him at least one of my display books so he could begin reading these works right away. So I gave him the Bhagavad-gita. As I showed him the other books he snatched them from me and told me to write him up for all our books. Although he literally had hundreds of books in his office he was like a child playing with a highly desired new toy for he was fully captivated by His Divine Grace's books. He avidly glorified Srila Prabhupada for his endeavors of continuing his translation work of the Srimad-Bhagavatam and Caitanya-caritamrta."

Then my letter continued, "Professor McKinnon is planning to have the Saint Joseph library also order the entire set of Bhagavatam and Caitanya-caritamrta. In the same college they sold our Krsna Books to Professor McFudden of the theology department who will use Krsna trilogy volume 1 as a required text in his fall humanities class. They also met a professor of Indian studies at La Salle University in Philadelphia who is using your edition of Bhagavad-gita as a text book. Presently there are only two devotees in our BBT library party, Sriman Mahabuddhi dasa brahmacari and Sriman Ganasam dasa brahmacari. Both were trained by Satsvarup Gosvami and Hridayananda Gosvami. Their report and results represents the first major breakthrough in reaching the intellectual scholars in America.

We are giving them all support and financing the party through ISKCON mail order in Los Angeles. I will keep Your Divine Grace up to date on their continuing successes in the field. We are all trembling with excitement as this new program gets under way. Also, these two men are staunch brahmacaris and completely dedicated to your lotus feet. Your unworthy servant, Ramesvara dasa brahmacari." So after this Prabhupada wrote back. He was astonished at hearing that we had sold 4 million books in one year. He encouraged...he says, "Your letters are a great pleasure for me

to read. You are always broadcasting the glories of the sankirtana movement in the shape of ISKCON's book distribution and surely you will be recognized by Lord Caitanya for your unbounded enthusiasm and expertise in seeing that my books are distributed all over the world.

This regular reporting is very encouraging to every one of our devotees and I have faith in your words that next year the figures will be far beyond what they were last year. It is the nature of the spiritual energy it is always increasing if we just apply our energy. The report of the BBT Traveling Library Party is something new for us and this is also only the beginning. Please give my heartfelt thanks to the boys, Sriman Mahabuddhi dasa brahmacari and Sriman Ganasam dasa brahmacari. These books are specifically meant for the intellectual class of people in your country and I have great hope in the results of this preaching at the universities. I received one rumor that the sankirtana parties in the U. S. would soon be stopped by political repression and lack of money by the people. Some so called devotee was thinking like that. But you can assure all your men that I have great hope for Krsna consciousness in America more than any other place and there is no question of repression provided we go on sincerely. Your ever well wisher, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami."

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Where...who gave him that report of what was happening?

**Ramesvara:** I don't know. There were some rumors. So this was one of the greatest breakthroughs we had ever come up with, starting this standing order program. And I was so overwhelmed that the idea was catching on. So I kept pushing the boys and we started making propaganda in our BBT newsletters and we started building up a few people to get interested in joining the party. And at that time Satsvarupa Maharaja was Prabhupada's secretary. And he was also swept up in the ecstasy of the whole idea. And they were discussing with Prabhupada constantly this library party, what a



new breakthrough it is for our movement. And Prabhupada was speaking that is has to have some senior person to head it up personally, to really push it.

And finally Satsvarupa Maharaja, who was Prabhupada's personal secretary, volunteered to do it. Prabhupada said it was a wonderful idea and Satsvarupa Maharaja wrote to me and we started working very closely together and he took over the BBT Library Party. And the rest is history. He organized worldwide library distribution on every continent and he changed the whole face of our movement. He singlehandedly, this party gained unlimited respect for our movement, tremendous support and recognition from the leading scholars and theologians in the world, the leading universities in the world, and our movement was overnight practically recognized as bona fide. The relationships with the professors became one of our most valuable assets. It was just the momentum from this initial start just flooded America and Europe and India. There's no way to describe the joy that Prabhupada derived. He made a special note of it at the end of his Caitanya-caritamrtas in the concluding words that he wrote, at the end of the Antya 5 when it was finished.

In the last paragraph he expresses his deepest thanks and gratitude to the scholars of the world who are reading his books and appreciating them. So there's just so much pleasure that we saw Prabhupada deriving from the book distribution up to this point and now simultaneous with the ongoing development of the regular book distribution and the spreading of it to other zones was now this new Library Party. So all of these things were just filling Prabhupada with so much happiness and his disciples were hearing of this ecstasy, getting letters from him, and knowing that this was the most dearest thing to their spiritual master spurred them on to unbelievable sacrifices. To go on giving Prabhupada pleasure was our motive. We were actually living day by day as if intoxicated. All we could think about was giving Prabhupada more and more pleasure through this book distribution.

## **Topical articles for Back to Godhead magazine**

So then late in '74 when Prabhupada came to Los Angeles, there were two incidents that took place. One, we decided to move the Back to Godhead printing to this Los Angeles printer. Prabhupada gave his approval for that and at that time we had a discussion with Prabhupada about our desire to write articles in Back to Godhead which were topical and contemporary and dealt with the news of the world from a Krsna conscious point of view. And Prabhupada, he spoke about that with us and he told us that his original Back to Godhead was like that. But he did not think that we had the expertise to do that. So it's not like he told us to go right ahead. He actually had some doubt whether we would be able to do it. And we also talked about the size of the magazine and different things related to the price. Because to get Prabhupada's permission to make that Back to Godhead, the printing change, everything was going through Prabhupada.

## **Prabhupada was very involved in the printing of his books & BBT loans**

Actually I should regress a little bit and explain that every major printing contract, although I was making major decisions I would have them verified by Prabhupada, I would send reports to Prabhupada. And he was very much in touch with the whole printing of his books. Before my time when Karandhar was still handling it there are numerous letters between Prabhupada and Karandhar where Karandhar is being given very specific instructions by Prabhupada how many to print, how much to pay for the printing, how much to sell them to the temples. So Prabhupada was the managing trustee in a sense because he was the one who got the book printing started, not only of course in India but in Japan and he arranged

for the credit line, he was setting the quotas how many he wanted distributed, how many he wanted printed, what the price should be from the printer, what the price should be for the temples. Prabhupada was very very active in organizing the publishing of his books during the period of 1970 through 1973.

In the last year Prabhupada had so much confidence in Karandhar that he delegated to Karandhar the authority to make decisions on his own. But when I came on, although from Prabhupada's point of view he had already delegated authority, I still continued to report regularly to Prabhupada any decisions that we had made. Also the policy was that no loan could be given from the BBT to any temple unless it had Prabhupada's approval. The trustee at the time was Bali Mardan, I was the secretary and like the manager of the BBT. But no one had the authority to give a loan to any temple other than Prabhupada himself. So temple presidents and GBC men would write letters to Prabhupada all during the early 1970's with proposed projects, "We want to buy this temple," "We want to buy this farm," "We want to buy this," "We want to buy that."

They would send Prabhupada financial reports, pictures of the properties involved. "We want money to do renovation." Whatever it was they would send their reports to Prabhupada, Prabhupada would write to the BBT inquiring whether the money was available. Sometimes he would write to the: BBT ordering them to pay without even inquiring whether the money was available. Prabhupada was actually not only organizing all the publishing, but he had this vision, the worldwide vision. Wherever he was in one place, every report from all around the move-ment was being fed into him. And so he was like a personality who was looking at the whole globe and planning out, "Now I want this to come up here, I want that to come up here," in different countries, in different continents.

So when the loan request came for buying this fabulous temple in Melbourne, Prabhupada made the decision, "Yes, I want my BBT to buy that." And when the loan request came from Bhagavan

Maharaja to buy the first farm in Europe at New Mayapur Prabhupada's the one who made the decision, "Yes, give them \$100,000 to buy that farm. Give Madhuvisa \$100,000 to buy the Sydney temple." And on and on. Prabhupada gave the loan to buy the Toronto temple, different temples. So if we could look at the record of loans made by the BBT just in 1974, every one of these loans was personally approved by Prabhupada. You have loans to Dallas, to Hawaii, you have a big loan to South America for printing, loans to New Vrindavana, loan to the Radha-Damodar Party for buying traveling temples, the loan for the Melbourne temple was \$133,500, more loans to the Radha-Damodar Party, a \$10,000 loan to Chicago, another loan to Radha-Damodar, another loan to New Vrindavana, a \$15,000 loan to Vancouver to buy a farm. Now this is just 1974.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Did he ever discuss a particular plan for expansion?

**Ramesvara:** Yes, but not so much with the trustees but with the temple presidents and GBC men who were going to actually be in charge of the projects. The BBT had been set up to make loans for the expansion of ISKCON in terms of purchasing properties, purchasing buildings, constructing buildings and so on. And Prabhupada was personally supervising it for years. All the loans during all the early years of the 1970's, they were all completely supervised by Prabhupada.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** As you were describing him as being the end of...everything was funneling in and he would say, "Yes, take this, take that."

## **Book distribution generated huge amounts of money for ISKCON**

**Ramesvara:** Yes, he was actually coordinating how this movement was springing up all over the world. See, with the rise of

book distribution suddenly the Society had tremendous financial resources. Selling 4 millions literatures a year meant millions of dollars coming in. So Prabhupada knew that now is the time to buy land, buy buildings up and expand. And he opened the gates, the flood gates, and everybody was writing to Prabhupada, “Can I have money for this? Can I borrow money for that?” And Prabhupada was making the decisions when the project was good and when it wasn’t good. And he would be the one to decide. And so single handedly Prabhupada was actually arranging for temples to appear in continents all over the world.

It was astonishing. Everything went through Prabhupada. In 1975 we gave a loan to Atlanta for \$16,000, we gave huge loans to Berkeley temple to buy their new building, \$75,000 loan to buy the Berkeley temple, we gave a loan to Boston for \$10,000, Buffalo \$17,000, Chicago \$50,000, Dallas about \$14,000, Detroit \$6,000, England received a \$25,000 loan, Germany got a \$28,000 loan, Houston a \$13,000 loan, even Gargamuni got loans for his vehicles when he was doing a traveling collecting party in America for Mayapur. He got about \$15,000 in loans. Miami, to buy their temple they got \$60,000 in loans, Abhirama, to buy this beautiful land which was later developed by Narahari. And Prabhupada made the decision. He looked at the pictures, he looked at the financial reports, he looked at the way that property would...Because I was there when Prabhupada had the whole presentation made to him. So I remember exactly how Prabhupada considered how the land would appreciate in value due to inflation over the years, how this would be a good buy. So he approved \$60,000 to Miami.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Was it a personal presentation by Narahari?

**Ramesvara:** Abhirama. New York in 1975 to buy the 11 story building on 55th Street, Prabhupada approved a \$75,000 loan. For buying New Mayapura, the first major farm in Europe, in early 1975 Prabhupada approved \$125,000 loan right from the BBT. \$29,000 for

Philadelphia. Every year Prabhupada said New Vrndavana should get loans up to about \$50,000 a year. Prabhupada said, "Whatever Kirtanananda wants you can loan him but up to \$50,000 a year let him have." That was Prabhupada's instruction to me. Kirtanananda Maharaja had a carte blanche from Prabhupada. He never had to tell Prabhupada exactly what he was using the money for, he had a kind...it was like a bank. He had a credit relationship where he could take from the BBT every year as a loan \$50,000 a year. That was Prabhupada's arrangement. Pittsburgh once took \$44,000, the Radha-Damodar Party in 1975 took 30, 40, 50, 60,. almost \$70,000 in loans. San Diego took \$12,000, the Spanish BBT took about \$55,000, Vancouver took \$18,000, Washington D. C. temple took \$14,000, all of these loans were given in 1975.

And Prabhupada approved them all. By the end of 1975 Prabhupada had set up the conditions whereby, and also the trust was there whereby I could start making these decisions. We had already gone over with Prabhupada on innumerable occasions the guidelines what things you can give loans for, what things you can't. In fact there's a letter that Prabhupada wrote to me with specific instructions, you can never loan money for businesses, you can't loan money to buy cows, you can't loan money to start restaurants. He had certain guidelines what you could give money for and what you couldn't give money for. You can't buy farm equipment with BBT loans. Those things were to be financed separately.

So Prabhupada trained me how to work the guidelines or what the guidelines were and how to decide what was a good arrangement and what was not. And whether they should be loans or grants. Prabhupada made that decision. They must be loans, they must be paid back, and there must be an interest charged, an interest rate charged comparable to whatever the going bank rates were or whatever the annual inflation rate was. All of these were decisions made by Prabhupada. How he wanted his BBT money to be loaned out, have it come back and be reinvested and so on. So Prabhupada was actually not only a publisher planning out the publishing but

he was planning out the whole expansion of the movement on a world wide scale. So this was going on during this period.

## **Back To Godhead — more profit, not more pages**

So anyway, back to this conversation in the garden in '74 with Prabhupada, we were talking about the cost of Back to Godhead. We used to talk over all these financial matters with Prabhupada. He wasn't aloof. He was involved. And he trained us. The reason he was involved, even though it disturbed him, all this management, is because he knew he had to train us. So he made the time. So in late 1974, or whenever that was when he was in L. A., July, we were talking about moving Back to Godhead and we told Prabhupada how much money we could save by moving to a different printer and we discussed the pros and cons and he agreed.

Then Prabhupada told us that actually our policy should be not to increase the number of pages in the magazine but to give less pages for higher price, he made a joke. He said, "That is good business." Not that...Because the idea had been there that because we're going to be saving so much money by moving printers, can't we use that money to reinvest in extra pages in the magazine. Go from a 32 page magazine to a 40 page magazine or a 48 page magazine, that was the proposal that had come from the BTG staff. But Prabhupada rejected it. He said, "No. By moving printers we're saving so much money so keep the cost the same to the temples and to the public, keep the number of pages the same and realize the savings yourself." So in this way Prabhupada was training us in different business policies that he wanted the BBT to be carrying out.

## Scandals with Bali Mardan & Ramesvara resigns

Then at the end of 1974 there was a big disturbance going on in our Society with our BBT trustee, Bali Mardan. We had discovered that he had been embezzling not only from the temple sankirtana but from the BBT itself, from the Press, from the New York warehouse. There were rumors that he wasn't following the principles, there were rumors that his wife was not rich as she had claimed and so on. So it was becoming very serious. And Prabhupada was dragged into it. It was a big dispute. Bali Mardan wanted me to give him the check book of the BBT. He was the signer. I would keep the check book, I would make out the checks, I would attach a photo copy of an invoice, and then I would mail it to him, he would sign the checks and mail the signed check back to me and then I would mail it to the customer...not the customer, the supplier. And Bali wanted the check book.

And I feared if he has the check book he can write checks for anything, there's no way of knowing what he'll be doing. And in the midst of all these rumors I was alarmed. So there was some fighting going on over this. And finally I wrote to Prabhupada and told him I couldn't work with Bali any more. Prabhupada told me to continue. He wrote me a letter, *trnad api sunicena* and so on. Then I wrote another letter to Prabhupada, it was getting worse, more intense. It was becoming unbearable. And I told Prabhupada that "As long as Bali and I are working together and he's in such a questionable condition to my eyes, we're always going to be fighting. You've made it clear that this fighting dis-pleases you. So the best thing, since you're displeased by this fighting and I can't stop because I can't stand to see somebody cheating my spiritual master, so the best thing is let me resign and go back to being a full time sankirtana devotee and sankirtana leader. Let him have the check book and then there'll be peace. And work for him and then he'll be working directly under you."



Then Prabhupada wrote me such a heavy letter in 1974. I'd gotten a number of letters about this Bali Mardan thing. It appears some-one took the letter from my file and never returned it. I consider this an important letter because Prabhupada blasted me. He said, "In a spiritual movement, once having surrendered it can never be withdrawn, there is never any question of resignation. You can't quit." Very heavy letter. I thought it was a very significant...So after about 4 letters that I wrote to Prabhupada back and forth, replies Prabhupada ordering me to calm down, be calm, stop being agitated, take your complaints before the GBC at the next year's festival but just go on working. But with every passing month I was seeing this man cheating more and more.

The devotee who was running the New York warehouse was working directly under me and he was regularly reporting how the warehouse was being broken into, books were being stolen, how false invoices were being prepared from ISKCON Press to the BBT so that BBT would have to give extra money to ISKCON Press. It was pure embezzlement. How money had been appropriated for buying a useless bindery, on and on and on. Finally in answer to my letter of September the 10th, Prabhupada wrote back a blasting reply.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** This was after your resignation?

**Ramesvara:** I resigned. I got to the point where I couldn't work with him any more and I didn't want to disturb Prabhupada, I couldn't keep from being disturbed. It was unbearable to see this cheating going on. So Prabhupada said, "Your resignation will be placed before the GBC meeting at Mayapur and a decision will be taken at that time. I hope in the meantime you will come to your real condition of mind."

Meaning that I was insane. "Your duty is to carry out my orders. There cannot be any question of resignation. If anyone surrenders to Krsna wholeheartedly and engages in His service, he cannot say later on, 'I resign.' It is not something like material service.

Once surrendered, it cannot be withdrawn. So never mind. Don't be agitated. Any complaint may be put before the GBC meeting. In the meantime, go on with your duties, that is my request. I hope this meets you in good health. Your ever well wisher." So I went on in that spirit.

Actually just prior to that some interesting things happened in 1974. I had recommended Tripurari Maharaja to take sannyasa but Prabhupada didn't like the idea at first. And he explained that actually distributing books is even greater service. By taking sannyasa it may interfere with his distribution because of the etiquette and by his personally distributing hundreds of books every day and inspiring others to follow he's doing more than any sannyasi Prabhupada wrote. So this was another one of those letters pushing the importance of book distribution.

## **BBT formula 50% for printing, 50% for building**

Then in August of '74, this was in the middle of the Bali Mardan controversy, I had written a letter to Prabhupada about terminating the agreement with Macmillan on the Gita. We were discussing practically how to do it and get the Gita into the hands of the BBT because it was the only book that we didn't have control over. And Prabhupada gave very specific instructions exactly how to do it. And then in this letter he wrote, what I take to be one of the most important instructions he ever gave me, this is in August 13th, 1974, "Regarding sales figures, please endeavor in this way. The sales figures, this is the only solace in my life. When I hear that my books are selling so nicely, I become energetic like a young man. It is very good report that the printers are surprised at our sales figures."

And again in that letter Prabhupada gave more instructions about, regarding monies collected, "Do not keep this money. Immediately spend on printing books. Perhaps we may require money for

building purposes. This should be strictly followed. 50% for printing and 50% for building. No money should be invested for any business purposes.” So constantly throughout these letters which can be seen in the files, these kinds of instructions appear. Prabhupada approved of our giving money to the Spanish BBT to print books there. In September of '74 he wrote another letter praising one of the boys who had distributed 138 hardbound books in one day simply because of hearing about Prabhupada's letter previously about how the sales figure is the only solace in Prabhupada's life, please endeavor in this way, which we had mailed out to the whole Society in one of our BBT newsletters.

## **Prabhupada created transcendental competition among the book distributors**

So this kind of reciprocation between Prabhupada, the devotees and then again Prabhupada was keeping the whole book distribution fever going. Prabhupada actually kindled the fire in the very beginning. He created a thing called transcendental competition. Prabhupada started it, not the devotees. He once wrote a letter to Kesava back in 1971 that “If you can outdistribute Karandhar, Los Angeles, then I will have to stay in San Francisco temple instead of Los Angeles.” So that was actually the beginning, that 1971 letter that Prabhupada wrote to Kesava, that was the beginning of transcendental competition.

And throughout the years of book distribution, this reciprocation between Prabhupada and the devotees, Prabhupada kind of stroking the fire to keep raising the temperature, this was part of Prabhupada's transcendental lila with his disciples. He would hear reports, he would encourage us to send reports. He would praise the sending of reports. Then he would send back fiery letters to raise the temperature even higher, feverish levels. So this was always

going on as a theme for years now. And the whole Society would just be waiting for the next Prabhupada quote, the next Prabhupada letter, the next Prabhupada stroking. And everybody was waiting and living for these latest statements to keep the book distribution going on and on.

## **Prabhupada sides with Ramesvara not Bali Mardan**

Ultimately as I mentioned, Prabhupada, although he chastised me for resigning, he sided with my position on the Bali Mardan incident. He told me not to let him have the check book and not to let him manage the BBT. Prabhupada knew something was going on but he had his own special way of dealing with it. Then Prabhupada wrote me at least two or three letters telling me, “Do not give Bali Mardan charge of the BBT, do not give him the check book.” There were at least two or three letters in '74. One letter in October of '74 states, “There is no need of changing the signatures It's all right.” See, at this point now I had taken the step that any three signers, myself, Bali Mardan and Jayatirtha. So in effect I had set it up so that myself and Jayatirtha could sign checks without even showing them to Bali. And Prabhupada said, “It is all right that Jayatirtha continues signing checks jointly with you for normal business matters that have been approved by the trustees, so let it go on.”

## **Whatever progress we have made it is simply due to dis-tributing these books**

And then he wrote in that same letter of October 11th, this was in response to a letter that I wrote to Prabhupada on September 24th in addition to this whole report about Bali and the checks and who was

going to be in charge of the BBT, I gave Prabhupada a report about how many books we had sold. "In Los Angeles this past weekend the book distributors set a new world's record for selling Krsna trilogy paperback volumes and Sri Isopanisad paperback volumes by distributing well over 2,500 copies in just 21/2 days. In addition, that same weekend they distributed over 200 hardbound volumes and hundreds of BTGs and other books.

I can happily report that in the past two or three months the sankirtana results in Los Angeles have increased so much that we've almost doubled our distribution from earlier this year. In the first weekend of September these same book distributors set a new world's record by selling over 500 hardbound volumes in just two days. They have predicted that the new volumes, especially the Sri Caitanya-caritamrta volumes, will be the best selling books ever. Each morning during breakfast, Tulasi dasa, the temple president, reads from your new books to the book distributors, they're enlivened for the whole day from that to distribute as many of these books as possible. We are feeling grateful beyond description to you for allowing us to participate in this sankirtana movement." So Prabhupada wrote back in October 11th what I take to be the most important instruction I ever received.

This is my lifetime order from Prabhupada. "Your report of the book distribution there is very encouraging. Make program to distribute our books all over the world. Our books are being appreciated by learned circles so we should take advantage. Whatever progress we have made it is simply due to dis-tributing these books. So go on and do not divert your mind for a moment from this. I have full confidence in you. I hope this meets you in good health. Your ever well-wisher, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami."

This was the most important letter I ever received from Prabhupada. because he tells me that, in a sense, and I took it like that, my life's work, because he says never divert your mind for a moment from this, he never changed that order, so this was my life instruction,

lifetime instruction. To make a program to distribute books all over the world. So this was one of those examples of Prabhupada stroking the fire and just turning some of his disciples into literally fanatical cent percent sold out book distributors, dedicating 100% of their energy to the core of their hearts to this program of book distribution. Prabhupada created this mood by such letters. And this mood has kept the book distribution going.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** In that letter it said, by then the Caitanya-caritamrta had already come out?

## **Discussion on the size of Caitanya-caritamrta**

**Ramesvara:** Volume 2 and volume 1. I was upset with Bali because he wanted to print the whole Caitanya-caritamrta the size of the Krsna book hardbounds and I knew it was impractical and costly. And I told Prabhupada, let's do it the same size as the Bhagavatams. And there was a big argument between myself and Bali but Prabhupada liked my idea that we should do it just like the Bhagavatams. And it proved to be practical in terms of our mass distribution.

## **Borrowing money from banks**

In the letter where Prabhupada authorizes me to give the loan to Bhagavan for buying the New Mayapur farm, he starts instructing me that you can borrow money by going to banks. The BBT, we can use the Mayapur-Vrndavana fixed deposits as security and go to a bank and borrow money if the BBT is having some short fall. So there were all kinds of practical banking instructions and financing instructions that were coming from Prabhupada.

How to keep the money flowing to all the different outposts of ISKCON for developing our movement. In that same letter of November 14th Prabhupada wrote, “Regarding book distribution, somehow this distribution must be doubled and tripled as far as possible. Do it.” So constantly getting these letters. So now, by the end of 1974 Bali Mardan is exposed and the local New York devotees rise up like a revolt and literally throw him out.

So at that time, late 1974, Prabhupada was in Texas, in Dallas. And I had flown there to speak to Prabhupada about the whole incident now that Bali was gone. What are we going to do about ISKCON Press? You have that date? There’s no doubt Prabhupada was in Dallas in late ’74 because I flew with him from Dallas to New York. When do you have Prabhupada going to Dallas?

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** January, ’75.

## **BBT loans are only for publishing and temple construction**

**Ramesvara:** So just at the end of that year, then just before we get to that, in the end of November Prabhupada writes me one final letter about the BBT management explaining again, “We cannot loan BBT money for any purposes other than what is mentioned in the BBT agreement. Loans for cows, equipment, restaurants must be repaid, no other loans can ever be given for such things. Only publishing and temple construction.” And then he tells me in this letter that “From here on in don’t consult me that much on technical things regarding book printing. You all consult amongst yourselves and make the decisions.” So he was delegating more and more.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** What was his mood on the way to New York?

## 1974 Christmas Marathon

**Ramesvara:** I'm going to get to that. We're still in '74. I'm just look-ing over my final letters for '74. Oh yes, the Christmas marathon of '74. This was a very joyous time, one of the biggest marathons in our history. I sent Prabhupada a telegram. First I sent him a telegram describing an incredible book distribution in the middle of December. Yes, to Bombay. The telegram said, "Great success. Book sales for weekend of Dec. 13-15: Tripurari's BBT party, one weekend, 1,346 big books. Los Angeles, one weekend, 1,002 big books. New York, over 950 big books. Atlanta airport over 650 big books in one day. Book distribution definitely doubling in U. S. A. Hare Krsna." Signed Ramesvara.

So Prabhupada wrote back, "I am in due receipt of your telegram reading as follows," dated December 17th and then he wrote the whole telegram out. "This kind of wonderful news is very pleasing to my heart and I thank you all again and again. I think this is the first time in history that ever before so many religious books have sold so popularly, 4,000 books in one day is a very unique figure. Keep distributing as many as possible in huge quantities. This is my pleasure. We must make a large propaganda program for Krsna consciousness by distributing these books everywhere all over the world. Just like the communists, they are very expert in distributing their literature, their propaganda. At the present moment they are distributing their literatures here in India in 9 different languages and it's quite effective.

Therefore we must print hundreds and thousands of books and distribute them at the same speed and thus we will have a great effect on the mass population of Europe and America. If we can get the masses in the western countries like Europe and America to become Krsna conscious then all the rest of the world will follow. That is a fact. So please, I beg you, continue distributing my books in this way and Krsna will pour His blessings upon you all. Please keep me informed from time to time of the book sales statistics. I



hope this meets you in good health.”

## **New York needs a new temple**

So that was from the Christmas season. And at the end of 1974 there were two problems facing the BBT. One of them was what to do in New York. We had been living for years with the idea that Bali was going to buy us this grand building in Manhattan. We had outgrown Brooklyn, we couldn't keep our operations in Brooklyn because the devotees were getting into fights with the neighbors. This was a low class, lower income neighborhood.

Mostly Italians. It was near the docks and the devotees especially on the way walking to ISKCON Press would see the children of these Italians and say Hare Krsna to them and so on and so on. And after a year or two of very friendly relations the children were starting to pick up our mannerisms, our expressions, these Italian children would come home to their families talking about Krsna being God. And the Italians were getting furious that we were somehow influencing their children. And it got to the point where there was a huge fight even before Bali left the temple. It was like a rumble. The Italians one night charged the temple with clubs and baseball bats and sticks. And the devotees repulsed them and certain devotees were brutally beaten and sent to the hospital. So we were so anxious to move out of this area. So by the end of 1974 it became critical.

So I proposed to Prabhupada that New York had a huge book inventory plus an accounts receivable. Total value of \$200,000. So I proposed now that Bali was gone, give them a chance, let's write it off. Make it a free gift to New York, \$200,000, so that they have a complete fresh start for buying their new building. And Prabhupada wrote back, "You idea of letting New York have the \$200,000 worth of books to help them get the building is good, do it." And of course, later on he also authorized that the BBT would then on top of that

give them a loan of \$75,000. Because actually the story was that they had been saving a lot of money to buy that building but Prabhupada had expertly taken it from Bali Mardan to buy the land in Bombay.

## **Prabhupada takes New York temple money to buy Bombay temple**

That story must be there with Satsvarupa Maharaja. That the man in Bombay was cheating us, the Nairs, and we were risking default of the property. And Prabhupada asked Bali Mardan to loan him the New York temple money. The devotees in New York had been collecting on the subways and it was so intense. Yogescandra and Tosan Krsna were organizing this huge New York sankirtana all during 1973, 1974 to buy this building in New York to get out of Brooklyn.

And Prabhupada took all the money to buy off the Bombay Juhu Beach property. So one time Bali Mardan asked for the money back and Prabhupada said, "What, you have given something to your spiritual master, now you are asking for it back? What kind of etiquette is." So Prabhupada was forcing Bali to get the money from his so called rich wife. But Prabhupada also didn't want to give Bali money. That was shown in that incident, it was shown in the incident in dealing with whether who should have the check book and actually manage the money of the BBT.

So anyway, New York's money that they had collected for their building went to buy Bombay. So when I proposed that the BBT give them a gift of \$200,000 worth of books, Prabhupada liked the idea. So in that way New York got the push and then later when we gave them the \$75,000 for the down payment on the building they were in pretty good shape. And we bought that nice building.

## **Prabhupada orders that book distribution must be done honestly now**

Also at the end of 1974 there was a controversy and I wrote to Prabhupada about what our methods should be on sankirtana. What kind of lines are we allowed to say. How we are allowed to represent ourselves. How much can we stretch the truth or how much can we conceal the truth. How much can we claim we are collecting for starving children. and so on. And on January 1st, 1975, Prabhupada wrote me a very very strong letter giving the policy regarding sankirtana lines. Up to this point, the Society had been more or less going on a letter Prabhupada had written in 1972 to Bali Mardan that stated, "By hook or crook, tell them any-thing but somehow sell them a book." But by 1974 it had gotten out of hand and Prabhupada corrected the whole mood in this letter of January 1st, 1975.

So that means that Prabhupada was actually con-trolling the excesses in the book distribution. Toning it down when it had to be toned down, heating it up when it had to be heated up. He was like the conductor of the orchestra. And there were some parts which called for crescendo and there were some parts which called for pianissimo or whatever that is. You know, very soft and then very loud. And so by different letters, Prabhupada was actually pulling the strings like a great puppet master and we were dancing to this pulling...So then in early '75 I went to meet Prabhupada in Dallas and we started talking about a proposal of moving ISKCON Press from New York to Los Angeles. We didn't know what the new building was going to be, we were definitely moving anyway from the old building.

So since we were going to have to pick everything up and move why not move it all to one place? So I proposed this to Prabhupada by flying to Dallas with him. He was willing to consider the idea but he wanted to hear what the New York devotees had to say about it and he wanted to know exactly where we were going to move and

so on. So it was a preliminary presentation.

## **Prabhupada was an expert on every topic**

Also in that meeting in Dallas, Nityananda flew in and showed Prabhupada pictures of this farm that he had just gotten in Mississippi. Or else, maybe it was pictures of...it was either he had just gotten it and he was getting instructions from Prabhupada how to develop it or he was getting permission from Prabhupada to buy it, one or the other. And that took place in that meeting. Another example of Prabhupada making a major decision on developing a farm community and giving very detailed instructions on how to develop farms towards self sufficiency.

The whole gist of Prabhupada's instructions to Nityananda actually are a standard for all of our farms. And Prabhupada, you could see what a multifaceted, almost unlimitedly multifaceted personality he was. That his disciples could approach him on any different topics and expertly Prabhupada would instruct them. He was doing this with schools, with publishing, with business, with real estate, with construction, with farms, self sufficient communities, with how to deal with the public, how to deal with the mood of the public, PR, so many things Prabhupada was just...he was everything. He was the expert on every topic and everybody went to him and he would give perfect advice.

## **Topical articles for Back to Godhead magazine again**

So in the airport as we were getting ready to fly to New York, we began a discussion again of one of our favorite topics which was how to make our preaching more appreciated. How to get the

masses of people to feel that the Krsna consciousness movement can answer their problems and solve the problems that they're all facing. And we started talking about writing articles in Back to Godhead again about this, topical contemporary stories about the current events of the day from a Krsna conscious point of view. So to give an example of our idea, we brought up the example of the Viet Nam war which had just ended a year ago.

And how the public would have liked to know what the Krsna conscious movement had to say about such an event. And Prabhupada immediately started talking about the Viet Nam war right in the airport. We were in the lounge of the airport and all the devotees were sitting around Prabhupada. And these were great moments, like history through the transcendental eyes of Srila Prabhupada. It was not at all like history according to the historians or the history books. There were a number of times when Prabhupada would give the most amazing purports to history that anyone had ever heard. He had given purports about World War II, he had given purports about Adolph Hitler, he had given so many different purports that had been buzzing around the Society. And now he was giving his purport about the Viet Nam war. I loved to talk with Prabhupada about these topics. To me it was one of the...it was always something that was of interest to me and I would always ask Prabhupada about events that were going to take place in the world and how to understand them.

Of course, this is the end of '74, early '75 and we had our In God We Trust Party. So there was a whole big splash of political ideology going around ISKCON. There was this book about a conspiracy from the John Birch Society that made a big hit. And Prabhupada had confirmed that yes, it's a fact, there are conspiracies and the whole material society is being manipulated by a handful of vested interest groups, demons, raksasas, who take birth on this planet just to control and manipulate. So everybody was buzzing with these ideas. So this was another facet of Prabhupada's personality that he could talk about these things with such authority and such

insight that would just be shattering all of the bogus Time magazine, Newsweek magazine version of the world as being completely superficial and external to what's really going on. And the devotees loved Prabhupada for it.

They knew that he was in touch with the Supreme Soul, Supersoul, and he was speaking the Absolute Truth every time he spoke. Actually that was an impression everyone had of Prabhupada. Whenever you saw Prabhupada speaking you were in awe. God is in his heart speaking to him and he's repeating or he's hearing it and presenting it so we can understand it. Whenever you saw Prabhupada, chanting in a kirtan or Jaya Radha-Madhava, you knew by looking at him he is in touch with God, he is seeing God, he is seeing the kingdom of God, he is seeing the lila of God, he's entering into the mood of the lila of God. Just you could see. And so the advanced devotees who could see Prabhupada like that, they were always so deeply surrendered. Their awe and veneration and love for Prabhupada was so deep, it can't be measured. So I had the blessing, the great mercy of Krsna to see Prabhupada like that. Whenever I was with Prabhupada, I took it that at every moment he is with God, he is speaking what God speaks to him in his heart. When he closes his eyes and chants the names of God he sees Krsna, he sees Krsna's abode, he enters into Krsna's lila. This was not something I had to intellectualize about.

This wasn't something I had to mentally fix my mind on. This was some realization that I got automatically whenever I was in Prabhupada's presence. I immediately became stunned and awestruck and serious and very aware of my own insignificance. Being around Prabhupada was like that. It was just the most awesome experience. Hardly there are words to describe. You knew you were with a person who knew God. There wasn't any doubt. And you could see it. You could see it in Prabhupada's mannerisms, in his expressions...there was a way that the older devotees, the more advanced devotees could actually perceive Prabhupada's exalted consciousness.

So when he spoke on these historical things we knew he wasn't speculating, we knew it was the Absolute Truth. We had that conviction. And so when he said things that we had never heard before and that were astonishing we would marvel at his genius. He seemed to know everything about everything. There was nothing you couldn't ask him that he wouldn't have a brilliant answer for. It was an amazing part of his personality that everyone loved and admired and was actually astonished by. So one such incident was when I was with Prabhupada in this airport and we started talking about how the world would like to hear what our movement has to say about these events. And when we brought up the Viet Nam war Prabhupada went into a whole discourse on this war. Unfortunately this conversation was probably not taped. But I do remember Prabhupada talking about the meat eating president, the animal killing president, Johnson, and how his animal killing kept him entangled.

No matter how hard he tried to get out it kept him entangled, he kept getting deeper and deeper entangled. But after describing that, Prabhupada said something even more astonishing. That they didn't want to win the war and they didn't want to stop the war. They just wanted it to go on. Why? They wanted to kill the hippies and the blacks. And when Prabhupada said that, everyone was just silent. And it was just another one of those Prabhupada bombs that he would drop on us. History by Prabhupada was just so amazing. And when we thought about that, that they kept it going deliberately because there was a social upheaval in America, a social revolution. The rock and roll groups and the drug gurus were turning the American young people into lunatics, hippies, derelicts. And Prabhupada said to rid the society of these people they drafted them and sent them off to be killed. And that's why they never really used the full military might to win the war. They wanted it to keep on going year after year after year. That was astonishing.

So in the plane when we were flying to New York, Prabhupada had me sit next to him in the first class section and said, "What

are the problems do they want to hear us talk about?" And it was just an amazing opportunity. And I had my list and we talked about the energy embargo and the energy crisis and the oil crisis. We talked about inflation. We talked about the threat of nuclear war. We talked about different topics like that. We talked about blacks, minority groups. And each time I would mention a topic and Prabhupada would speak and give some Krsna conscious statement about how our movement views these problems. Unfortunately due to my dullness I don't remember the answers to all of them. I remember to the energy crisis he got angry and said there is no such thing as energy crisis. God has an energy shortage?

God has a power shortage? What kind of nonsense is this? He would speak like that. I remember when I mentioned the word unemployment, it was an unusual answer. Because usually Prabhupada would just criticize their argument and make a statement about what the real solution or what the real understanding of the matter was. But when I said unemployment he didn't throw it out, he didn't criticize the conception of the karmis. He became very serious and he gave one his famous Prabhupada predictions. And he said, "Unemployment, in the future unemployment will destroy your country." I remember those words vividly because it was so shocking. "Unemployment will destroy your country." Then after some time talk-ing like that, Prabhupada wanted to take a little rest and I was sitting next to Prabhupada and I also took a little rest. And I remember waking up and I was almost afraid to open my eyes. I was thinking, "Oh, my God. I fell asleep into the mode of ignorance right in the presence of my spiritual master.

What if he's already awake and he's wanting his servant to be here and I'm occupying the seat and Prabhupada's not waking me up out of some transcendental humility," and all these thoughts flashed through my mind in an instant. And then I dared to open my eyes and Prabhupada was awake looking out the window, not looking at me at all and I was so embarrassed I wanted to disappear. So when Prabhupada saw I was awake he told me, "Go get my servant," just



the thing I was thinking he wanted. So I said, “Thank you, Srila Prabhupada,” and I quickly got out of the seat and I went to the back. I can’t remember who it was, maybe Nanda Kumar. So that was my flight with Prabhupada to New York.

Now I guess I should digress a little bit to talk about the instructions that Prabhupada gave regarding his books. (break) This is just something we found related to I believe it was either 1971 when we first started planning the BBT central warehouse and accounting and ordering system. “When Prabhupada heard that Los Angeles was arranging a big warehouse where books could be delivered in 4-8 hours, he smiled and said, ‘this is American standard, very fast. But what are you doing here in India? How many Krsna Books?’” This was reported by Yasodanandana Swami who was with Prabhupada at that time when he got the news about the Los Angeles warehouse system being organized. (break)

## **Moving the press from New York to Los Angeles**

Before we talk about Prabhupada’s instructions regarding the production I just want to finish this section about Prabhupada in New York. We met with the New York devotees and Srila Prabhupada and they were mixed about going to Los Angeles, moving the Press to Los Angeles. But we decided that we were going to move the art department. So we did. We moved the whole art department to Los Angeles some time in early '75 and it started working out pretty nicely. But there was some feeling among the older devotees that the Press was the life of the temple.

That losing the Press devotees would really cripple New York. And they kept thinking how they could buy this big 11 story building, they could put the Press in there and it would still fit. But at that point I felt that it was in the best interest of the BBT to bring everybody together, have myself and Radhaballabha working very

closely together on production. So it was left for the BBT trustees or the GBC to decide at the Mayapur festival. Now, in 1975, was it January that Prabhupada was in Hawaii the first time?

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Yes.

**Ramesvara:** And this was before the Dallas-New York flight. I think so. So I was with Prabhupada for that visit in January '75.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** In Hawaii.

**Ramesvara:** Yeah, in Hawaii. And...

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** You met him coming in from Tokyo, you met him in Hawaii?

Hawaii: Siddhasvarupa & Vyasasanas for Hansadutta and Kir-tanananda. **Ramesvara:** Yes, we came to Hawaii. There was quite a number of things going on at that time in the Society. And I took notes in my outline of a few of them. One thing is that we had a very heavy morning walk. Very heavy morning walk. Gurukrpa Maharaja was there, Yasodanandana was there. And Bali was there. And Siddhasvarupa was there. And I was there. I think Jayatirtha was there also. Now this is a very famous tape, lecture. The name of the tape, the title given on the tape is called "Attached Householder Life." So if you want to see what mood Prabhupada was in, you listen to this tape. It was so intense. And we were really coming down on the whole Siddhasvarupa philosophy.

We had had so much trouble in Hawaii. Sudama had been the president and he had just blooped. He had just gotten contaminated by Janmadagni and the Siddhasvarupa philosophy and it was just another big disaster for Hawaii. So we were on this morning walk and Siddha was on it. He would come around whenever Prabhupada was in Hawaii. He never understood how it was that Prabhupada would never come out to any of his centers but would only stay at the ISKCON center. It never dawned on him that Prabhupada didn't give him that impression that he was seeing Siddha's movement as bona fide. Anyway, on this tape we were

talking about Siddha's whole philosophy of how it's all right to be outside of ISKCON as long as you're chanting your rounds, following the four regulative principles, having your own morning program at home. And you're just being Krsna conscious in like a varnasrama way.

It was all like varnasrama. Get a job, be respectable, book distribution has ruined America, don't get into preaching heavy, don't be aggressive, just be mellow. And the whole morning walk was about this. And finally at a crucial point in the morning walk we were really really beginning to pin it down. And we asked Prabhupada if someone is living outside following all the principles, chanting his rounds, going to a morning program and has an outside job and is earning money and is not giving the money to ISKCON but he's doing everything else, what is his position? Because this in a nutshell was the position of the Siddhasvarupa men. Prabhupada said something to the effect that they go to hell because they're disobeying the order of the spiritual master by not giving 50%. And by disobeying that one order, they're finished. So that was a kind of a breakthrough which finally cleared the air on Siddhasvarupa's whole philosophy.

Also during that Hawaii meeting there was a big incident about siksa guru. There had been a report that on the vyasanas in Germany or on the altars they had started putting pictures of Hansaduta Maharaja, or Hansaduta, he wasn't a sannyasi yet. And that from New Vrindavana it was the same kind of a thing, they were putting pictures of Kirtanananda and they were worshipping them as siksa guru. And I recall Prabhupada called both of them to Hawaii. And Gopal Krsna was there also. So there was quite a number of men there. And Prabhupada blasted away that during his lifetime he said, "I am both the diksa guru and the siksa guru for all of my disciples. This is against the etiquette. You cannot accept any kind of position like this during the physical presence of your spiritual master." So that was very heavy.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** So there was substance to the reports then?

**Ramesvara:** Oh, yes, definitely. And also at that meeting we finally got Sudama and Janmadagni to come to the temple to meet with Prabhupada to discuss why they blooped, why they were trying to steal the restaurant and whatever they were doing. And there was a very significant room conversation where they were presenting to Prabhupada their philosophy. It was based on the Siddhasvarupa philosophy and they had...Janmadagni had applied it to their position in a very far out way. The Siddhasvarupa philosophy basically was that Prabhupada is not expert on the material platform.

He is not all-knowing on the material platform. But he is perfect, expert, all-knowing on the spiritual platform. So what does that mean? Siddhasvarupa would argue that, "Prabhupada can't build a jet engine. Prabhupada can't build a nuclear reactor, so he's not expert materially, he's just expert spiritually." That was his argument, it was a bogus argument. The answer philosophically of course is that if it was Prabhupada's service to build a jet engine for Krsna, Krsna from within his heart would instruct his pure devotee how to do it. Just like from within the heart Krsna instructed his pure devotee Brahma how to construct the whole universe. But he didn't know how to do it. So the argument is bogus but that was the Siddhasvarupa philosophy.

Now, what was the implication of that philosophy? The implication of the philosophy that the guru only knows things spiritually but not materially is that he has to depend on his own men, disciples, to get reports about what's going on in ISKCON. He just doesn't know, he's not aware of how badly the GBC are mismanaging, how they're blundering with book distribution and ruining the image of the movement, how they're mistreating devotees, Prabhupada's not aware of these things because that's taking place on the material platform. So therefore, Janmadagni applied the whole type of bogus logic in this way, that we have faith in Prabhupada and we trust

Prabhupada, but we can't work with the GBC. We don't have faith in them, we can't follow them, they can't be our authority.

We just want to work with Prabhupada. So they came into the room and they started discussing with Prabhupada the whole philosophy and Prabhupada kept asking them, "Why did you leave? Why have you left? Why don't you stay? Why don't you surrender?" And he was trying to point out to them that by being independent, by surrendering to your independence this is false ego, this is the cause of bondage, this is the cause of separateness. And they just kept insisting that they just don't trust the GBC but they trust Prabhupada. The GBC in Hawaii at that time was Gurukrupa Swami. So I was just getting exasperated watching these, people argue with Prabhupada and Prabhupada presenting things so nicely and them not accepting and continuing to argue. And finally I interjected, "You say that you accept Prabhupada." "Yes." "You say that you have faith in him." "Yes." "You say that whatever he asks you to do you can follow it."

"Yes." "So then, if Prabhupada asks you to follow the GBC, will you do it?" And the room was tense and silent and then they said, "No." And when they said no, Prabhupada slammed his fist on the desk and then he held out his finger, his arm and he pointed right at them and he said, "Just see the hypocrisy." And after that they were dismissed and they left. They were defeated and they still didn't accept it. But they were completely defeated that we had shown that they said they had faith in Prabhupada but they really didn't. That when they were saying, "We like Prabhupada, we just don't like ISKCON. We like Prabhupada, we just don't like the GBC." Prabhupada stated that that is hypocrisy. "When they say they don't like ISKCON and the GBC they're really saying they don't like to follow my order, that means they don't like my order, that means they don't have faith in my order, that means they don't have faith in me. That means guru-aparadha. And to say they have faith in me is just hypocrisy." So that was a very significant conversation that took place during that time.

## **You cannot use astrology on our devotees” — Srila Prabhupada**

Another event that took place during that Hawaii trip was that there was one devotee who approached Prabhupada about astrology. He made a whole presentation to Prabhupada about how he wanted to use astrology to help with devotee marriages and planning things out for the Society and so on. And Prabhupada nipped the whole thing and said, “You cannot use astrology on our devotees. Astrology is not meant for our men.” So then Prabhupada gave him an idea, because he wanted to make his living, his career by astrology. So Prabhupada said, “So you open up some storefront or something and you promote yourself as an astrologer to the people in general, but not our men.

And then, as the people come to you and you do their charts, if you’re expert and you can tell them things about themselves then you may also add that I see in your chart that there is a part of you which is very spiritual and very soon you will actually learn some great mantra, something with Krsna in it. Some mantra that will give you great liberation and you will feel inclined towards this because of that spiritual part within you.” So Prabhupada said, “In this way using astrology you can induce them to chant Hare Krsna and come to Krsna. That is the only use for your astrology. But don’t use it on our men.” So I personally witnessed that, that was very significant.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Who was that?

**Ramesvara:** Some outsider, like a Siddhasvarupa type person.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** He wasn’t a devotee.

## Prabhupada on the Mayapur City

**Ramesvara:** He was, but he was with Siddhasvarupa I think. Then there was another incident in Hawaii where it was about 11 or 11:30 at night and Hansaduta and myself were taking rest in the downstairs room, when Sruti Kirti, Prabhupada's servant, comes running downstairs and wakes us up, "Prabhupada wants to see you right away!" So we got up, rubbed the sleep out of our eyes and ran upstairs. And when we got upstairs, Prabhupada was sitting, Sruti Kirti was massaging and the secretary was Paramahansa Swami. And he was reading to Prabhupada from the Bhagavatam, First Canto, Volume 2 about the reign of Maharaja Yudhisthira and how nature was bestowing her most bountiful gifts on the human society.

Because this kingdom of Maharaja Yudhisthira was so perfect and followed the laws of God, that there was perfect reciprocation. Those purports in the First Canto, Volume 2. And right after that section had been read, Prabhupada turned to myself and Hansaduta and he just started speaking about the Mayapur city project and it was just amazing. Prabhupada started describing how the city was going to be based on all of the same principles as Maharaja Yudhisthira's kingdom. And he explained that there would be all types of people in the city. He even said there would be a provision in the city for meat eaters. There would be a section for the meat eaters, there would be a section for the people who are addicted to drinking and smoking. He said, "Yes. Even those types of people, they will also be living in our city. But their meat eating, their smoking and their drinking will all be done according to Vedic injunctions, according to the religious scriptures. How to make the sacrifices and so on. If they're addicted, but there will be that class." In this way he started explaining his concept of a Vedic city.

How even people who are very materialistic and addicted to sense gratification could be elevated. This would be the perfect expression of varnasrama and the world would see a perfect varnasrama city

as the perfect social system for human society. And Prabhupada explained this vision that by building this city and conducting it perfectly according to the varnasrama principles, without a doubt it will attract the attention of the world. People will come to study it. It will be a direct model of a perfect social system and people will come and study it. So he went on speaking for quite awhile about the Mayapur city like that.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Did he say how big it would be?

**Ramesvara:** 50,000 people. He mentioned 50,000 people definitely.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Did he give any idea how it would happen? Or just that it would happen? You know, instructions...

**Ramesvara:** He always told us that by book distribution Mayapur will be built. Especially toward the end of 1975 as the book distribution was building Bombay, Prabhupada was very confident that the book distribution would also be able to build Mayapur. A few other things were happening in those early years, '74, '7...In 1974 I was working very...actually '73 and '74 I was working to get men to leave their temples to join the Nama Hatta party in Japan.

## **Japan Nama Hatta sankirtan Party — Prabhupada's personal collecting party**

Prabhupada had given some personal instructions and I happened to know of them. That he once said, "This is my personal collecting party. My personal sankirtana party." So I made a big push to get them men. And with those men they built our Mayapur temple, Mayapur Candradaya Mandir, they helped build the Krsna-Balarama Mandir and even at the end the Bombay temple. So that was an important source of money for Prabhupada. And they would give the money personally to Prabhupada, they would deposit it personally in Prabhupada's account and he would allocate it and spend it for the construction.



He would tell them exactly how much he needed, like giving them quotas, and they would go out and collect it. So Prabhupada was actually running his own sankirtana party. And it would be just like any other sankirtana leader. Sometimes they wouldn't want to go out. Literally they would not want to go to Japan and Prabhupada, just like every sankirtana leader does, he would preach to them and convince them to go back out on sankirtana and make their quota. So that was another aspect of Prabhupada, how he was a sankirtana leader.

## **BBT grant to Yadubara for camera equipment**

Also, it was either 1973 or 1974 that Prabhupada had agreed to make a grant to Yadubara of BBT funds. An initial grant was given for Yadubara to buy his equipment, which is what started ISKCON cinema. That's how it began. Prabhupada's the one who approved the money for ISKCON cinema. So that was another part of Prabhupada's vision.

## **First donation from Ambarish for Golden Avatar Studios**

Also, I can't remember exactly, but either '73 or '74 we got our first donation from Ambarish. Krsna Kanti got the donation. Ambarish was still living in his ski area in Colorado at the time. And with that donation we started Golden Avatar. We bought the first tape recorders, we bought the first equipment, little studio. And our first project at Golden Avatar was to arrange for Prabhupada's secretary or servant to always carry a tape recorder, a Uher, and to be taping every single thing that Prabhupada said. So that started at that time.

That everything was going to be taped. And that was a very big decision that was made.

## **Prabhupada on Radio and Television**

And then thereafter we did the Krsna Show, the Krsna radio show was very popular. And Prabhupada was so pleased when he heard about the Krsna Show that he said that “If you can actually arrange for me to be on the airways, then the whole world can become Krsna conscious.” He made quite a number of statements about television and radio in that period. There were some letters to Karandhar and to other members dealing with Prabhupada’s strong feeling about getting on the radio and television regularly. He once said to Karandhar, “If you can arrange to get me on television I will sit down in Los Angeles and I will never leave.”

Actually Prabhupada wanted a skyscraper office building in Los Angeles, he told Karandhar this in 1973. He said, “If you can build a skyscraper office building in the parking lot, then I guarantee you you’ll go back to Godhead. I assure you. Anyone who builds it will go back to Godhead.” So, Prabhupada had all kinds of amazing visions. Also in 1974, Bali came to visit with Prabhupada in Los Angeles. At some point in ’74 Prabhupada was in L. A. It was at that time that Bali showed Prabhupada the slides of the Gitanagari farm and Prabhupada approved it. They had just bought it and Prabhupada was very pleased, it looked like a beautiful farm. I remember sitting in Prabhupada’s room watching the slide show. He was very happy to see that farm purchased. So once again, Prabhupada was the hub of all the activity in the development and the growth in ISKCON and everything was being funneled towards him. And he was relating with everyone.

## **Reading Krsna Book with Prabhupada**

There's a few more early incidents that I can remember. In Los Angeles on one of those early visits, probably '73, we used to read the Krsna Book to Prabhupada every evening, he would sit in his garden. And it was just the most wonderful, intimate association with Prabhupada. And I used to marvel at the way Prabhupada would sit and listen to the Krsna Book. His head was looking up very erect, the way he was holding his body, and very grave, serious, sober look on his face. Very intense. Although it was so personal and ecstatic and informal, to just be with a handful of devotees reading the Krsna Book to Prabhupada, Prabhupada was showing us how to actually become absorbed in hearing of God. It wasn't that...he was not in a light mood. He was in a heavy mood, like a great transcendental aristocrat. I'll never forget how serious, how he was looking, so formal. Even though the mood was so informal. In that way he was showing us how to hear the Krsna Book.

## **Hitler stories are exaggerated propaganda**

I remember once, instead of going for the morning walk, it was raining. So Prabhupada decided that he would like to see all the rich homes in Los Angeles. So we got in the car and we drove through Beverly Hills and then we drove through Bel Air. This was either in '73 or '74. Most of the time in the car he was silent, but there was a conversation going on just before we got in the car and just as we began to drive off about Adolph Hitler and how history, especially due to the British, had completely wrong information about him. Painted him as the arch demon of the 20th century when Prabhupada indicated that there was some other side to Hitler that the British have completely distorted and covered over. Again, one of those astonishing things by Prabhupada. Because it was just

something that everyone took for granted about Hitler.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** That was his connection to the Vedic, his attachment to the Vedic knowledge?

**Ramesvara:** Prabhupada said that the stories of all the violence and the murder in the concentration camps was all propaganda and exaggerated. You know, he was saying things like that that are very far out. I remember in 1973 or '72 when we went out to Los Angeles airport to receive Srila Prabhupada and a number of devotees were able to go outside as they climbed down...it wasn't directly into the gate, one of those gate things. But you have to climb down some kind of a stairway, ladder, directly from the airplane door and then walk on the ground outside and then go through the glass to enter the terminal building. So somehow or other the devotees were out there. We were all having one of these huge fantastic ecstatic kirtans. And when Prabhupada saw Visnujana Swami right in front of everybody he just embraced him. It was very special.

## **BBT cannot pay royalties to anyone!**

Also, in 1974 we had, at the Mayapur festival, we had decided that we were going to give Acyutananda Swami some royalty for writing the songbook. And with that royalty he was going to use it to preach in South India which was his preaching field. Prabhupada found out about it and was furious. Just furious. He said, "No one in the BBT gets a royalty, even myself. Why he has written something, he gets a royalty?" And Prabhupada was so angry over this principle that nobody can take a royalty for himself from the BBT, even if he's going to use it for Krsna, it doesn't matter. So on this principle he was very angry and he forced Acyutananda to turn in all the money. And I had gone all the way to Krsnanagara to a bank to actually change the cashier's checks I had brought into rupees. I had gone to great length to give him this royalty to help him in his preaching in South India. Prabhupada nipped the whole thing.

## **The importance of dioramas for preaching (FATE)**

Another thing that happened in 1974 which was highly significant for our movement was Prabhupada sent some of his top artists to Bengal. Or maybe in '73 this occurred. Yes, '73 I think. To learn the dying art of earthen doll making. And in 1974, Prabhupada was ready to send them back to the West. And it's a very important part of our movement. In the "Who Are They?" magazine there's part of the history is there about the doll makers in India. It's a very interesting history, it will make a wonderful section in the book what they went through. How they got apprenticed, how at first the old masters in Bengal didn't believe they were serious and wouldn't teach them anything.

And they had to prove themselves by throwing themselves at the masters and saying, "Look, we're going to clean your little huts and live in this village. Until you teach us we're not leaving because it's the order of our guru to learn from you. So we'll stay until you're ready to teach us." And in that way they proved their sincerity, they began to get taught. So Prabhupada originally wanted to send them to London because he wanted them to make a diorama museum there along the lines of Madame Tusaud's. That was his original plan. But Baradraja became convinced that there would be better facility for him at that time in Los Angeles. London was not that together. So he convinced Prabhupada, Los Angeles it was, and he showed up. We gave him a little studio across Venice Boulevard which is now the place where our restaurant is and they just started making little dioramas. And then sometime in 1974, late '74 during Prabhupada's visit they had made a model of the Los Angeles Bhagavad-gita exhibition that they wanted to construct.

They showed it to Prabhupada and Prabhupada approved it. At that time Tulasi dasa was the president, Jayatirtha was the GBC, I was also in the room because the money was supposed to come from

the BBT. And Prabhupada said when he saw the plan, he said, "You must do this immediately." So I said, "Prabhupada, so you know how much this is going to cost? This is going to cost hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars from the BBT." And Prabhupada said, "Money is no object, spare no expense, no matter what it costs you must do it." And then he went on to speak about his Guru Maharaja and how much he wanted dioramas and how this type of preaching...

That same 1974 Dallas meeting when I had gone to be with Prabhupada to try to present the idea about ISKCON Press moving and Nityananda came to present his farm, at that time we were also discussing with Prabhupada quite a bit about FATE. And this was a very amazing conversation with Prabhupada. Prabhupada explained that his spiritual master had introduced a fascinating concept into his Gaudiya Math. He said, "My Guru Maharaja has introduced the concept of bankruptcy." And we were all sitting on the edge of our seats, so to speak, to hear what on earth is that?

And then Prabhupada explained, "Guru Maharaja would send out all of his men collecting for a specific project and they would raise the money for the project and they would sign the contracts and whatever was involved in building the project and they would give their Guru Maharaja all the money. Then having all the money, he would immediately spend it on one of his favorite preaching programs, dioramas. Then after giving all the money to the men who were making the dioramas, he would turn to his leading men and say, 'Where's the money? I need money.' And they would say, 'But Guru Maharaja, we just gave you the money.' And then he said, 'No, no, no, that's already been spent. I need the money.' So in this way he would get them to go out collecting and he would spend it on the dioramas."

So Prabhupada told us, "This was the policy of my Guru Maharaja so therefore I am also following this policy of taking the money that is being given for one purpose and using it for the dioramas." And

then he said, “My Guru Maharaja always kept his temples in debt, always, so that they would always have to work very very hard.” So that was one of the major conversations about FATE. Prabhupada, in 1974, in L. A. and in Detroit was giving very specific instructions about the importance of FATE, the role of FATE, the funding of FATE, and so on, and relating it to his Guru Maharaja.

## **Don't you dare change the picture on my book! — Srila Prabhupada**

So regarding the instructions that Prabhupada has given about the quality of his books. Prabhupada got involved in many of the facets related to his books. In 1974, for example, we had proposed to put a new picture on the cover of *Isopanisad*, Krsna playing the flute on the rock. We mailed a copy of the picture to Prabhupada and told him, “We're planning to do this.” Prabhupada fired back a letter, “Don't you dare change the picture on my book! I have deliberately chosen the picture of Visnu because I want this book to be attracting the Mayavadis and impersonalists.”

So that was the first direct instruction that I had received from Prabhupada which gave me an understanding of how much he would meditate on every facet of his books. The art, the size, the pictures, who the market was. And I began to realize Prabhupada is very much on top of his book design and publishing. So there was an incident that took place in I believe it was 1974, at the end of 1974 when Prabhupada was in Los Angeles, whenever he was in Los Angeles. At this time Karandhar was gone, Radhaballabha was in charge of the Press, Bali was the BBT trustee in New York and I was the manager of the BBT. And we were getting ready to reprint the Krsna Books.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** January, '75?

**Ramesvara:** No, because by then Bali was out. So it had to be

sometime in '74. Oh, no, wait, maybe it was January, '75.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Either that or July.

## **Prabhupada wrote hundreds of letters to the artists**

**Ramesvara:** Yeah, one of those two places. Now, I could find out the exact date because there's a letter that I wrote to the art department and to Radhaballabha. It's a four or five page letter, it's a very good letter for you to find and use as a reference. Because it's some of the most amazing instructions Prabhupada has given to the artists. Actually, it would also be very good in this connection to have someone pull the letters that Prabhupada wrote to Jadurani and Muralidhara and Baradraja. Because in these letters to the artists you have some of the most nectarean instructions ever given by Prabhupada.

And actually the artists were always writing letters to Prabhupada asking him to explain how he wants the transcendental lilas painted. How to paint the spirit soul, how to paint Krsna, how to paint the spiritual world, what it looks like, what the atmosphere is, what the ground should look like, all kinds of detailed questions. And Prabhupada would write hundreds of letters to his artists explaining to them the answers. Even though these questions bothered him sometimes, they were like teasing him, but still he took the time to always answer. He once had said that the BBT or ISKCON Press I should say, ISKCON Press is the heart of ISKCON. And the art department is the heart of the Press. So to Prabhupada these paintings were windows to the spiritual sky and this was the ingenious...



## The paintings sell the books

See, what Prabhupada did was so ingenious, it has to be appreciated from a historical point of view. No one in modern history has ever made philosophy books popular for the mass market. So what Prabhupada did was a stroke of genius and he should be described as...this should be understood to be part of Prabhupada's genius in knowing how to popularize Krsna consciousness. That he combined the world's deepest philosophy with paintings.

And the paintings added to this philosophy made the books popular, made very deep high level philosophy books popular to the masses. The average print run and distribution of a major philosophical work is miniscule in this world. In any language it's miniscule compared to the popular novels and the popular nonfiction works. Philosophy books just are not big sellers. So this was Prabhupada's genius. It cannot be in any way overstated, because it is an act of genius that he figured out how to have mass popularization of very high philosophy books. Prabhupada actually wanted 50 paintings in every volume. That was Prabhupada's vision. Genius! No philosopher ever thought of such a thing. And therefore their books never sell. These art paintings were the basis of all the book distribution.

Of course, it was our sincerity and our drive and our desire to please Prabhupada. But the technique was showing people the paintings, attracting their senses, getting them curious and interested and attracted by the art. The more beautiful the art the more you could tell people that this describes the most beautiful, peaceful way of life, the most beautiful spiritual thing, you have to find out these people have. You'd show the paintings and you'd say things like, "This explains how to experience the highest happiness. Just look at this painting. Wouldn't you like to be there?" The paintings were the basis for the book selling. And Prabhupada is the genius who thought that up.

So Prabhupada took a lot of care in developing his art department. This is another facet of Prabhupada's personality. His genius for transcendental marketing of Krsna consciousness in a massive way. This is what sets Prabhupada off from all of his dull headed Godbrothers who have no brains or ideas about how to spread this movement all over the world. They would never have thought of this idea. So the letters that Prabhupada wrote to the artists are full of the most amazing nectarean instructions. And they're worth reading I think and describing in the Lilamrta. They're so astonishing.

## **Let's update the Krsna Book paintings**

So anyway, by 1974, Radhaballabha and I and the artists were talking about reprinting the Krsna Book, let's update the paintings. These paintings were done in 1969, 1968. The artists have gotten much better. Their expertise was much better. So the decision was made by myself and Radhaballabha, we were going to upgrade all the paintings. The artists would get together with Radhaballabha and pick out which ones they wanted and then we would work it out together which ones to take out and which ones to put in.

## **They're ruining my books! They have no brain! They are hippies! - Prabhupada screamed**

So Prabhupada and Bali came to Los Angeles and I had a meeting with Prabhupada upstairs in his room and I started showing him all of the paintings that were coming out, page by page, and all the paintings that were going in. This was one of the most astonishing meetings I ever had with Prabhupada in my life. Just before we started going over the Krsna Book paintings, we went over these

drawings that Pariksit had done for the Teachings of Lord Caitanya. He had worked for one year on about 24 or so black and white drawings which would be going on the title page for each chapter of the Teachings of Lord Caitanya. This was his first major work at the BBT art department.

And they had sent them to me so I could show them to Prabhupada because we were getting ready to print the TLC in Dai Nippon. So we went through drawing after drawing after drawing and Prabhupada was becoming angrier and angrier and more and more livid, and it was becoming a frightening experience. He was condemning them, he was throwing them out, he was rejecting them, he was blasting them, he was describing how they were going to ruin his book, they're off, they're misrepresentative, they're not clear, they're bogus, and "If you put anything bogus in my book, this is my greatest fear that you will ruin my book and the whole book will be ruined because of you!" And on and on, it was devastating! And I wrote a letter to the artists with the description of Prabhupada's comments like a blow by blow because it was so impressed in my mind. As soon as I got out of the room I ran downstairs and typed out this letter, remembering all of the things Prabhupada said.

So I'll be able to find that letter and you can refer to it and you'll see exactly how Prabhupada analyzed the drawings in relation to what they were supposed to be illustrating very carefully and rejected them and just with devastating critique. Prabhupada was so expert. So then after going through that scene, then I took out the Krsna Book and said, "Now, these are the paintings they want to take out and these are the ones they want to put in, Srila Prabhupada." And we started again going page by page, color plate by color plate. And Prabhupada was becoming more and more livid, and more and more angry. And it was just the most terrifying experience that I have ever gone through. He was screaming, "They're ruining my books! They have no brain! They are hippies! They are rascals!" Screaming, pounding his fist on the desk. At one point they wanted to take out the old Putana, the dead Putana with Krsna sucking the

breast of Putana or playing on her lap, whatever it was, and in the background you have the Vrndavana village. And they wanted to put the new one in from the 2. 2 which Prabhupada considered to be an inferior painting because it did not show as much. “An ugly black lump,” he said.

But the worst was when we came to the rasalila. There were different reasons that Prabhupada gave why he didn’t want these paintings taken out and the new ones put in in most cases. He gave the instruction that “If you want to replace a painting it has to be same the exact same pastime, the exact same scene, just done technically better. But just to take a painting out that’s already been approved and stick in a new painting to fill up the number of pages of a different pastime, this is not allowed. You can add but you cannot subtract.” He would say like that. “If you want to take something out you replace it with the exact same lila executed better. Other than that, if you want to add something, just add it. But there’s no question of removing anything.”

So by the time we got to the rasalila, this was one of Prabhupada’s favorite paintings, the original Devahuti painting of the rasalila which we’ve made the poster of, which is now in the Krsna Book and so on. They wanted to take it out and they wanted to put this painting of Krsna dancing with the gopis from the first printing of the Third Canto, Volume 2. Now in the reprinting of the Third Canto, Volume 2 this rasalila has been taken out and the original Krsna Book rasalila has been put in. Because the rasalila that they wanted to put in the Krsna Book was the final straw. Prabhupada just turned white! He looked into his bedroom at the original painting which was hanging on his wall.

From his sitting room in Los Angeles he could look into his bedroom. He turned white. He looked at that painting. Then he looked down at the painting that they were proposing was better. Krsna’s hair was wild and long, Radharani’s head was uncovered, the gopi’s hair was uncovered. It was like, Prabhupada said, “hippie dance, sex

dance. Hippie seeds, hippie contamination, hippie mentality, hippie, hippie, dirty! Rascals!” On and on. Prabhupada was screaming, banging his fist on the desk. There was nothing you could say, it was just an explosion that “They’re ruining my books.” Hearing the screaming, Sudama, who was acting as Prabhupada’s servant ran into the room opened the door and seeing... just as he came in Prabhupada was banging and releasing a barrage.

And Sudama couldn’t even offer his obeisances. I remember looking at him, he was terrified. He lifted up his hand to his face to shield his eyes. He somehow pushed himself into the back wall and lifted up a foot like he was towering, like he was about to be attacked. And he was just holding himself, cringing. Finally Prabhupada said, “Go get Bali Mardan.” So I ran downstairs. I found Bali. I said, “Bali, Prabhupada is so angry at the artists, Radhaballabha, me and you. You better come upstairs immediately.” So Bali ran upstairs and Prabhupada just explained how everyone’s a rascal for daring to touch anything in his books.

## **Prabhupada’s greatest anxiety is that we will change his books**

The greatest anxiety he has is that after he’s gone we will add things to his books that are bogus, we will take things out that are bona fide, we will make changes in his books and the whole work for 10,000 years, his plan Prabhupada was working on, it will all be spoiled by us because of our tendency to change. And Prabhupada gave an example that the disease to do things differently is so inherent in the Americans that for the sake of doing things differently we would walk on our hands rather than our feet. He gave different examples like that. He called the artists rascals.

So we promised Prabhupada that we wouldn’t change the art. And then I wrote the letter to the artists explaining to them everything. I remember Bali Mardan went downstairs to call them up and I

remember watching the phone call. He called up the Press and asked for Radhaballabha, (imitating Bali's voice) Radhaballabha, guess what just happened? Prabhupada called you and all the artists rascals. He said you're all rascals" Dead silence on the other end. And Bali, he was enjoying this humiliation of the devotees that worked under him. So I saw that and it was the beginning of my suspecting that something's off with Bali Mardan.

## **You're never allowed to change anything in Prabhupada's books**

So that was a big event, the first of many with the Isopanisad cover and these paintings. The first of many experiences I've had with Prabhupada literally drilling me, pounding it into my head that you're never allowed to change anything in his books. He trained me so intensely on this point. Even when the changes make sense he wouldn't let me change. Just to train me. One time in early 1975 was it? When Prabhupada came to L. A.?

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Yes, January, end of January.

## **Change the size of Krsna Book? NO**

**Ramesvara:** I presented to Prabhupada that we could no longer afford to print the hardbound Krsna Book in two volumes. We already published the paperback Krsna Book in three volumes. So I had the task, the service of trying to beg Prabhupada to let us print his hardbound Krsna Book in three volumes. The discussion went on for an hour in his room. Prabhupada was just telling me how he had planned out the Krsna Book in two volumes from the very beginning. He had planned it like that and I'm ruining the plan. And that the whole feeling was that it's not just Prabhupada's plan, it's

Krsna's plan and He spoke it to Prabhupada and then Prabhupada just did it like that.

So it was so heavy and I was presenting all the arguments about the economics of it and so on. Because the oil embargo had killed the printing industry. The price had gone up 50% on everything. And I told Prabhupada if we don't make this change to three volumes the book will be out of print, we can't afford it. We're already contracted with Dai Nippon to reprint the Krsna Books, they've already bought the paper, we have to go ahead but they've raised their price and there's nothing they can do. They won't honor the original contracts. So finally after about an hour, Prabhupada was so unhappy, so depressed about it, he finally consented to make it three volumes like the paperbacks. Then I mentioned to Prabhupada that Dai Nippon had proposed that this book would be so much cheaper if we just print it in the same size as the Srimad-Bhagavatam instead of the bigger size.

When I said that there was another one of those famous transcendental explosions! He banged his fist on his desk, he told me that he had planned it in that size and nothing will change it and he threw me out of his room. He just threw me out. So in this way he was training me to understand how meticulous every detail of Prabhupada's books, his translations, his purports especially are designed. The concept, the market, the cover pictures, everything Prabhupada would...whenever he was involved he was just meditating so deeply on his books and how to present them to the world.

And I never knew how much Prabhupada was involved in those decisions. So it came as a great surprise and a great...very wonderful, very wonderful to see. So then in 1975 the Mayapur festival came upon us. And it was at that time, due to my foolishness Of course being preoccupied with Bali, in the whole year of '74 Bali was really in charge of the Press and I was in charge of the managing of the BBT, but he was in charge of the Press.

## **Caitanya-caritamrta not being printed by BBT**

So I never really thought to make inquiry how many manuscripts has Prabhupada written that you haven't published yet. I just assumed that Radhaballabha was on top of it and Bali was on top of it. So I didn't find out till Mayapur, '75, the awful news that Prabhupada had already finished the entire Caitanya-caritamrta and was getting ready to start on the Fifth Canto. We had only published Volume 2. There had been a big fight over Volume 2 because Bali wanted to publish it in the Krsna Book size. I think I told this story, and I finally convinced Prabhupada to let us go down to the Bhagavatam size. So the first printing of Volume 2 was the Krsna Book size. Then came Volume...what came next? After Volume'2, maybe Volume 3 came next and then finally Volume 1. I think it came in that order. Yes. In any event, the reason Volume 1 was so big was because we started with Volume 2.

So they didn't have any idea how many chapters and how long the purports were in Volume 1. Not how many chapters, but how long the purports were. Because Prabhupada hadn't finished it. Or the Press hadn't finished it. Radhaballabha could tell you, he's here in town, he could tell you more specifically why they did Volume 2 first. But anyway, they did so we were stuck with a thick Volume 1. Anyway, I asked Radhaballabha to quickly calculate how many volumes is the Caitanya-caritamrta. Now that Prabhupada's finished you could figure it out. He did some line counts, he did some chapter counts and our whole mind was blown. We had always been going under the assumption that it was 12 volumes. Well, it turns out it was 17 volumes. Nine Madhya-lilas, five Antya-lilas and three Adi-lilas. And the Adi-lila should have been four. So at Mayapur we came to learn that we were about 15 volumes behind and Prabhupada was moving right into the Fifth Canto.

And by the time another month or so passed. ...Because Prabhupada



was going to Hawaii and Hawaii was Prabhupada's favorite place for translating. I mean he translated so fast in Hawaii. So he was going to do the whole Fifth Canto. Prabhupada translated the Caitanya-caritamrta so quickly, faster than anything else. I think it states in the concluding words that the whole 17 volumes was translated and written, the purports were written, all in 18 months. That's a pace of a book a month. For an author who's actually only able to write by giving up his sleep because he's too busy all the rest of the time to write.

Now this writing feat of the Caitanya-caritamrta is one of the great literary miracles of our time. Because when you consider how many letters Prabhupada was answering every day, how much Prabhupada was traveling around the world in 1974, how many problems Prabhupada had to deal with. He dealt with the Hawaii problems, he dealt with the Bali Mardan problems, he dealt with a lot of problems. He was keeping his personal sankirtana party going out in Japan all the time so he had to deal with that problem. India was still a mess.

Because in 1974, about two months after the GBC meeting, the GBC of India, Tamal Krsna Maharaja, decided that he had had enough of India and he was coming back to America. So that left India without a GBC. So in effect Prabhupada had to become the GBC for India during 1974. Plus organizing all the loans to be building up the world wide movement, approving all of the growth of the whole...So during that period Prabhupada writes a full volume a month and sustains that pace by giving up his sleep over 18 months. This is a literary miracle of unprecedented nature that someone could write like this while doing so many other activities simultaneously. It is a miracle. It is inconceivable potency. And it should be understood like that.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Isn't it the same time that disciples weren't keeping up with him?

**Ramesvara:** And nobody knew except a handful of them how far

ahead Prabhupada really was. So at Mayapur '75 it came out. Nitai and Pradyumna, we were talking and it came out and everybody was stunned. Everyone considered that the Press was mismanaged. At that time I had brought pictures of the building that the Press is now in and I said this building is for sale or lease. Even if they don't sell it to us we can lease it. This is the place we want to move the Press to. So the combination of being so far behind and having this perfect building ready to go and putting it under new management, Prabhupada decided, "O. K., move it. Move the Press." And during that festival Prabhupada started really talking about how disturbed he was that he had written so many books and they're not publishing them. Very disturbed.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Who would he speak to?

## **World War III prediction**

**Ramesvara:** Me. One or two other members of the GBC. He just let it be known that he thought it was...But it was just building up. The full anger was to hit as he was getting ready to leave Hawaii and come to L. A. So I think it was during that 1975 festival. 1974 festival was the famous varnasrama talks. Now 1975 festival was the famous World War III prediction. I remember being on the walk. It started out like a normal morning walk. But as we were getting on down the Mayapur road and then turning up the path towards the goshala, we walked out the front gate down Bhaktisiddhanta Road, then we were going to turn up towards...right at that time Prabhupada said, "Very soon there will be a war." He started off like that.

And the devotees who were walking at different distances from one another and from Prabhupada, in an instant came crushing in around Prabhupada, almost as if he was going to be crushed, they were just diving in to the crowded huddle around Prabhupada just to hear, a war, Prabhupada had just completely captured everybody in one statement. And then of course he went on with his famous

talk about Russia and America and World War III. And there's a whole history to these talks. Rupanuga and Balavanta probably know the history better than anyone and it makes for a very interesting section in understanding Prabhupada's personality. How he would actually reveal things, historical things that have happened in the past and that are about to happen in the future. Just as I mentioned that time when Prabhupada talked about unemployment destroying America.

So there were a number of devotees that Prabhupada would regularly talk to about this war with. He gave very explicit instructions to Balavanta and Rupanuga about it and in 1977 he gave very detailed instructions to myself. And I have that on my tapes and in my diary which we'll get to later. So that was of course a very very big big overwhelming bomb that Prabhupada had just dropped. And the devotees, I remember, the whole GBC was there, all the sannyasis, everybody was just completely besides themselves. It was just an overwhelming experience. Prabhupada had just revealed something so amazing. Then as we were walking back to the temple the kirtan of the devotees waiting for Prabhupada was building and building and building and the whole mood changed as Prabhupada went to greet the Deities, sit down for chanting Jaya Radha-Madhava and start his Bhagavatam class. Do a circumambulation around the temple, ringing the bells.

That lecture, that Bhagavatam class that Prabhupada gave that morning right after that morning walk, that should also be transcribed and listened to. Because that also has information about the war. But mainly the devotees who were on the morning walk picked up on it. But there was something very definite that Prabhupada said about who was going to win that war in that morning class. So that's very interesting if you're going to get into it in the Lilamrta. A combination of the morning tape and the morning class, if you listen to that you'll have a good idea what he said. So anyway, it was decided that the Press was going to move and that was the most significant thing I can remember from that 1975.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Do you think that also had...that combination of war coming and being so far behind in his books, was there any connection or just the urgency?

## **Expanding the BBT Library Party**

**Ramesvara:** No one made any connection at that time. I would have to think about it. I don't want to speculate. It might be that Prabhupada wanted those books out so fast because he was thinking like that. So of course by this time Prabhupada was getting regular reports from Satsvarupa Maharaja about the BBT library party and giving directions. We had decided together it was to expand to other countries outside of America and so all the different types of book distribution were going on and Prabhupada was in each case stroking the fire and building up the fever in all of his men. Letters that Prabhupada was writing to Satsvarupa Maharaja are some of the most significant that's every been written.

Prabhupada telling him that "Your work of selling these books to the libraries and educational institutions is the most important work in the whole movement. Do not doubt this for a second." When Prabhupada writes a letter like that to somebody he's stroking the fire. So Prabhupada was expert at actually building up the book distribution. And the publishing, all the major decisions. From the design to the price of the printing to even the printing house. And as far as the management, ISKCON management giving loans, building special projects, the businesses of the Society, all the construction, all the land acquisition, all the building acquisition, it was all being master-minded by Prabhupada. He was the mastermind on a worldwide scale. And as far as Prabhupada's being a visionary, not only a historian. He's much more than a historian. He's a visionary. He's a revolutionary but he's also a visionary personality who could see things that no one else saw that were happening in the world.

There were different things about the projects or the different things going on in ISKCON and how they related to Prabhupada. Some projects were directly Prabhupada's projects, regardless of who was in charge. They weren't those person's projects, they were Prabhupada's projects. So examples would be just like the BBT. It didn't matter who was in charge of the BBT, that was Prabhupada's project, that was Prabhupada's. Or the BBT Library Party. That was actually Prabhupada. Mayapur, Vrndavana, Bombay, those were Prabhupada's projects. Later on Hyderabad also became one of Prabhupada's projects. The FATE dioramas, completely Prabhupada's projects. So there were things like that which were just completely...the Nama Hatta sankirtana party.

## **How Prabhupada approved projects / BBT loans**

Then there were some special projects which were a combination of Prabhupada's vision and the ISKCON disciple of Prabhupada, the personality involved that shaped those projects. Just like these temple loans that Prabhupada was agreeing to give out. He didn't initiate. He wasn't the one deciding what the building was going to be in Melbourne or anything like that. So the local personalities from around the world would be choosing projects and then presenting them to Prabhupada, "Can we do this? Does this meet with your approval?" And then if he liked it, then "Yes. And here is my vision how to develop it." And then there was some management in ISKCON which was practically based mainly on the personalities involved where Prabhupada gave a lot of room to these very strong headed personalities just to engage them. These were people that weren't so malleable.

Just like Bali or Madhuvisa or even Gurukrupa, Gargamuni. All of these men had big projects which they had created and they were so strong headed that they were going to do it their way and

Prabhupada was just authorizing it, sanctioning it. So Prabhupada dealt differently with different things. Some things were directly his. Some things were somebody else's but they were very malleable towards Prabhupada and they would come up with the idea, present it to Prabhupada, he would choose or not whether he wanted to authorize it. Then there were other things where these people were so heavy that all Prabhupada could do practically speaking to keep them going was just sanction whatever they're coming up with. So in this way Prabhupada dealt with his movement in different ways.

## **Prabhupada's Mayapur Vrndavana Trust money**

In 1973 after the Arab embargo on oil in America, the interest rates in America crashed. There was a phenomenal reaction. And after awhile all of Prabhupada's Mayapur-Vrndavana money that he had been accumulating, which had now come to in the area of \$700,000 or so, maybe even \$1,000,000, it had really built up, was hardly making any interest rates. Prabhupada had kept all of that money in fixed deposits at banks. So the interest rates crashed. So there were different proposals what to do with that money. Someone said put it all in real estate, someone said this, someone said that. But ultimately Prabhupada made the decision.

He wanted to keep the money in fixed deposits and he started checking around to different countries in the world who had higher interest rates than America. Mexico, some countries in Europe, ultimately Prabhupada chose India. At that time the interest rates in America they were down to 5% or 6%, in India it was still up around 10% or 11%. So we told Prabhupada if you move all these fixed deposits in India then you will never be able to take the money out of India. Because once it goes into Indian currency, that's it. Prabhupada said, "That's all right. This money is meant for India development. This is why it's called the Mayapur-Vrndavana Trust."

And he moved his money to India.

Now this is a very interesting thing about Prabhupada because while he turned everything over to the BBT, all of his rights, his royalties, his books, copyrights, everything he turned over to the BBT, and while he arranged for the temple management within ISKCON to be completely autonomous and decentralized, and while he was doing all these other things of writing books and organizing a worldwide movement and masterminding the construction and the acquisitions and solving everybody's problems, while he was in the midst of doing all of these things he was also in the midst of raising money personally for the Mayapur-Vrindavana Trust. Wherever Prabhupada went he would get money and very...with great, great discipline that is rarely seen in ISKCON, if ever, Prabhupada would take that money and put it into the Mayapur-Vrindavana Trust.

It was always very interesting. Prabhupada had this little red case that he used to carry. And there was a key to it kept in another pouch. So it was a whole elaborate thing opening up Prabhupada's cases with all the keys. One time when Prabhupada came to L. A. there was a pouch. You take the key out, you open up the red case. Within the red case there was a key. You take that key out and you can open up his elmira in his quarters in L. A. or his trunks. Prabhupada had this whole elaborate system of keys for locking things. He was very meticulous. He would never let that red case, like an attache case, out of his sight. Never. Wherever he traveled his servant had to carry it, in the airplane it would sit at his feet, in a car picking him up at an airport it would sit right with him in the car. He never let it out of his sight.

Any money he got from daksina from any of his disciples he would put in that case and as soon as possible deposit it. So over a few years time, Prabhupada had built up a fortune. While doing everything else that we know he did, at the same time he built up personally this fund. By the time he moved the money from L. A. to India it had between 5 and \$700,000 in it minimum. By the time

Prabhupada departed from the planet it had over a million dollars in it. And that's after Prabhupada gave money for the building of the Mayapur temple, after Prabhupada gave the money for the building of the Vrndavana temple, after Prabhupada arranged for the money for the Bombay temple and the Hyderabad temple, even after that. And all the land acquisition that he had supervised, he still had over a million dollars left. Prabhupada was such an extraordinary personality, he left a million dollars in cash in the Mayapur-Vrndavana Trust that he had personally built up.

On top of everything else he was organizing he was building up this money. And it's not easy to build up in cash over a million dollars. Prabhupada had built up much more than a million dollars but he had disbursed from the Gurukrpa sankirtana party money to these different temple projects. And still there was a million dollars left when he disappeared. This is also very extraordinary. To be traveling around the world and doing all of the different things he's doing and at the same time be raising this money. While having a very autonomous, decentralized system for managing all the individual temples, to be simultaneously building up this central fund for Mayapur-Vrndavana. Just genius. Actually it's just genius that Prabhupada did this. So that was Prabhupada's decision to move that money to India. And it turned out to be a good one.

## **Prabhupada would not allow changes even if the change was an improvement**

There were times when Prabhupada was confronted with a situation where being very practical came up against one of his principles. So I'm sure there are examples of Prabhupada leaning in both ways. But I generally remembered and the way I was trained is that Prabhupada put more emphasis in his training to me on the principles even than on the practicality. Even though I'm known a little bit for being very practical minded. Just like with the BBT.



The size of the books, the type of art in the books and so on, on principle Prabhupada would not allow changes even if the change was an improvement. Just to teach that principle of don't change.

When the Dallas Gurukula was collapsing, I begged Prabhupada, "Let us send money from the BBT." He said, "No. It is not the business of the BBT to support children, it is the business of parents." The parents didn't have any money, how could they support the children? But on this principle, Prabhupada wouldn't let the BBT bail out the Dallas Gurukula and it closed. I was ready to bail them out. I proposed it, I wanted to bail it out, but it just didn't happen. So, I think we can stop here and tomorrow...There's one more incident in the 1975 Mayapur which is the opening of the Krsna-Balarama temple. So I can talk about that and then we'll go into 1975 with the Caitanya-caritamrtas and the Radha-Damodar sankirtana and the building of Bombay.

## **The rise of book distribution**

The rise of book distribution was like a meteor, literally meteoric, is that the word? From the early days in 1971, the first discovery, and pioneering to the accidental discovery of the Christmas marathon at the end of 1972, the enthusiasm, the inspiration was there but the large scale distribution did not begin until 1973. Between the period 1970 and 1972 when the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust was first being formed, the actual income of the BBT was gradually growing from about \$50,000 or \$100,000 a year up to maybe several hundred thousand dollars a year. But after the 1972 Christmas marathon, there was a quantum leap and throughout 1973 the BBT sold over 4,100,000 literatures to the temples which brought an income of over 1 or 2 million dollars. In other words, in a period of one year the Society's book distribution had increased by almost 10 times, tenfold. And the pattern had been set.

## **Book distribution changes the daily life of the devotees**

In 1970, the daily life of a devotee consisted of going to the morning program as it had just been introduced by Srila Prabhupada and spending most of his day out on a chanting party in one of the downtown city's busy streets. Devotees would sometimes spend 8 or 10 hours a day chanting, they would distribute the Society's magazine, Back to Godhead, in between the kirtans devotees would read scripture to themselves and sometimes a collection from interested bystanders would be taken up. In Los Angeles, with the Broadway play Aquarius moving to Hollywood theaters on Sunset Boulevard, the devotees would stay out on the chanting party until midnight because of course the chanting of Hare Krsna was so prominently featured. And this was the daily life of a devotee. Going to the morning program, eating sumptuous prasadam and going and chanting on the street corners for 12 hours a day. Coming back to the temple late at night and just going to take rest. And this was the pattern.

Except of course on Sunday which was the big Sunday festival. But with the beginning of book distribution in 1971 the pattern of life was changing. First there was a new concept of sankirtana. And there was a new personality in the temple called the sankirtana leader. And gradually as the book distribution expanded from the door to door program to going to stores and malls to the accidental discovery in 1973 of airports, the sankirtana leader's job became more and more demanding and sophisticated.

He now had to coordinate a whole fleet of vehicles, he had to maintain them, he had to purchase them, he had to repair them, he had to direct his sankirtana party, sometimes only 2 or 3 men per car, in loading their vehicles, in keeping track of inventories that were going in and out of the temple storehouses, in plotting out the areas of the city where the door to door distributors should

go, where the store distributors should go, mapping out an entire city for sankirtana. It became a part of the temple life that a new devotee who would join would be trained and as soon as possible, say within 3 or 4 months of his becoming a little steady, he would join one of these book distribution parties. Whereas previously he would have just joined the chanting party. So a pattern was being set.

In 1972 the GBC in the western United States, Karandhar, regionalized book distribution. He established it in every temple in his zone. That became a pattern that an entire zone would be organized around book distribution. He set up the first traveling parties and soon every temple in his zone had traveling sankirtana parties. Brahmacharis would be sleeping in vans just to get away from the temple atmosphere where the sense of urgency and the priority of distributing books was not universally felt or at least not everyone was acting on it.

There were many different areas in a temple. Where was pujari area, cooking department, so many different departments, chanting party. So to send out the men on traveling sankirtana which created a exclusive environment for the men to just be absorbed in the book distribution and not think of anything else was a breakthrough. And this became regionalized. Soon every temple in the western United States had a traveling sankirtana party. So that also became a pattern of life in ISKCON.

## **Sending the best distributors out to train others**

By 1973 when we wrote the letter to Srila Prabhupada that we were preparing to send our best distributor, Tripurari, to New York and then Chicago to teach the art of book distribution, this had tremendous significance for the whole Society. Because when Prabhupada wrote back in that letter of 1973 that “I approve your

program of sending out your best men to train others, this is the process of Krsna consciousness, do it so that every devotee in this movement learns the art of distributing my books,”

Prabhupada’s instruction endorsed a whole new era in our movement. We were in a sense transplanting all of the ideas, the techniques, the systems that had been developed in the west coast temples in different regions of America. And gradually we were sending out representatives not only to train up or to establish and transplant these practices in other temples in America, but we were sending our best men to Europe and to Australia and to Mexico and South American countries. It was taking on the shape of a very mature and sophisticated expansion. Almost a transcendental version of a giant company springing to life and marketing and opening up franchises all over the world. It began to take on that appearance.

Simultaneously in ’72 and ’73 with the transplanting of the expertise and the techniques and the systems, how a sankirtana leader would map a city out, how he would keep track of the individual devotee’s results. Even we had in the sankirtana room we had a whole system that we had developed which we transplanted everywhere. It consisted of a huge blackboard with lines and the devotees names. And they would sign in every day so that the whole temple could come into that room and at one glance they could understand how big the devotees were doing. They could understand which devotees were going out. And late at night when the sankirtana devotees would come back, there would always be maha-prasadam waiting. That became an institution.

Sankirtana devotees get the best prasadam. Prabhupada even wrote a letter about it that they get the best prasadam and the most rest because they’re doing the most important work. So late at night they would sit around the sankirtana room drinking milk, taking maha-prasadam and telling stories. The tales of the day, the adventurous exploits of the day, the boldness of one sankirtana devotee recited in

this forum would enthuse and excite the others to go out on the next day's sankirtana and be even more bold themselves. So there was a mood that was being built up and this became institutionalized that this is how you organize your sankirtana office, this is how you organize your sankirtana party. You have the big blackboard, you list the scores of the men, you have these gatherings in the evening around maha-prasadam which would assure that the gathering would take place.

And you create an atmosphere where men are enlivened to tell sankirtana stories and embolden and strengthen one another. And we even introduced sankirtana skits where one devotee would play an expert book distributor, another devotee would play different character roles of different types of people that we would meet in society. A priest, an elderly gentleman, a household couple shopping, a young military boy. And we would have skits of a hardened businessman where the devotee characterizing the conditioned soul would use every argument not to take the book. The book distributor would have to break down his arguments, disarm him, come up with a counter line based on friendliness, humor, wit and probing, sharp forays into his defenses. And so this was institutionalized all over the Society.

With Prabhupada's blessing this sankirtana technique and program actually was transplanted. It was almost as if it was on his order because he wrote that letter with such strong support that the doors to all of the other temples became opened. It was as if Prabhupada wanted this, whatever the technique was, whatever the system was that distributed his books, he wanted it everywhere. And he ordered it and it was done.

## **Shopping malls declared illegal for book distribution**

So patterns were being set so that throughout the year 1973 the entire United States and Canada and Australia, it had gone that had taken up very seriously the book distribution and the results were phenomenal. A phenomenal leap. Ten times the previous year's distribution, up to 4 million literatures. And at least 1 or 2 million dollars. The figures we can check if they're required. By 1974 some major changes had taken place. in the American sankirtana. There was a major Supreme Court decision in '73 which was based upon Viet Nam war protestors going to private malls and distributing leaflets in Oregon.

The Supreme Court ruled that private property rights were being violated and that citizens of nonprofit interest groups which would include religions have no longer any access to private property unless the owner of the private property agrees to invite him. All of a sudden all of our sankirtana spots were shut down. The malls and so on. Out of necessity we approached a lawyer and asked if there was anything we could do against this Supreme Court decision. He told us that private property was definitely off limits and it would be a very long time if ever before it could be reopened for our sankirtana.

## **Moving from shopping malls to public property**

We felt cheated. We had been taught that everything was the property of Krsna, we're his sons, we have a right to go and talk about our father on His property, and so on. But the lawyer did tell us that using the same Constitution that had barred us from the private property, we could have access to public property. We made

an experiment. We filed a lawsuit against an airport in Las Vegas because the airport was owned by the city. We won an immediate injunction that the city and the airport was depriving us of our right to free speech as it was a public place. A new era was ushered in in early 1974.

We began to map out the most important transportation and airport terminals around the United States. On behalf of all the temples in America we started legalizing for our sankirtana the major airports. Then in late '74 we expanded into another forum, the county and state fairs which were also public properties. And by '75 we were going into zoos, parks, national parks, convention centers. The world again was a lark and the devotees were able to go everywhere and distribute.

So a pattern had been set into motion from the early very enthusiastic but stumbling pioneer days of '71 and '72 to a transcendental multi-national or international system for organizing warehousing, organizing shipping, organizing accounting, organizing the distribution techniques, a very sophisticated legal network was set up with all the temples to organize the legalization of sankirtana. And suddenly within a period of one or two years, just as much as the distribution was skyrocketing so the devotee's expertise and sophistication in dealing with the world about us was simultaneously skyrocketing.

## **Big leaders fall but nothing could stop the movement**

From the early days of our movement in the late '60s and early 1970 to where we were at in 1974 was a world of difference. A whole new pattern of life, a whole new level of expertise had been ushered in. It was a new era. Another pattern was set during these days. The original BBT trustees had enormous authority and power invested in them by Prabhupada. Karandhar, Bali Mardan, and

Prabhupada's personal secretary during those years, those early 1970's was Syamasundar. In a matter of two or three years all of them had been struck down by maya.

First Syamasundar fell victim to the lure of money in 1973. Then at the very end of 1973, Karandhar he fell prey to the lure of women and intoxicants. And then in 1974 Bali had fallen away, again due to the lure of money and women. And how Prabhupada dealt with this was also very significant. It became a standard. It established a principle. These men, these three men had so much authority, so much position, but their falling away did not rock the Society. Prabhupada did not display unusual emotion, lamentation. Undoubtedly he was feeling very very unhappy, sorrowful, how to save his disciples who had rendered him so much service.

But outwardly, Prabhupada was deliberately detached and calm and determined to push forward. He established the principle that this movement would go on even if the biggest individuals fell away, nothing like that could stop this movement. The movement did not depend on one individual. It was a dynamic spiritual movement. In the earlier days if the big leaders had fallen away, it was such a shock and Prabhupada expressed it openly, sometimes with transcendental tears. But this was different. Prabhupada was now creating a world wide movement. It couldn't depend on one individual.

## **Moving the printing from Japan to America**

So this was an important lesson to all of us. Seeing these three big leaders fall from the middle of 1973 to the end of 1974 they were gone. New leaders filled their place. And nothing changed. The movement went on. It was a new standard. It was part of the new era that this movement was too dynamic, growing too fast and rapidly to be checked by anything. So with the meteoric rise



of book distribution, Prabhupada began planning out huge book print-ing. In 1974, the BBT was established as one of the major religious publishers, one of the major independent new publishing houses. Up to this point we had been doing all of our printing with Dai Nippon, the largest printer of Japan.

But world conditions were forcing the rise in prices due to the successful oil embargo and the huge quantum jump in the price of oil, the entire inflationary cycle set into the society and Japan was hit the hardest. All of their raw materials had to be imported. All of their finished goods had to be exported. They had enormous costs that other manufacturers didn't face. So we began to take, what was for us, a very sophisticated step. We began exploring the world printing market or printing industry. With Prabhupada's guidance and his approval we brought the printing out of Japan and back to America.

Again, Prabhupada's boys were becoming men. They were becoming expert, sophisticated. It's not that they went to business schools, marketing schools, advertising schools, publishing trade schools. This knowledge was springing up automatically on account of the dynamic spiritual process. The expertise was just suddenly appearing and Prabhupada's boys were becoming sophisticated. The selection of printing became a sophisticated art in research and negotiation. Playing printers off each other to get the prices down. All with Prabhupada's approval.

## **Getting the Bhagavad-gita As It Is back from Macmillan**

In 1974 we were faced with a great dilemma. Our most important single book for distribution was the Bhagavad-gita As It Is. The rights had been given to Macmillan in 1969 and 1970 before Prabhupada even dreamed of his own Society distributing books in large quantities. It had appeared in those days that the only method

or avenue for book distribution was through commercial channels, the stores and so on. And therefore Prabhupada signed the rights away to a commercial publisher, the Macmillan Company. By 1974 the BBT was projecting a doubling of book distribution from the previous year. We wanted badly to distribute the Bhagavad-gitas but due to the inflation in the society, the Macmillan Company raised their price accordingly.

Now as an active publisher we could understand that we were being cheated. We knew the price of paper, we knew the price of printing. Macmillan was charging two or three times as much for each copy as we could have paid if we were ordering the book directly ourselves. How to break the contract? We were bewildered. We could no longer afford to distribute the Bhagavad-gita. We presented the matter to Prabhupada in 1974 and as usual Prabhupada had the answer. He always had the answer, he always appeared to have an answer to everything. He was to us a transcendental genius who knew everything about everything.

So Prabhupada looked back into his transcendental memory and remembered a clause in the contract which allowed for the rights to be withdrawn from Macmillan and the contract to be terminated if the book had gone out of print. We did not have the sophistication at that time to read a legal contract and draw out the secret how to terminate the agreement with Macmillan. Neither did we think of taking the contract to a lawyer. At that time we were just beginning to have relationships with professional legal counsel for opening up the airports. It had just begun in 1974, March. So we were very innocent when it came to matters of law.

But Prabhupada remembered the contract which was written 4, 5 or even 6 years ago. I believe that first contract was dated 1968. And he remembered that if the book goes out of print, then the publisher has to immediately reprint it. But if he doesn't then the author or his agents can demand that the rights be turned over. Then the publisher would have the option to reprint it or not reprint it.

If they chose not to reprint it, that would mean they could not find enough orders, enough market, and then the rights would go back to the author after a period of one or two months. So Prabhupada remembered this clause and he told us personally that “You should write letters from different centers and order all the books in their warehouse.

Then after all of the books that they have in their stock are shipped, that would mean that they are out of print. Then you place a new order challenging them to reprint it. If they say they can’t fill the order, then you send the copy of their letter addressed to one of your centers to BBT office and then let the BBT as the agent for the author write them a letter demanding that they either reprint the book or they release the rights.” So Prabhupada developed this scheme. We carried it out, we found out that Macmillan had no longer any of the abridged editions of Bhagavad-gita in print, as we had been distributing for the last several years the unabridged.

So Prabhupada said, “Start with the abridged. Check them, place orders from one or two centers to see if they’re out of print or not. And if they are, use their reply letters to force them to either print it again or turn the rights over to you.” So we followed Prabhupada’s instructions and it worked like a charm. Macmillan had no conception that ISKCON was going to be able to publish the book themselves, they didn’t think that there was a market, they didn’t think of forcing ISKCON to buy from them, they just released the rights.

Within a matter of months we had the Bhagavad-gita back, even though it was the abridged edition. In our enthusiasm and in our expectation of the biggest book distribution ever we approached the Dai Nippon Company in 1974 for one last printing job which we could not yet afford in America. Dai Nippon was still willing to give very attractive credit terms. We asked Dai Nippon to print 350,000 hardbound copies of one title. It was a milestone in the history of religious publishing or the publishing of any great philosophical

text in the world. Probably one of the largest orders that had ever been commissioned. Needless to say, Prabhupada when he heard about it was very very happy.

The books were printed and on the basis of those books being printed on such easy credit terms the book distribution in America got another great push. Our system had been set up by Prabhupada to mark up the book 100% and distribute to the temples, let them then mark up the same book 100% and distribute to the public. If the book cost the BBT \$1, we would sell it for \$2. The temples would then be able to sell it for \$4. Everyone would make enough profit for their overhead to be met and the balance would be used to keep the books in print. And on the BBT side the excess profit would be used by Prabhupada in purchasing land, acquiring buildings and constructing temples.

That was Prabhupada's design. And he insisted on it. So by printing one title in such large quantity we were able to negotiate wonderful credit terms. And because the credit was negotiated we were able to print. And because the print was in such large quantity, the unit price became very low. And because the unit price was very low we were able to distribute it to the temples at a very low price. And so by this introduction in 1974 of mass printings, the temples were now getting a hardbound book at a ridiculously low price. And so this was another cause of the book distribution to begin to mushroom.

The temples were now getting hardbound books which anyone would give a five or ten dollar donation for, 64 color plates, beautiful dust jacket, beautiful imitation leather binding and cloth, for the ridiculous price of \$2. So the temples were happy and the books were going out faster than ever. The books going out faster than ever meant turn around, the BBT's coffers were being filled. So this was the pattern that was set up throughout 1974.

## **Book distribution flourishes at airports, fairs and parks**

We had by the end of the year legalized about 10 or 15 of the major airports in America. And each airport was filled with 5 to 12 expert book distributors. Everywhere in America the major public forums, the major transportation centers, the major fairs, the major parks were places for our preaching, for our men to go to distribute. With a small, dedicated band of men our presence was being felt throughout all of America. And just as in the early days we had been famous for the chanting of Hare Krsna in the streets, so now everyone was talking about Hare Krsna.

Millions and millions of Americans were getting the books of the Hare Krsna movement. Hare Krsna was becoming another household word. Of course, problems began to develop. As I mentioned, at the end of 1974 there was some alarm about how far a book distributor could go in saying whatever was necessary in order to distribute the book. Prabhupada wrote a letter in January of '75 setting very strict guidelines. And curbing any possible overzealous or even illegal or misrepresentative tendencies in his men. But he never ordered a withdrawal from those public places. He wanted more and more the book distribution to go on.

## **ISKCON — From poor to rich**

Within a matter of one or two years the whole situation of our Society had dynamically been altered from struggling to maintain the rent to having millions and millions of dollars to spend on construction and loans to temples and donations to India. We were donating by the end of 1974 \$200,000 worth of books to New York. By the end of 1974 we had donated at least \$300,000 worth of books for distribution to India. A whole new era had set in.

And Prabhupada saw that it was caused by book distribution. And he wrote more and more letters impressing the desire and the importance of book distribution into the minds of his leading disciples. He wanted book distribution to double so that the major plans that he had for constructing huge cultural centers in India and ultimately constructing a huge spiritual city in Mayapur would all be funded by book distribution. It was right around this time that we began seriously distributing books in Europe which later on would prove to be our biggest market for our books.

## **Book distribution replaces the chanting parties**

So the pattern had been set. A whole new way of life had been ushered in. In fact, the importance of the chanting party began to diminish. As Prabhupada wrote several letters that amongst the different types of chanting, distributing books was the greater chanting. Using the phrase *brhatmrdunga*, greater *mrdunga*, Prabhupada was facing questions from his disciples, what is more important, distributing the books or going out on Harinama? Harinama had been the mainstay of the movement. But Prabhupada personally ordered a shift. He said of all the types of *sankirtana* this is the greater *sankirtana*. And so the Harinama parties began to take on a secondary role. And eventually they became part of the training of new devotees...As a stepping stone to joining the book distribution parties, new members would go out on the Harinama party.

Of course, in 1974 when Tamal Krsna Maharaja left India as the GBC, at first Prabhupada was a little unhappy because the management in India was such a burden. Now who would take it up? But Tamal Krsna joined with one of our traveling preaching parties headed by Visnujana Swami and he began traveling around America holding college festivals. Chanting in the colleges and in the important cities around America, making many new devotees.

Prabhu-pada was very pleased. But he began to write letters to Tamal Krsna asking him how many books have you distributed? Prabhupada wrote letters to so many of his other disciples emphasizing book distribution more and more and more, that practically speaking it was impossible for anyone to ignore, the desire of the spiritual master was so strongly being felt.

Newsletters were being written broadcasting the latest statements of pleasure, the latest instructions and latest predictions about how our success is based on book distribution. So the whole society was ringing with the message of book distribution and it was very soon that this party of Tamal Krsna and Visnujana Swami took up book distribution in earnest.

In early 1975 their book distribution was rising rapidly and Prabhupada was encouraging it again by writing letters to the leaders of the party, stroking the fire. The book distribution had also developed into a type of transcendental competition which Prabhupada endorsed. Back in 1972 we started a transcendental BBT ratings which was published every month based on how much a temple could send in to the book fund. And it would be understood that the temples who were sending in money who were the temples who were distributing the books.

The ratings system became an institution and by the end of 1974 there was transcendental competition amongst all the temples to please Prabhupada by being his number one book distributor, by being his champion book distributor in a particular category. Small temple, medium temple, large temple, maha large temple. Or by being the number one zone in book distribution. So the GBC leaders were brought into the competition. And Prabhupada encouraged it. He wrote letters talking about how if one party defeats another party I will go to their temple or if one party defeats another party the defeated party will have heart failure. And on and on. Prabhupada would write letters encouraging the transcendental competition.

## **Radha-Damodar Traveling Sankitan Party**

By the early 1975, the party of Tamal Krsna and Visnujana, which was based on traveling buses, had grown quite large. Prabhupada had authorized loans from the BBT to that party. As soon as they had enough men for a new bus they could buy a new bus and the BBT would pay for it. Prabhupada reasoned that the buses were just like temples. He personally made the decision. He personally ordered that every time they get enough men to buy a new bus, buy them another bus. Just like buying a temple. He wanted ultimately that party to develop 100 buses. To have two buses in every state in America. That was his instruction. So he was really pushing that party. "Make new devotees and distribute books."

So by early 1975 a transcendental secret agreement was reached between the network of airport book distributors that had been built up all during 1974 and this traveling bus party. The book distributors of the airport were headed by Tripurari who by then had just taken sannyasa or was about to take sannyasa. It wasn't clear at that time who was the GBC for Tripurari. He was operating all over America. His men were stationed in every major airport. They were reporting directly to the BBT, they were called the BBT Traveling Sankirtana Party. In any event, these two parties agreed to merge. And the idea was to build up the biggest book distribution force in the history of ISKCON. With the airport men's expertise and with Tamal Krsna and Visnujana's expertise in making new devotees, it was perfect combination. They would make as many devotees as possible, Tripurari and his men would train them as fast as possible. So a new pattern was established for book distribution.

In addition to working all the public places, these bus parties were like miniature armies or armadas, the bus being the central ship and every bus had about 5 or 6 vans which would be like the little destroyers and fighters around the central battleship. And



they would go out into the parking lots and they created a whole new pattern in the book distribution. Previously big books were primarily being distributed in airports and paperback books were being distributed in the parking lots and in the fairs and in the malls. But we still had to engage in a kind of secret type of sankirtana whenever we went to any private property. But Tamal Krsna Maharaja was very expert in calculating how many books could go out.

So by distributing different types of paraphernalia, mainly incense, he taught the men who were distributing in the parking lots to distribute the hardbound Bhagavad-gitas and Srimad-Bhagavatams rather than just the paperback books. The matter became actually a matter of controversy. Because practically speaking the book was being given away at a ridiculously low price. Prabhupada always had said that you have to sell the book on its merit. But now we were getting donations by distributing packs of incense and as the donations built up, every fourth person there was enough money to give away one free book. So this was a matter of controversy which was taken by Tamal Krsna to Prabhupada himself. And Prabhupada said that as long as the BBT has paid for the book I don't care how you distribute it. Just distribute it as best you can and get the BBT to pay for it.

## **What is better: hardbacks, paperbacks or magazines**

Another matter of controversy had also been resolved by Prabhupada during this '74-'75 period. We asked Prabhupada what is better to distribute, hardbound books or paperback books or magazines? And we gave the classic argument that with the magazines or the paperback books, hundreds of people can get your literatures and with the hardbound books, less people can get your literatures. Prabhupada's answer at that time to myself and Jayatirtha was that,

this was when we went to Laguna Beach, we asked Prabhupada this question and Prabhupada said that “Ultimately I prefer the hardbound books because they will last the longest. Magazine may be thrown away, paperback book may not last that long, but a hardbound will have the longest shelf life and therefore I prefer distributing that the most. I consider that to be the most important.”

So when that message went out, all the men who were not in airports felt some anxiety. How can we distribute the most important books? So the answer was solved by Tamal Krsna Maharaja. And he established that the men in the lots would collect from a certain number of people and then as soon as they had enough they would give out one hardbound book to the person who was the most sincere. So soon his bus parties were actually out distributing the airport parties in the matter of distributing the hardbound books. And his men were becoming so expert in the parking lots that soon some of them actually no longer needed to distribute packs of incense. They got to the point of using the same method as the airport men. Putting the hardbound book directly in someone’s hand and just getting a donation on the basis of the book. This method revolutionized our book distribution. Actually single handedly, this method caused another doubling of book distribution.

## **The RDTSKP controversy begins**

Also at that time there was a controversy brewing regarding the nature of this giant traveling sankirtana army that Tamal Krsna Maharaja had built up. Because a number of brahmacharis were hearing that they could make more spiritual advancement by getting away from the temples which also contained women and householders and children. And by joining this party which had that rule of no women and no children. So a controversy began to build up in early 1975 which throughout that year mixed with the spirit or the transcendental competition that had been created within the

Society. And the mixing of these two forces, the transcendental competition that had already been well established as a pattern within the Society and the impressing of men from temples to this transcendental army, the mixing of these two proved to be explosive.

## **Getting the Bhagavad-gita back from Macmillan continued**

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** And where was Prabhupada when he was cracking Macmillan? When he gave all those instructions, do you know? Because that would be an important scene.

**Ramesvara:** Yes. Oh, that was an important scene. We considered that it was so far over our heads at that point to come up with a sophisticated legal solution to the Macmillan problem, so the impression we had of when Prabhupada was able to remember from something 6 years ago, the strategy how to break the contract, again it increased our faith in Prabhupada, it left us in awe of Prabhupada's genius and his perfect knowledge of all topics. Let me see if I can find a reference to.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** It seems like that's such an amazing corporate move.

**Ramesvara:** It is. Defeating Macmillan. Macmillan was such a bureaucracy that when we wrote the letters to their sales department and then one month later we wrote the letter to their trade rights and copyrights division, they didn't actually connect, they didn't discuss even with their sales people what was going on, whether there were any orders. Macmillan was going through a change at that time. They were losing a lot of people. America was in a flux. The inflation due to the rising oil prices was creating a whole new economic flux. And Macmillan was caught up in it. And they were just too large a bureaucracy to catch our trick. If their trade rights

people had understood that there were still orders for this book coming from the individual ISKCON temples, they would never have released the rights to the central BBT.

They would have negotiated with the individual temples, “O. K., you placed firm orders, we’re ready to print.” But it was by Krsna’s grace that one arm of Macmillan was not in coordination with the other arm. And Prabhupada suspected that would happen when he made that plan. It was ingenious. Well, we know that the plan took place in 1974. What I could do is I could look up in my Macmillan file the letters. And by doing that we could get an idea of the date. And then we could figure out where Prabhupada was. So we’ll do that later this morning.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** And then I can ask someone that was wherever Prabhupada was...get more of that scene.

## **Doubling book distribution by reducing the cost with mass printing**

**Ramesvara:** One more point about the first mass printing of Prabhupada’s hardbound books was that actually this was revolutionary. Literally in one stroke we were able to double book distribution. Up to that point we were selling hardbound books to the temple from the BBT at about \$4 a book. By this one stroke we were able to sell the same hardbound book for \$2. Just overnight book distribution doubled. So the effect on the Society was so enthusing, it was all part of the mood of ISKCON during these years of ’74 and ’75. There was a flush of unlimited growth that the devotees around the world were feeling. New areas were opening up for book distribution, Europe, Australia was booming, South America. Hrdayananda Maharaja had been sent there in 1974. By 1975 we had temples in 10 countries. And every one of them was dedicated to book distribution.

We had started the Spanish BBT division. It soon became the largest second language division, overnight. The American BBT was giving loans throughout '74 and '75 to give them a push. And book distribution was spreading out in different languages. So there was a mood in ISKCON of just unlimited success, unlimited growth. Prabhupada stroking it, Prabhupada guiding us, Prabhupada leading us. Everyone was flushed with victories one after another. One airport was falling, one fair was falling. We actually fought in the period of '74 through '77 over 100 major lawsuits in America.

We had a very aggressive legal policy which began in a very humble way, almost a very cautious and conservative way in 1974. By 1977 we were experts in Constitutional law. We had done more in the Constitutional area of first amendment rights in America than any religious group in the last two centuries including the Jehovah's Witnesses. We had gained respectability in the courts and in the legal community as being very aggressive but very very expert. We were becoming leaders of first amendment rights in America. Our attorneys and our devotees who were legal representatives for our Society were being invited to conferences by various legal societies throughout America.

So during these years we were practically unbeatable. We didn't lose a case. Some cases the courts stalled under pressure by the cities. But practically speaking, it wasn't til the late years of the '70s when the enemies of our Society began to develop strategies to cause us to lose some of the spots for preaching that we had worked so hard to earn. But in these early years, '74, '75, even up through '76, there was a feeling in ISKCON that our movement was just going to go on doubling every year. And so it was a very euphoric period. A devotee in ISKCON during those years was caught up in the momentum and the euphoric expansionism of ISKCON.

## **Book distribution explodes in Europe**

It was in late '76 that book distribution exploded in Europe. And so every time there was a new explosion somewhere in the world, the whole Society reacted to it by increasing in their own right. In '76 England and France just took off. England made the most number of devotees of any new temple and by '76 and '77, England and France were the leading book distributing areas of the world. So just again, seeing the dynamic nature of our movement in spreading to different places.

By then the Library Party had gone to all of Europe and there were hundreds and hundreds of reviews from the world's leading philosopher and Sanskrit and Indian and religious and psychology scholars. And these reviews, as fast as they were coming into the Society were being broadcast in newsletters. Prabhupada would get the reviews, he would make some comments. So the combination of the reviews, the praise by the world wide scholar community, and Prabhupada's comments and the happiness over it, was being broadcast in newsletters all over the world.

And these scholarly reviews gave the devotees redoubled strength. Seeing experts, scholars, established men of knowledge endorsing our books, endorsing Prabhupada's writing, this had a tremendous effect not only on Prabhupada...it had an effect on Prabhupada, it had an amazing effect on the book distribution. Our men were more convinced about the importance of distributing books and about the potency and the greatness of Prabhupada's books. Some of these reviews were more eloquent than the things the devotees themselves said about Prabhupada and his books. The reviews written by the scholars were so eloquent. They would melt the devotee's hearts. So we kept a constant stream of letters going out to all of the temples during these years.

## **Expansion, success, victory everywhere**

So everyone in ISKCON was just completely swept up in the enthusiasm and the momentum and the euphoric confidence of this era. And there was nothing to dampen our spirits. There were no defeats anywhere. Everywhere there was expansion, everywhere there was success, every-where there was victory, and most important of all, everywhere there was Prabhupada. Prabhupada endorsing it, Prabhupada personally planning it, Prabhupada stroking it, Prabhupada enthusing it, Prabhupada being happy over it. So it was a very glorious time, an intoxicating period for all the devotees in ISKCON.

## **The whole nature of ISKCON had changed**

So as a final summary statement to these incredible changes that took place in ISKCON which completely changed ISKCON over a period of one or two years from the pattern that had been set up during the first seven years. Probably the most significant point is that for the first time, ISKCON and Srila Prabhupada had at their disposal lots and lots of money for which to plan out the expansion of our move-ment. Prabhupada was instrumental in creating the instrument for raising the money through his massive book distribution program that he had organized and that he had ordered to be set up in America and that he approved at every step of the way.

And also with the formation of Gurukrpa's Nama Hatta sankirtana party in Japan which Prabhupada personally told me was his personal sankirtana party, in 1972 and 1973 this party began raising money for Prabhupada which he spent on building the first building in Mayapur. And which he was also spending to buy land in Mayapur and to build the Krsna-Balarama Mandir. By 1974 the importance of Prabhupada's sankirtana party became so clear to

the leaders that there was an effort to donate men to that party. Actually from the western United States we donated about 10 or 15 men to build up the party in 1974. And this is the money that primarily went to build the Mayapur Candradaya Mandir and the Krsna-Balarama Mandir.

So between the money that the book fund was developing or acquiring and this money from the Nama Hatta party, the whole nature of ISKCON changed. One symptom of this phenomenal growth and the euphoric expansionistic mood that the devotees had was right here in Los Angeles. Prabhupada had authorized in 1972 the acquisition of an apartment building. In 1973 he authorized a second acquisition. In 1974 through '76, based on Prabhupada's instructions we continued acquiring property so that over a period of say two years mainly, say between the middle of '74 and the middle of '76, the largest community in one of our cities just sprang up overnight.

And between 1974 and 1975 a massive renovation was completed in the temple which included marble floors, onyx arches and columns, marble wall and floor, Deity room, a balcony and so on. So this was a kind of a symbol for this era. Actually the renovation work of the Los Angeles was criticized by Prabhupada. But in the end when he finally came for the grand opening in 1975, he gave it his full approval. I remember when he arrived he walked into the temple room, he looked at the ceilings, he looked at the arches, the walls, he looked at the Deities and after offering his obeisances he said, "It has come out nicely. Finally it is all right." There had been some anxiety expressed by Prabhupada that it had been taking so long. And it was considered to be maybe an over expenditure. But it still was a symptom of this age.

Prabhupada's management system was that...and he stated this personally...that the devotees in the West were taking his instructions, implementing them, going out on the sankirtana by their own innovation and systems, actually raising the money themselves.



Therefore, Prabhupada was tolerant with the way they spent the money to a much greater degree than say in India. In India the money that was used for the big projects came from donations either from the book fund or from the Nama Hatta party. So Prabhupada was extremely strict. Because the devotees were not raising the money themselves who were managing those projects. So Prabhupada had a very different management position in dealing with the Indian centers than in dealing with the western centers.

## **Prabhupada starts the Life Membership program in India**

During this period also Prabhupada started the Life Membership program in India which was designed by him as a device for distributing his books and raising funds for supporting our operations. And during this period, Prabhupada personally ordered me to ship books to India without any real expectation of getting paid back because rupees could never leave India and go to the West. So Prabhupada knew that but he wanted India to have his books to distribute to the life members. He personally organized the Life Membership program, it was his mastermind scheme for distributing books in India. And then he ordered me to ship hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of books and worth of magazines, Back to Godheads, to India without any repayment. It was almost like a donation to our Indian yatra.

Later on when the India BBT began to develop its own resources, we had the India BBT start paying for some of the literatures they had received directly to the international projects that the American BBT was funding. But in the early years there was no question of that and so literally the book fund gave India hundreds of thousands of dollars under Prabhupada's direction to get the whole yatra started in book distribution. These are the kinds of management things that characterized this era which Prabhupada was personally

involved in.

## **Bhaktisiddhanta's disappearance day in Los Angeles**

One other incident which is kind of a nectarean incident took place when Prabhupada came to Los Angeles and I believe it was Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's Disappearance Day. There is a famous lecture which Prabhupada gave and at the end of the lecture he cries. It was somewhat unexpected, Prabhupada's coming at that time. Or somehow the preparations for Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's Disappearance festival weren't really planned in advance. So when we realized that Prabhupada was going to be there, it was the day before the celebration.

And Naranarayana prabhu stayed up all night with another devotee and built a huge vyasasana which towered over Srila Prabhupada's. So that by the time mangala aratik came, it was time for mangala aratik the next morning he had just put the finishing touches on it. So Prabhupada's servant went upstairs to tell Prabhupada that we had just built this magnificent vyasasana for his spiritual master. So Prabhupada came down the stairs and entered into the temple room right at the beginning of mangala aratik and he bowed down to the vyasasana of his spiritual master which had the picture of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta on it. And then all the devotees immediately bowed down also with Prabhupada. And then when Prabhupada stood up, he turned to the devotees and he held up his hand, acknowledging our crying out Prabhupada's name and "Jaya! All glories to Prabhupada!" He raised his hand and turned to all the devotees and said, "I will be back." And then he walked back up to his quarters. So we went on with our mangala aratik and chanting of japa and then Prabhupada came down to greet the Deity.

And then, after greeting the Deity, Prabhupada offered an aratik to the picture of his spiritual master which appeared on this vyasasana.

And the entire temple formed a semicircle around Srila Prabhupada and I remember standing by the side of Prabhupada's vyasasana looking directly at his face as he was offering the aratik. And it was one of the more memorable occasions in my appreciation of Srila Prabhupada. Because the expression on Prabhupada's face as he was worshiping his Guru Maharaja was so profound, so deep and so full of emotion that to look at his face you would become just overwhelmed at seeing such profound thoughts and feelings being expressed.

And I felt completely humbled by the whole attitude that Prabhupada was manifesting which was just filling the whole room with awe and just ecstasy. And I remember praying to Prabhupada very intensely and praying to Krsna that if I could just have a drop of the devotion to Prabhupada that he is manifesting towards his Guru Maharaja, it created that kind of mood and I'm sure many devotees were praying like that.

## **Prabhupada increases interest in bhajan singing among devotees**

After offering the aratik, Prabhupada sat down on his vyasasana and gave a very wonderful talk about his relationship with his spiritual master. And at the end of this talk...It might have been at the beginning of the talk, Prabhupada asked if anyone could sing the bhajan, je anilo premadhana and no one could. Finally Danavir got a songbook and sang it for Prabhupada on a harmonium. After that incident...it was an embarrassing thing when Prabhupada asked if anyone could sing it and no one knew the words. After that there was a great increase in the interest of the devotees in learning the different bhajans in the songbook.

Sometimes it's said that Prabhupada had no interest in devotees learning these bhajans but regardless of such rumors, after Prabhupada asked us to sing one of them and we couldn't, many devotees

started taking a great interest. And now in ISKCON there is quite a number of devotees who know how to sing many of the traditional poems and songs by the great Vaisnava acaryas from our songbook. And I believe that Prabhupada wanted that and he pushed it. And that incident really sparked it. That's what sparked the great spreading of this interest in singing these Vaisnava songs.

So after that, Prabhupada gave the talk and at the end of the talk, as you can hear on the lecture tape, Srila Prabhupada can hardly contain his transcendental emotion. And when he talks about his disciples being sent by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta to help him in his mission and therefore they are the representatives of his Guru Maharaja, he becomes overwhelmed with spiritual emotion and begins crying and choked up, exhibiting ecstatic symptoms he is unable to complete his final sentence.

And the devotees were so stunned by this profound devotion Prabhupada was displaying for his Guru Maharaja that our hearts were literally flooded with love for Prabhupada. And we began a tumultuous kirtan in the temple room and which Prabhupada participated in and enjoyed very much. That was a very important event. Seeing Prabhupada worshiping his Guru Maharaja. It became impressed on our mind as a very very important event, a great opportunity that we were there to witness such a thing.

## **Prabhupada's Los Angeles Rolls Royce**

There's another series of incidents involving Prabhupada in Los Angeles in those years. Every time Prabhupada would come we would obtain a Rolls Royce car for Prabhupada to drive in. There's an interesting history behind this which ended up in a kind of a scandalous affair because Karandhar was buying the Rolls Royce. Every time Prabhupada came he told him, "We own this and it's yours." Then as soon as Prabhupada would leave he would sell it, usually for a profit. Then again when Prabhupada would come he

would buy another one, And this was going on. About three or four Rolls Royces were purchased and sold and I think the last one Karandhar didn't make out so well on and it became a little bit of a scandal. But while driving in those Rolls Royces, Prabhupada did enjoy the idea that his disciples were offering him the best. He said, "The representative of God should be treated as God Himself. And to show this you have to offer to him what you would offer to God." And that is the principle of guru disciple relationship.

So he told us on that basis he was accepting these Rolls Royce cars. One final thing about the properties in Los Angeles, actually Srila Prabhupada had given the instruction that you could buy one property and then you could mortgage it and with the money received from a bank you could then buy a second property. Then gradually as the inflation increases the value of that property you could mortgage it and buy a third property. And in this way Prabhupada instructed, "Buy up the whole block." And he called this philosophy or this system, "frying the fish in its own oil." So he gave this as an instruction in high level real estate management for increasing our land and property holdings in Los Angeles. And once again we would marvel at Prabhupada's expertise in dealing with these things.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Maybe you could get more into how having money changed ISKCON. Did Prabhupada philosophize much on that point that now we have...did he train up the devotees, especially after the fall of Karandhar and this and that, how to deal with this new situation?

**Ramesvara:** Well, as I mentioned, Srila Prabhupada allowed me to constantly write him letters about managerial matters regarding publishing. And the combination of Prabhupada's instructions and the transcendental devotion of the devotees and the circumstances that we found ourselves in created a kind of awakening of expertise in our leaders. In other words, we had been Prabhupada's boys, now we were becoming Prabhupada's men. We were buying and

selling, or especially buying real estate, organizing construction, organizing international publishing, international shipping, centralized warehousing, accounting and so on. So just the nature of the increased book distribution plus Prabhu-pada's guidelines created the expertise in his men.

## **Managing money, men, lawyers, finance...**

By 1974 we started dealing with lawyers and we became very attuned to legal matters which we were really very naive about. This was a major change. And the pattern of life in ISKCON had also changed because the whole program in ISKCON now became geared towards sankirtana, sending out men, collecting money, distributing books to different places. That involved expertise. Management of vehicles, management of time, management of paraphernalia, management of personnel in a whole different way than ever before. Mapping out cities, strategizing, coming up with techniques.

So the whole experience of building up the book distribution, and we were all caught up in the euphoria and the pioneering mood and as I mentioned this transcendental competition that Prabhupada had started was a very significant factor. Everyone was working with every ounce of their energy to try to please Prabhupada the most. So that drive was there created by Prabhupada and it kept the money coming into ISKCON. So we would naturally ask Prabhupada what to do with this money. And he would decide the loans, he would decide the disbursements. And he gave instructions about money, what to spend it on and what not to spend it on. How to bank it, how not to bank it. He once gave a very specific instruction how you could go to banks and borrow money against various Society assets. So Prabhupada was actually training us in the world of high finance. At least to us, millions and millions of

dollars meant the world of high finance.

## **American money, Indian culture**

And of course, with this advent of the money era, of the big book distribution era and the money era synonymous, Prabhupada now began to not only expand the movement rapidly into different countries and getting his books published in different languages, but he also began developing the schemes or I should say putting into practical implementation the major schemes he had for our preaching work in India. And Prabhupada's plan in India was based on a formula which he constantly repeated throughout this period and all the way up until 1977 he was preaching about this. "American money, Indian culture. These two things must be combined together and the world will change, the world will actually be able to accept Krsna consciousness." These two things. He compared it to Laksmi and Sarasvati, two sisters. He gave many analogies like this.

So Prabhupada's plan was to bring the money of America into India and to bring the young men and women of America into India. Because as Prabhupada wrote in some letters, the Indian population had become completely enamored by the West, the western materialistic success, and they simply wanted to follow. So bring the West to India and engage that western money and those western devotees as Vaisnavas or in the service of the Lord and the Indians who were trying to follow the West will be stopped in their tracks. We're wanting to go to the West but the West is coming to us. All right, let us follow the West as they take the lead in being devotees."

So this was Prabhupada's ingenious idea for saving India from the dangerous course that had been adopted since Indian independence. Which was simply to worship and adore the West and follow the West and adopt western culture and western habits and western

practices. Prabhupada wanted to save India from this because Indian people especially were chosen by Krsna and by Lord Caitanya to be His devotees, to be Their devotees and to travel and preach and save the world. In a sense you could say that the Indians are the chosen people. Because God appears there to personally deliver His instructions. And He wants them to take up those instructions and be examples of those instructions and then teach others those instructions. They are the chosen people. So Prabhupada wanted to save the Indian people from the suicidal course of following the West. And this was his plan how to do it. Bring the West to India.

## **The first Mayapur festival: a mixed success and failure**

So he had that plan from the...beginning and now by 1973 and 4, between his sankirtana party in Japan and between the book distribution in America, he was now able to practically start building huge projects in India. And this was of course a major event. The first huge building in Mayapur, the Mayapur Candradaya Mandir was completed some time in 1973 and it was available for the ISKCON, the first annual Mayapur festival of 1974. That festival was actually a mixed success and failure.

The devotees managing Mayapur temple at that time were not organizing the cooking and the prasadam distribution properly and some very contaminated water and buckets used for cleaning stool rooms had been somehow brought to the kitchen area, mixed in with the food and then distributed to the devotees. And literally hundreds and hundreds of western Vaisnavas became very seriously ill during that festival. Prabhupada became very very angry. Walking around the floors of the Mayapur Candradaya Mandir and seeing hundreds of devotees literally unconscious, lying in their sleeping bags during the day, Prabhupada chastised, "What are they coming 10,000 miles to sleep?"



But the severity of the health problem was very great. I myself became almost gravely ill. And I had to take very very powerful medicines to recover. So that first year was a mixed success and failure. But by the second year, 1975, it was a glorious time. Because not only was the management in Mayapur temple far superior, although still there was the normal dysentery and so on, but we were getting it together, we had our power generator, there'd been quite a lot of improvements made.

## **Opening of Krsna-Balarama Mandir in Vrndavana**

But this was the year of the grand opening of the Krsna-Balarama Mandir. And this was a great event. The governor of Uttar Pradesh, a very big political leader in India, I think his name is Chanaredi(?), had been invited and he had accepted the invitation, Prabhupada had arranged for the local Gosvami panditas to actually install the Deities and this was going to be our crowning success in Vrndavana. The temple was beautiful, the guest house was ready, everything was ready. Or so we thought.

So there was a great euphoric mood as everyone was looking forward to going to Vrndavana from Mayapur. But when we left Mayapur and traveled with Prabhupada to Calcutta temple, there we received disastrous news. We had always been having problems with cost overruns in the Vrndavana construction. As usual, we had been exploited a little bit and cheated by the contractors and the builders and so on. And we just could not hold the costs. And there had been on numerous times budget overruns where each time the management team headed by Surabhi had to go to Srila Prabhupada for additional money over what they had projected. And then Prabhupada had to approach Gurukrpa Maharaja and tell him, "Go back to Japan and collect more money."

So this was becoming extremely annoying and finally Prabhupada

said, "This is the final budget." So they made it to the best of their abilities and submitted it and Prabhupada ended up giving the money again from his sankirtana party. So when we arrived in Calcutta, there was a telegram awaiting us that there had been one final cost overrun, unavoidable. I can't remember the exact details. The workers had not been paid and the workers had through a spokesman announced that if they do not receive payment immediately two things are going to happen. Number one, the final finishing work which makes all of the difference in the world would immediately come to a halt, and number two, on the day of our opening ceremonies the workers would personally stage a riot and do everything in their power to disrupt the entire function. "Therefore we need tens and tens of thousands of dollars immediately transferred to Vrndavana."

So this telegram had arrived in Calcutta. So I was with Prabhupada in Calcutta, Gargamuni Maharaja was there, perhaps Tamal Krsna Maharaja was there, I'm not sure, I can't remember who else was there in Prabhupada's quarters in Calcutta. But Prabhupada was fuming. He was so angry. He called it blackmail. He was...the more he thought about it the angrier he got. He kept repeating over and over again, "My disciples are blackmailing me. At the 11th hour! At the 11th hour!" And the more he reflected on it and how they had promised him that there would be no more budget overruns, he kept saying, "Where to get the money at this hour? Where to get this money?" And he was pounding his fist on the desk. And finally he said, "Let it fail. Let it fail! We will not give them any money, let it fail!!" And the devotees around Prabhupada were, as you can imagine, they were just completely stunned. And we were just overwhelmed, Prabhupada was in so much transcendental anger and anguish that the whole beautiful plan, the great great success and great achievement of Srila Prabhupada was about to be spoiled.

The governor had been invited, his troops were coming with him, it was just days away, it was a disaster. And then Prabhupada would

not give in saying, "Let it fail." On principle. Prabhupada was like that. Very strong on principle. So we were actually overwhelmed. The room was completely silent, no one knew what to say. No one had any money. So finally, I asked Prabhupada, "If we can raise the money from somewhere other than Gurukrpa's party and we can get the temple opened on time, will you still come? Will you still let it open?" Then Srila Prabhupada answered me. He said, "As far as I am concerned, it is finished and I have nothing more to do with it Now, you can do whatever you like." And so I said, "Thank you very much, Srila Prabhupada." I rushed out of the room, I grabbed my bag and jumped on a plane and I flew into Delhi.

And I called up the BBT banks from Delhi and the bank we were using in building the Vrndavana temple was a syndicate bank. So I ordered the bank in Los Angeles to transfer money from the BBT to the syndicate bank in Delhi, it would take about three days. And I stayed in Delhi waiting for the money to arrive, I sent the telegram to Surabhi in Vrndavana that the money was on its way, assure the workers to go back to work, give them...swear on your life, tell them they can kill you if it doesn't come, promise them anything, just get them back to work and they went back to work. And in 3 or 4 days the money came and it was about a day before the opening. And I'd have to look in my files to get you the exact amount but this was the first major donation from the American BBT to an India project.

Because up to this point, most of the money had come either from Prabhupada's Mayapur-Vrndavana Trust donations or from Prabhupada's Nama Hatta sankirtana party donations. So this was the first major grant from America. And as a result the temple opened on time and we went ahead with our festival. It was very close, a matter of one or two days. Prabhupada never asked me about that, he never asked where the money came from, he never said anything more about it. He arrived in Vrndavana a day or so later and was comfortably situated in his house and was just completely happy like a transcendental boy. Making arrangements for the guests, for the governor, for the devotees, it was as if nothing

had ever happened.

Prabhupada never indicated externally that anything was going on or that he had condemned the whole thing to fail or that he had completely condemned his men who were working on the project as blackmailers. He just became completely euphoric and became completely absorbed in all the affairs of the opening. And of course on the opening day Prabhupada performed the aratik for Krsna and Balarama. I managed to enter the temple with Prabhupada and I was leaning on that circular railing that is right in front of the Krsna-Balarama altar and so I was able to watch Srila Prabhupada offering the aratik to Krsna and Balarama.

And my impressions of Prabhupada during that aratik, of course, are just my own impressions and feelings from watching him so closely but I sensed in Prabhupada a great overwhelming joy that he had brought Krsna and Balarama, he had established Krsna and Balarama to be worshiped by his men. And he felt such joy that the event was coming off so successfully and so gloriously. And even there was some transcendental pride I felt. Prabhupada was just radiating bliss and happiness. You could see it whenever he would turn around. Like especially with the fan and the camara. When he would turn around to offer the article to the assembly of devotees and guests, Prabhupada, he couldn't hide his joy and his happiness. It was showing all over his face. And it was so wonderful to see, this type of happiness coming from Prabhupada. Usually the pujari is very grave but Prabhupada couldn't hide his ecstasy.

And there were pictures of it. And everyone was in a joyful mood. I remember the very next morning we went on a morning walk with Prabhupada and Prabhupada was explaining why he had installed Balarama alongside Krsna. And the main reason Prabhupada gave is that in the future our men who are now performing very strenuous preaching and sankirtana, mixing with the conditioned souls, they will actually feel sometimes a weakness or exhaustion from this and they will require additional strength to carry on the

vigorous pace of the preaching work which Prabhupada himself had set up or ordered.

So he said, “Therefore I have brought Balarama here for all of my disciples from all over the world to come and pray to this Balarama. And He will give them that extra strength so that they can go on preaching vigorously in the West.” So that was his great mercy on his disciples and always you could see how Prabhupada was relating everything, the establishing of temples, the establishing of Deities, everything was being related to the preaching, the sankirtana in the West. But all over the world but there was no doubt that Prabhupada’s vision was that he saw everything in relation to sankirtana, in relation to preaching work.

## **Is there any benefit to the people from distributing incense**

Then on that same morning walk, Tamal Krsna Maharaja was asking Prabhupada about whether there’s any good or bad effect from distributing the incense on the sankirtan to get people to give donations. And Prabhupada surprised us by saying that “Actually the incense is part of the Lord’s transcendental paraphernalia. Therefore, whenever anyone lights a stick of incense in his home, even unknowingly, it creates a...” his exact words were “a slight spiritual atmosphere. And therefore of course they get the benefit by giving the donation but even from lighting the incense there is some benefit. So in this way Prabhupada endorsed the program that Tamal Krsna Maharaja had started with his Radha-Damodar party and which was about to mushroom throughout 1975. So as I mentioned, in Mayapur...We didn’t have much time to talk with Prabhupada in Vrndavana, it was so much...

## **Book distribution is more important than opening temples**

You asked a question about this conversation we had with Prabhupada about the opening of the temple in relation to book distribution. I vaguely remember the conversation, Jayatirtha was there, it might have been that Tripurari was there also. And we were discussing giving donations to the India projects, but Prabhupada said the most important thing is distributing his books, even more important than opening up the Krsna-Balarama temple, more important than anything he said was distributing his books. Printing and distributing. He always instructed like that. That the opening of temples and the construction of temples was to be based on book distribution. It wasn't that there was supposed to be some competition between what we would use our money for, but that we would use the money to distribute the books. And within the distribution of the books there should have been enough profit to cover the reprinting as well as...

So Prabhupada always had that emphasis on books being the basis for all of our expansion. So there was a conversation just before the Krsna-Balarama temple opened, in Calcutta or in Mayapur, I can't remember where now, where this took place. Anyway, as I said, in Mayapur Prabhupada did begin to speak very strongly about how he had written these Caitanya-caritamrtas. Which, as a literary feat, is unprecedented. The idea of writing one full volume, translation and commentary, per month and sustaining this...400 pages each book...and sustaining this for an 18 month period while all of these other things were going on which we already mentioned.

Tamal leaving India and Prabhupada having to manage all the India projects, Prabhupada going through the first GBC meeting at Mayapur, Prabhupada opening the Krsna-Balarama temple, Prabhupada organizing the Nama Hatta party, Prabhupada pushing the book distribution, Prabhupada authorizing the expansion of our

movement all over the world and of course the regular business of writing letters. In the midst of all of that to have sustained this pace for book translating and writing, it's unprecedented, it's astonishing. And actually, no one knew it was going on except a few men and it came out at Mayapur.

So at that same time we showed Prabhupada the pictures of the building we wanted to move the Press in and he approved the moving of the Press because we were moving anyway from Brooklyn, this was a first class building for the Press to be in, right in the middle of the L. A. community, and because he was a little angry that the book production had lagged. The Press was averaging one volume of the Bhagavatam every three or four months. So at that time we proposed to Prabhupada that maybe we could increase it to one volume every two months. And he didn't make any comment but he didn't look very satisfied.

## **Prabhupada is concerned about his unpublished books**

So the next thing that happened was I got a letter from Prabhupada in Australia dated May 15th, 1975. And in this letter, now it appears that Prabhupada after the Krsna-Balarama temple had opened Prabhupada was now really meditating on how he had written these books and nothing was happening with the Press. And he wrote, "The Caitanya-caritamrta is now complete and only three parts are published. And now the Fifth Canto is almost finished." Another two volumes. "So why these books are not being published? This is our first business. Immediately these pending books, 17 in total, must all be published. Why the delay?"

The U. S. printers binding is better than Dai Nippon so some may be printed in U. S. and some in Japan. But the pending books must be finished in a very short time. When I see so many books pending it does not encourage me to translate. When I see books

printed I become encouraged to write more and more. We can talk this over more in Hawaii. Now you and Hansaduta expedite the publishing work. This is your business. And push on the selling. You request Tripurari Maharaja in this connection along with others. Now Bhavananda Swami and Gargamuni Swami are there. They are also expert in pushing this on. By combined effort, publish as quickly as possible and immediately Caitanya-caritamrta should be done. I hope this meets you in good health. Your ever wellwisher, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami.”

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** He wrote that from Perth?.

**Ramesvara:** He wrote that from Perth. So Prabhupada was planning to go to Hawaii and then to Los Angeles. And I was in a complete frenzy. We had just gotten back from India, it was some time in April. And we made the final arrangement, we leased the building. So from the middle of April to the middle or end of May we were first moving ISKCON Press. Everything was being moved. The artists had come just before the Mayapur festival, now we were moving the Press. And we were installing for the first time a computer typesetter.

We had arranged to buy this computer typesetter with Prabhupada’s authorization back in 1973. The final selection had been made by Jayadvaita in ’74 and this was a big step for our movement. But we hadn’t really put it into use yet. We were still using these IBM type...whatever they’re called, composing machines over in Brooklyn. So we had to knock down walls, build a photo lab for the black and white film development, build a color photo lab upstairs, install the developer, install a dark room, install the cameras, install the computer typesetter, install the composing units, adjust the whole plumbing. And we had one month to move ISKCON Press.

So practically the whole community shut down and everybody was working feverishly painting, knocking down, constructing, everything. Prabhupada was coming and we had to have the Press ready and running. So with the mood that Prabhupada was coming,



the devotees became surcharged. And actually set up the whole Press and set up all the plumbing and all the labs in a matter of one month.

So once the Press was established by the end of May, Prabhupada was in Hawaii and I was getting regular calls from his secretary, Pusta Krsna, "Prabhupada is mad, Prabhupada keeps talking about the unpublished books and you had better be prepared when Prabhupada arrives in Los Angeles in early June." Just before Prabhupada's arrival we had a major breakthrough in terms of our legal work. And I wrote Prabhupada a letter on May 7th. And this was in relation to opening up the airports around America.

## **Using lawyers to open up book distribution spots**

The law firm had proven its success sometime in late 1974 as I mentioned earlier. And so when I told Prabhupada of our plans to start opening up the airports and opening up other public areas, especially transportation centers, working with lawyers, Prabhupada endorsed the entire plan. And I received a letter from Melbourne on May the 19th in which Prabhupada said, "I am extremely happy to hear that a firm of young lawyers are now working with us to help us spread this movement by helping us to flood the world with our books. This is very welcome news.

Things are looking very favorable for us. Now we simply have to try even harder to sincerely carry out Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's orders and He will be pleased to provide us with more and more facilities. Cooperate nicely with one another and strongly push on this mission by printing and distributing our books in unlimited quantity." So this was similar to the other instructions that Prabhupada had given in relation to book printing and book distributing. Just like the instruction of 1973 to transplant the techniques and the book distribution systems into other temples. Prabhupada just gave

the go ahead and the momentum just from his authorization spread it all over the world.

So now with this letter Prabhupada again gave the go ahead to the strategy of using these legal counselors to open up all of these public places. And from the momentum created from that authorization, over the next year or two practically every airport, every park, every fair became legalized to our Society's book distribution. So Prabhupada was very much part of the strategy. Our mood was that things had to be authorized by Prabhupada before we go ahead and this was the authorization. And this shows how much Prabhupada was involved in actually helping plan out the whole strategy for distributing his books.

## **Proposing to print Caitanya-caritamrta, one volume per month**

Anyway, I had the idea to bring Hayagriva to Los Angeles to help with the editing work on the new books and Prabhupada also approved than plan. So by the time Prabhupada arrived in Los Angeles, I believe it was June, some time in June '75, Radhaballabha and I had met with Hayagriva and Jayadvaita and we proposed that it might be possible for us to do if we worked very vigorously, one volume per month. And at this rate we could at least have the entire Caitanya-caritamrta published in a year. Because we had to take into consideration that the artists needed time, the indexers needed time and so on. So we were ready to make our proposal to Prabhupada and we thought he would be pleased. After all, this would be increasing the book production by 4 times.

Because we were doing one book every 4 months. So Prabhupada arrived, we had another grand welcoming ceremony. And the same day of his arrival Prabhupada went on a tour and we walked through the Press and we walked through the office building right next door to the Press that had been converted from one of our

apartments. And Prabhupada really enjoyed this tour. He was very happy. And there were a number of GBC men present, Brahmananda Maharaja, Tamal Krsna Maharaja and others. When we told Prabhupada how fast our photo typesetter could produce...we told him actually if this thing is running all night, the entire Srimad-Bhagavatam, all 18,000 verses can be put out, produced, within 24 hours. And Prabhupada was just nodding his head in ecstasy just thinking about such rapid technology for his massive book distribution plans. So...

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** You took him around to all the different...

**Ramesvara:** Every room. He looked at the typesetter, he looked at the composers, he looked at the dark room, he looked at the labs, he looked at the camera room, the layout room. We even had a board, a big huge production board hanging in Radhaballabha's office with each volume and all the different steps of production and showing with colored pegs where each volume was.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Did Prabhupada make comments at each step?

**Ramesvara:** Different comments, yes. But the only one I remember was the comment regarding the typesetter. We told Prabhupada how fast it could produce and actually I don't remember exactly what he said but I just remember his joyfulness. Radhaballabha would be a good devotee to interview on this. He might remember exactly. Undoubtedly Prabhupada made some comment about modern technology and the rapidness of it.

## **Prabhupada Offers Obeisances to the Printing Press**

Actually this reminds me, since we were talking about comments about the Press, some years before in 1973 Karandhar had bought an old Press and installed it in one of the rooms in the Los Angeles

temple building. And he called it New Dvaraka Press and was printing pamphlets and on one trip Prabhupada came and we took him on a tour of the room. And the first thing Prabhupada did when he entered the room was he bowed down and offered obeisances upon seeing the press. I remember that. He was encouraging Karandhar to print a series of pamphlets.

Karandhar had already produced a pamphlet, *The Scientific Basis of Krsna Consciousness, I think, I and Mine*, a few pamphlets like that. Prabhupada was encouraging him saying he always wanted these pamphlets, but I remember he bowed down. That was very significant. Every time I saw Prabhupada indicating how much printing and anything that had to do with printing and distributing books, how much it meant to him, it just increased in myself and the other devotees the burning desire to sacrifice everything for the sake of distribution of his books.

## **You must do all the books in two months” — Prabhupada**

Anyway, the fateful event took place the following morning of Prabhupada’s arrival. We were on a morning walk at Venice Beach. And it was a wonderful morning walk. We were telling Prabhupada different stories and talking about different things going on in the material world and it was a very very relishable, enlivening morning walk. And towards the end of the morning walk Prabhupada asked, without turning behind him, he was walking but he asked, “And how long will you work to produce the unpublished books?”

So I stepped forward, still a little behind Prabhupada, maybe to his side and I said, “Srla Prabhupada, we’ve been having meetings about it and now that the Press is finally here and installed, we think that we can increase production four times. We think that now we can go from one book every four months, we can produce one of your books every month.” And Radhaballabha and I were standing

together. Tamal Krsna and Brahmananda were there. Prabhupada kept walking. And he said, "One book every month. That means over one year." He said, "It is not fast enough." Then he said, "You must do all the books in two months." And he just kept walking. Everyone was looking at me and Radhaballabha. We were looking at each other and we were sure that Prabhupada didn't mean it. And we were sure that he wasn't serious. So I began to speak again and said, "Prabhupada, when you take into consideration the artists and the indexing and all the different things, I don't really think it's possible to do all the books in two months. But I think that it's definitely possible we could do..."

In other words, I was groping for some words, I wanted to please Prabhupada, I wanted him to be satisfied, I didn't want to just come back and say, "We'll do one book a month," but I really didn't believe we could do anything faster than that. So Prabhupada again stated, "No, you must do all of the books in 2 months." And it was at that moment that I realized that Prabhupada was serious. And Radhaballabha and I looked at each other in complete disbelief. We couldn't believe Prabhupada was asking us to do this. And I said, "Prabhupada, I think it's impossible to do this." Then Prabhupada put his cane very firmly down in front of him and stopped. And then he turned and looked at me and everybody froze. And very gravely, not with any anger but just very profoundly looking, very deeply looking, very serious, Prabhupada said, "Impossible is a word found in a fool's dictionary."

And he looked right at me to see if I had faith in his words. And at that moment I felt like I just had to surrender, I had to throw away my material intelligence, I had to throw away everything that I was basing my estimations on, all my experiences, all my intelligence, all my rational common sense, I felt I had to throw it all away, I was being asked to just surrender to Prabhupada. And I was just speechless. Because when he said that "Impossible is a word in a fool's dictionary," I realized that if I don't believe Prabhupada it means I don't believe in God, I don't believe in the power of God.

If I don't believe what he's saying is true and then Prabhupada just started walking on. And everybody scampered to catch up with him. And Radhaballabha and I were trying to get our wits together and what to say next and

Now all of the men who were walking with Prabhupada including these big GBC men, whenever Prabhupada says anything all of his disciples always naturally side with him and agree with him and follow him. So the whole mood on the morning walk from that moment, it completely shifted. And everyone was looking at us like, "Come on, you have to do it." And that was the mood. And so we were just becoming overwhelmed by the whole mood that Prabhupada had just created and all of his devotees were supportive. We were trying to collect our thoughts. So I think I asked Prabhupada if we could have a meeting back at the Press, discuss it with all the devotees and then meet with him again. He said, "Oh, yes, whatever is required."

And so Radhaballabha and I then dropped out of the morning walk and we just started letting everyone walk in front of us and we just started talking among ourselves out of the earshot of everyone else about this phenomena that had just taken place. And I remember we kept asking each other, "Do you think it's even remotely possible? Do you think it can be done?" And he kept asking me, "Well, what do you think?" So in that way I said, "Let's go back and have a meeting with everybody and let's just talk it out and see what we can do. I mean, this is amazing, this is like Prabhupada's challenging us. He's challenging us. And he's promising us at the same time it can be done. Let's go back and tell every..."

## **An emergency meeting at the press**

So we jumped back in the cars and we went through the morning program with Prabhupada giving the class and greeting the Deities but actually we weren't mentally...we were just absorbed in

thinking about this challenge that Prabhupada had thrown down. And it was just...we couldn't control our minds, we couldn't think of anything else. It was so inspiring to be challenged like that. So right after the morning program we called an emergency meeting of all the devotees at the Press. And we talked the whole thing out. Hayagriva, Jayadvaita.

We had already decided that with Hayagriva's help we were going to form two production lines. Hayagriva being the faster editor, he was going to edit the Madhya-lilas, Jayadvaita would do the Antya-lilas. Between those two books there were twelve volumes left. And then there would be the Fifth Cantos. Is that right? Nine and five, no, fourteen volumes. Madhya-lila was 9 volumes, Antya-lila was 5, so 14 volumes and then 2 volumes of the Fifth Canto. 16 volumes. So we began to calculate what would be needed and how to cut corners and how to just...how many people we would need and we just started mapping the whole thing out. We presented it to all the devotees, we convinced them. Because by this point we were convinced that it could be done somehow. Some mystical power is going to descend, it can be done.

So we just convinced everyone, "This is what we're going to do and it can be done. Prabhupada said it can be done." And we just convinced everyone. And so we started mapping the whole thing out. Then after it was all mapped out and we had some kind of a plan, then we went to Prabhupada. We said, "Prabhupada, we think it's possible." He was sitting in his room. And he said, "Hmm." And then I said, "But there are several things that we think are going to be required in order for actually this to happen. And a lot of the work with the Bengali editing, in order for it to go quickly, requires constantly asking you questions." And Prabhupada said, "So, I am prepared to stay here for as long as it takes and make time every day. The men," Nitai and whoever else was working on it," they can come and see me. I'll set aside time. I'll make it a new part of my daily schedule."

Then I said, “Prabhupada, to illustrate the books we’ve always needed paintings to sell these books.” He said, “Just paint as many as you can.” So then I said, “Well, they may not be of good quality because we’ll be rushing to meet the deadlines.” So then he said, “I understand. But a blind uncle is better than. no uncle. So whatever you have got you put it in the books and at a later date, if required, it can be redone or replaced.” And then I said, “Prabhupada, to read all the manuscripts and to plan out the paintings, we’re going to have to ask you a lot of questions. We also need time to talk with you about understanding how to illustrate all the different lilas.” He said, “Yes, I am prepared, I can make time for that also.” And we had already established in the other volumes that we were using photographs. So we discussed with Prabhupada the use of photographs. And he said yes, he still wanted the photographs because they add historical authenticity to the books.

## **The book printing marathon starts**

So with Prabhupada agreeing to stay for at least a month and make time on a daily basis, as much time as possible, we felt that we had a chance. And we left Prabhupada’s room, we ran down the stairs and the race was on...And how to describe this mood. I’ll just describe it generally because of course most of the work that was going on was not directly being done by Prabhupada at this point. He had already done all the translation and commentary. There were daily meetings with Prabhupada every day, every day. The Bengali men were coming in every day with their questions and I was coming in every day with our questions.

The first thing that I did was I sat down and I read all the manuscripts. It took me about a day and a half of just locking myself in Radhaballabha’s office. They were bringing me my food, I would sleep there. Actually I didn’t sleep. I just continually read for a day and a half. And we planned out all of the photographs



that we wanted. And we called Bhargava in and we said, "O. K., you have to go to India right away and you have to take all these photographs." And he agreed. And then I said, "Now, how am I going to understand when you send the film what is the caption, what is the caption for each place?" So we worked out a system that Bhargava would simply write a detailed description accompanying each roll of film of each place and I should be able to understand it from that.

However, if there were any problems, he would take more than one slide of each place so that if I had any questions about labeling them...or rather, not if I had any questions, I should label all of them according to the instructions in his letter and then mail him one set, one picture from each place labeled according to the way I read his letter back to him in India and then if there's any discrepancy he'll call it in. And if he doesn't call it in go ahead and publish it like that. So that was the system. So within a matter of two days, Bhargava had the list for the next 14 books what pictures to take and he just went off to India. It was actually amazing that we read the books that fast.

Then we read them a second time and started planning out with the artists all the paintings that we wanted to have. And at that time a new artist had just joined. This was an artist who had a lot of experience as a commercial artist, his expertise was landscapes, seascapes. And he was such a proficient artist that he could lay an entire landscape, a formal landscape down in a matter of one or two days. So we developed a production system where this man whose name was Hector would work on every single canvas. And all of the artists would be laying in the figures. All of the artists would do the basic sketches. I would have them approved by Prabhupada or myself...yes, Prabhupada was there so we would take the sketches to Prabhupada, have them approved, Hector would lay in the backgrounds during the day and the artists would paint during the night and 24 hours a day each canvas was being worked on.

Then for the production system we had a shortage of manpower. So we started firing off letters, newsletters all over the world. We need help. This is the people that we need. We need indexers, we need layout men, we need composers, we need this, we need that. And the whole Society became so astonished that Prabhupada had challenged us to produce all of the missing books in just two months that there was practically universal cooperation. And we would get on the phone and say, "You have to send them. Prabhupada said, this is the most important thing, you must send the devotee."

## **We got people sent from all over the movement to ISKCON press**

So in this way we were getting people like Rigatmika, Surasa, Palika, different people from all over the movement. Vilasini for indexing. From different temples, key people were being sacrificed and sent to ISKCON Press for the two month marathon. Within a matter of one week, all the necessary devotees that we needed had been sent from all over ISKCON. Most of the equipment at the Press, we had a day shift for it and a night shift for it. We had three men working in layout. Yamaraja, one black devotee named Arcita or something like that and another devotee, I can't remember his name, they're gone now.

Plus for the evening shift I would have people like Ranadhir and somebody else coming in to assist. As much as possible I tried to have the devotees working a day shift and a different group working a night shift. But for some departments and for some key devotees like Balai, like Yamaraja, myself and Radhaballabha, we worked both the day shift and the night shift. I had Raksana running the computer all night and I had somebody running the computer typesetter all during the day. So in this way we actually had the equipment in use on a round the clock basis. The proofreaders, Sri Kanta, mother Ksama and a few others were literally losing their

mind.

The manuscripts were coming in and out of their hands so fast. Radhaballabha's job was to bring the manuscript over to a proofreader after each rev comes out of the typesetter and giving them a certain amount of time and not caring whether they were finished or not he would run back, grab the manuscript from them and just give it back to the composers for the corrections. And in this way it was just driving the proofreaders wild.

## **The artists were going crazy**

So there were a lot of different incidents which are very interesting but I don't know if they'll really form a part of the Lilamrta. The artists especially were actually going crazy. Late at night like about 2 o'clock when one artist would fall asleep I would take their canvas secretly out of their room and bring it to whichever artist was still awake. Just so that at no time was there ever a moment when the painting was not being worked on. We had four artists when the art department was in New York. We had about 13 for this marathon. We had built up the art department in a matter of two or three months by having moved it to Los Angeles. We had almost tripled the art department.

We had people like Gauri working, Janavi working, Jayarama, Puskara, Ramanatha had just joined, Hector had just joined, a girl named Dhrti she had just joined, Ramadasa, he joined a little later. But we had just suddenly by Krsna's arrangement practically tripled the art department. Of course Muralidhar was there, Pariksit was there, Jadurani was there, the mainstays of the art department. I had convinced Baradraja that he had to do paintings. And I got him to do at least two or three paintings. Although he was busy working at FATE and he had his own deadlines. But I told him, "Prabhupada's given us this impossible challenge, you have to help us, we'll help you on your FATE deadline," so we worked out an agreement where

Baradrāja was helping and he also did paintings.

So the artists were literally livid when I would...Oh, we also had this boy Pandu painting, Caruhasa was painting, anybody that knew how to hold a brush we threw him in there. So the artists were livid. They were threatening to kill me because I would take their paintings which they only had a week to work on anyway and give it to somebody who was even more tired than them but somehow forcing themselves to stay awake while they would fall asleep.

## **The average press devotee was sleeping 2 or 3 hours at the most**

Literally you would see devotees draped on equipment, draped on desks and typewriters and over their easels or their chairs at 2 or 3 in the morning just completely unconscious. They would sleep in their rooms, they would wake up, I guess they would take showers and they would just start again. The average Press devotee was sleeping 2 or 3 hours at the most. All prasadam was honored inside the Press in one or two huge gulps. We had crews of L.A.temple devotees bringing the prasadam over to the Press so no one ever had to leave the Press. We had about 3 or 4 drivers that were racing constantly every day taking film to be developed, bringing it back and so on. It was a real mess with the photographs.

We would be unable to read Bhargava's letters, his handwriting was so illegible. As the film was being developed we would try our best to identify each picture with the description in the letter so we would know which one is Raghava Pandita's samadhi, which one is his bhajan kutir, which one is this, which one is that. And then we would follow the system, we would mail things back to Bhargava. And meanwhile Bhargava would be flipping out because we couldn't follow his letters and we would label everything wrong.

There were at least two books which had been sent to the printer

with completely incorrect captions. And Bhargava, just in the nick of time by air freighting the slides back to India with the wrong labels, Bhargava would make emergency phone calls to Los Angeles, "You labeled everything wrong!" And then we would make the corrections and shoot the corrections over to the printer and they would strip them in just like a day or two before going to press.

## **The impossible was happening**

That was the kind of wild things that were going on. Every night Radhaballabha and I would stay up and try to write captions for the paintings. And by around the third week we were becoming completely bereft of all gravity, all soberness. And we would be like 2 or 3 in the morning we'd be sitting around talking about captions but the whole scene, the whole atmosphere in the Press was one of such, it was like a dream. It wasn't real. The fact that the impossible was happening just wasn't real. And as a result of being in the midst of something that was so impossible and yet becoming true right in front of our eyes, we were becoming giddy. We were becoming "like little children.

We were losing our grip. Actually sometimes we would literally laugh for hours. We would be unable to work. As what was taking place would...as we would realize that it's actually happening, the impossible is taking place, we would just start laughing. And it became contagious actually that every night the Press devotees at around one or two or three in the morning you would hear hysterical laughter coming out of ISKCON Press. And this was going on for weeks. There were times when we were writing captions and it would be like we were so tired like 2 in the morning, we said, "What book is this for?" And we'd look up our notes, try to figure out what book it is.

And then Radhaballabha would say, "Hey, wait a minute, that book's already been printed!" So then I, "Oh, no! Well, let's find

another book where this pastime is repeated just like briefly and then we'll mention that this is...please refer to the previous book for the full description." And if you read the Caitanya-caritamrta there are captions. like that. I think the Herapancami painting, it missed the book so we just stuck it in the next book with a caption to please refer to the previous book. So when things like that were going on, we would just smile and laugh hysterically and just go on.

## **The press devotees go to San Francisco Rathayatra**

Then came the time in July for the San Francisco Rathayatra. So we made an arrangement to rent a bus which would leave Los Angeles at like four in the morning and we would put all the Press devotees on it and it would arrive around noon, just in time for the parade. And then that same bus would leave at 7 in the evening and all the Press devotees would be on it and come back to L. A. at 2 in the morning and the Press devotees would just get off the bus, take their baths and start working again. So in that way...because all the Press devotees were in so much anxiety to go to the Rathayatra to be with Prabhupada. So we agreed and I sent everybody up and I stayed back by myself to continue working on the captions and working out things with Bhargava.

So that actually happened. The Press devotees drove up and back to San Francisco and just started working again, all within 24 hours. In that way they got to see Prabhupada at the Rathayatra. So some time in late July or early August...

## **The largest printer in America drops everything to print Caitanya-Caritamrta**

Oh, and of course with the printer and the paper mills, they couldn't believe that we were going to pull off what we were proposing. But they said that if we can make deadlines they'll make deadlines. And the printer, the American printer, this was the first time we were working with him. He knew that we were a big company and of course we were about to print 16, 17 books, 20,000 copies each. So right there is over 300,000 hardbound books. And he knew that we just on one title alone with Dai Nippon had printed 350,000 books.

So the printer was extremely anxious to snatch our business away from Dai Nippon. And I told the printer, "You make these deadlines and you've got our business." So the printer met with the top management. This is the largest hardbound printer in America, Kingsport Press, division of Arcada. Although Donnelly is the largest overall printer in America, just in terms of hardbound books, Kingsport has the largest division. So they met with the president, the top management and they decided that we want this account badly enough, we're going to stop, we're going to push back all our other jobs and we're going to work round the clock, we're going to free other presses, free the bindery, we're going to completely wipe out all of our other customers for a month or two and we're just going to do Bhaktivedanta Books.

So once we negotiated that with the printer, because to find a printer that could turn the books around as fast as we needed, they would have to have no work going on. So they agreed to do that. It was all part of the miracle that was taking place. Then we talked with the paper companies and there was one paper company salesman that we had worked with when ISKCON Press was still in New York and they agreed to supply the paper in time to meet all of our deadlines, spacing it out in such a way that we could afford it. So everything was clicking.

And I remember the first time Radhaballabha and I went to the airport to pick up the advance copies. There were about 5 volumes. Three volumes of the Madhya and two volumes of the Antya came in the first run. It was 2 in the morning and we drove to the airport and we picked up the books. And we had been sitting at the airport for about an hour in a semiconscious state because he hadn't slept in about 4 or 5 weeks, and this is literally, literally, Prabhupada empowered his devotees to go without sleeping and to go without practically speaking eating. There's no way to describe the situation.

## **For 8 weeks the devotees just gave up eating and sleeping**

For 8 weeks, for 8 weeks the devotees just gave up eating and sleeping. They reduced their sleeping to about 2 or 3 hours at the most. At the most. And sometimes there wasn't even an opportunity for that. So we were at the airport, we picked up the books, we rushed back to the temple, we put them all on the altar to offer them to the Deities and at mangala aratik nobody knew what was going on except that they were surprised to see us at mangala aratik. And the door opened. Prabhupada was upstairs or maybe he had left. When did he leave Los Angeles? He left some time in August. He didn't stay for the whole marathon. He was now traveling through America. Right from Rathayatra he had left.

## **The first five books arrive from the printers**

So the doors opened and the whole temple room was stunned. Hundreds and hundreds of devotees were just staring at these 5 new books. And Prabhupada had just left a week or two ago. So the



miracle that was taking place hit everybody all at once. It just struck everyone that it's actually going to happen. And the whole temple room, all the devotees were having the most ecstatic kirtan. Women were screaming, crying, people were...men, grown up men and women were just crying literally. They were sobbing and crying.

They were just overwhelmed with emotion seeing these 5 books on the altar. And just being part of a miracle. And this was the mood during the entire 8 weeks. If you look through these volumes you'll find that each Volume has approximately between 8 and 11 new paintings and 4 to 7 pages of color photographs. So if you add that up you will realize that our art department painted...it would be interesting for someone to get the exact numbers. Someone should go through the Caitanya-caritamrta and just figure out how many paintings there are and how many photographs there are so that you could say that let's say there's 17 books...Well, let's say there's 14 new books in the Caitanya-caritamrta that were part of the rush. So 14 books times let's say 8.

So there were over a hundred paintings executed by this group of artists in a 2 month period. That works out to something like for each artist one painting a week. Sketched, put onto the canvas, colored in, painted in, the whole thing. No artist could have spent...There were deadlines, I remember deadlines where an artist had three days to do a painting. Like the painting of Lord Caitanya running on the sand dunes. That painting was done in two or three days. Baradraja's painting of Lord Caitanya's dreaming of the gopi rasa dance, that painting was done in 5 days. This was the kind of transcendental empowered state that Prabhupada had put all of his devotees in.

## **By Wednesday next week all the volumes will be at the printer**

On August the 12th I wrote a letter to Srila Prabhupada. By now Prabhupada was back in India. I mailed it to Delhi. And in this letter I wrote, "Today our composers finished the last volumes of Caitanya-caritamrta and by Wednesday next week, August 20th, all of the volumes will be at the printer. Now they are just starting to compose the 5th Canto and the entire Canto will definitely be at the printer by Sri Vyasapuja day." Then this I felt was one of the most important letters I had ever written to Prabhupada.

It was in the midst, or I would say towards the end of this marathon. We started in early July so this was August 12th and we'd already finished the whole Caitanya-caritamrta and we were now working on the 5th Canto and we were so caught up in the ecstasy that devotees were coming up to me and saying, "What are we going to do when it's all done? We're not going to have any more work to do. We can't live without working on Prabhupada's books!" This was the mood of all the devotees in the Press.

## **The devotees were speaking like madmen**

Prabhupada had created such an attachment to him and his mission of printing books that the devotees were speaking like madmen. That "We can't live without this! Life itself doesn't have any meaning if we're not working on these books." So I wrote to Prabhupada in that same letter, "I know that your great mission is to give to the world the authorized edition in all languages of Srimad-Bhagavatam, 12 Cantos. This would be the greatest exhibition of the mercy of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Because everyone who has lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in this age

of Kali shall get light from the Bhagavat Purana.

By distributing millions of volumes of Srimad-Bhagavatam the whole world will begin chanting the Hare Krsna mahamantra and dance in ecstasy. I am so fallen and I am begging for your mercy, please please please give us the entire 12 Cantos of Srimad-Bhagavatam to publish and distribute all over the world. Please engage us in this way in Lord Caitanya's movement. Unless we can distribute all the volumes of the Srimad-Bhagavatam to the lost souls, our lives are useless. Your purports in Srimad-Bhagavatam are the only truth in this world.

There is no hope for the crores of sinful living entities to ever revive their relationship with Sri Krsna without your books. They're all living in hell and just by keeping the Srimad-Bhagavatam in their homes they're in Vaikuntha. There's no hope for them except your books. We vow that if Your Divine Grace will kindly give us all 12 Cantos of Srimad-Bhagavatam we will definitely sell millions of volumes all over the world. We are fervently praying to Lord Caitanya to give us the chance to publish and distribute all 12 Cantos. Otherwise our lives are empty. Please save us. Your most unworthy servant."

## **We didn't want to stop**

So this was the mood. We didn't want to stop. We wanted Prabhupada to go on giving the Bhagavatam and we would go on feverishly publishing and distributing. So Prabhupada wrote back on August 21st from New Delhi, "Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter dated August 12th and have noted the contents. Yes, when Krsna was present the religious principles were going on nicely. But when He retired to His abode then deterioration infiltrated. But Srimad-Bhagavatam is the sunshine Purana by Vyasadeva to open the eyes of the conditioned souls. It is the sound representation of Lord Krsna. Regarding your desire

for all 12 Cantos, you will get it, rest assured. Your so much ardent desire will be fulfilled by Krsna.”

On August the 21st we sent a telegram to Srila Prabhupada. “His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, 19 Todarmal Lane, Bengali Market, New Delhi, 11001, India. This was Lord Balarama’s Appearance Day and we wrote, “By the mercy of Lord Balarama, Nityananda, the last volume of Caitanya-caritamrta is leaving today for the printer. By your mercy and divine order it is done. Ramesvara.” On August the 31st we picked up the final volumes of the Sri Caitanya-caritamrta. The final six volumes of the 17 volume set had just arrived from the printer. We had tried so hard to get these books to Prabhupada for his appearance day.

We never thought it would be possible to actually get them back from the printer, we thought we were going to get them to the printer by his appearance day. But we had worked so fast that it was a question of getting them to Prabhupada on his appearance day. So on August 31st I scribbled a letter to Prabhupada and I flew the books to India with one of the devotees. He was personally carrying them. I don’t have a copy of my letter. It might be in the secretary file.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Who was that devotee?

**Ramesvara:** I gave the books to Nitai. But the copy of my letter that Prabhupada wrote to me, I should say, and the original letter that I sent to Prabhupada, they might have been stapled together and put in the file. In any event, that was on August 31st. Prabhupada wrote me a letter from the Krsna-Balarama Mandir on September the 1st in reply. “Sriman Ramesvara and company, BBT, My dear Ramesvara and company. Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your letter dated August 31, 1975, and the six new volumes of Caitanya-caritamrta. So the books have increased and they are all very nicely done. I think I may stop all touring and just sit down here for translating. You have taken seriously the publishing and also the distribution of these books and that is the success of our

mission. You have taken seriously this work and I know that my Guru Maharaja is pleased with you because he wanted this. So by this your endeavor you will all go back home, back to Godhead.”

## **Let us go on for the rest of our life publishing your books**

This was the second time Prabhupada had written me a letter saying that simply by the endeavor. The first time was that letter he wrote after the first Christmas marathon, that January '73 letter. That just by your endeavor of going out every day and distributing you will all go back to Godhead and now this order. That because you have taken it seriously and you're endeavoring to publish and distribute, so just by your endeavor you'll all go back home, back to Godhead. So I had asked again in my letter to Prabhupada to please let us go on serving him by now publishing the rest of the Bhagavatam. So then he wrote...Oh, and then I also mentioned, “And after the Bhagavatam, what books will you write? Let us go on for the rest of our life publishing your books.”

That was the mood of that letter I wrote to Prabhupada. So he wrote back, “Let me first of all finish Srimad-Bhagavatam. Then we can take up others. So I wish to also thank you for your cooperation. Because of your cooperation therefore it has been possible. For me to publish alone the first three volumes I had to take so much trouble. But by the cooperation of you American boys and girls, now this has become possible. You promised on Vyasapuja day and it has come, although Nitai has come a little late, just after our ceremony. We might have missed it just by hours. Anyway, what you have done is good. Nitai has said he has brought advance verses for 7th Canto and this will help me. Nitai was to come on the 20th but now he has come with the substance. So I am very much pleased. The pictures are all wonderful. The artists tease me with so many questions about this and that but they have done nicely. So it is all

right. So you all go on with your work and I will pray to Krsna for your ever advancement in His service. I hope this meets you all in good health. Your ever well wisher.”

It was our practice whenever a new book was published to send gold leaf copies to Srila Prabhupada, at least two or three. So this was a very auspicious time, a very joyful time. And the devotees who were fortunate enough to be present when Prabhupada got new books could understand how auspicious an occasion it was. Prabhupada’s emotional ecstasies in the form of these books which are non different from Krsna Himself were appearing. And Prabhupada would drop everything when a new book would appear. Whatever was going on in the room, whatever business was there, he would just stop and take the books, hold them to his head and begin looking through them page by page, picture by picture. As much as possible I always tried to be present when Prabhupada was getting new books. And there were a few occasions when it was possible for me to be present.

Once Yadubara filmed my giving Prabhupada this new 7th Canto right in his room. The following year, 1976. And I can’t remember exactly what transpired in that occasion but the film is there. At this point Prabhupada wrote me another important letter on September 15th, also from Vrndavana. This was based on the BBT trustees report and also the BBT newsletter that I had mailed out. Prabhupada would always get copies of the newsletters and occasionally he would write me comments about them. So he wrote in this letter of September 15, “You have written,” referring to what I wrote in the newsletter, “The BBT is capable of keeping up with Prabhupada’s pace at this time and we humbly request all devotees to respect Prabhupada’s desire to fulfill his dream of publishing and distributing thousands and millions of volumes of Srimad-Bhagavatam in 12 Cantos all over the world by not disturbing him at this time with problems and decisions that can be made by his direct representatives, the GBC secretaries. ‘ Yes, this is wanted. I want to increase my work. Brahmananda Swami and Gopal Krsna

were suggesting that I go to some other place in India but if leaders fly 10,000 miles to lodge complaints, what can I do? If all you leaders cannot work together, how can you expect the others to cooperate with you? Differences may be there but still you have to cooperate together. Otherwise, where is the question of my being relieved by so many problems and decisions?"

## **A feud develops between Tamal Krsna (RDTSKP) and Jayatirtha**

Now this refers to a transcendental feud that had been developing in America between two of our senior leaders.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** What's the date on that?

**Ramesvara:** September 15th, '75. The two leaders were Jayatirtha and Tamal Krsna. The feud was in relation to something that I alluded to earlier. In early 1975, after the Radha-Damodar traveling bus party and the BBT airport party had merged into one group they began making a kind of propaganda that men who join this party will be able to increase their service to Srila Prabhupada. They'll be able to actually get the energy by the association and the expertise, the training to distribute more books than if they just stay at their temples. Besides, staying at the temples means associating with householders and women and children which brings a brahmachari's consciousness down.

So all during the year of 1975 men were deserting their temples, especially men who wanted to be book distributors. And they were joining this Radha-Damodar party. So in addition to the merging of these two large groups and the making of new devotees, literally dozens of devotees from temples were joining them. Temple economies were suffering, some temples were actually stopping book distribution and just being able to barely maintain, having lost so many collectors. And the Radha-Damodar party ranks swelled

to well over 100 sturdy brahmacari collectors. So it was a mixed thing, a mixed feeling, we had mixed feelings about it. That on the one hand this is the greatest organization in the history of book distribution. On the other hand, it's creating all these difficulties for our temples. And there was a whole mood of sannyasi versus grhastha, which was also at the heart of the conflict between Jayatirtha and Tamal.

So all during this year the tension grew and grew. Prabhupada came to learn of it because this letter refers to Tamal flying all the way to see Prabhupada in Vrndavana with some complaint that Jayatirtha maybe should be removed. So in any event, Prabhupada came to learn of the disturbance. And how did he deal with it? It was very interesting. He actually increased by writing different letters to Jayatirtha, to Tamal Krsna and to myself, he actually increased the transcendental competition that was going on between Jayatirtha's western zone and the new zone of Radha-Damodar.

He wrote letters to the effect that if one leader beats the other leader, the other leader will have heart failure and this is very good, every one of you should engage in. this transcendental competition and Prabhupada actually built up the fire that was going on between the two of them. Of course, not that he wanted there to be a mundane disagreement. But he wanted them to take all of their energy that they were feeling and just pour it into outdoing each other. And Prabhupada saw that this would increase the book distribution. So if you study the letters in late 1975 during this period to these leaders and to myself, you will actually be able to see Prabhupada's stroking or stoking this fire of transcendental competition.

## **BBT Library Party even more successful**

In the midst of this, we were also sending Prabhupada reports of the BBT Library Party. On October the 6th, 1975, I sent a telegram to Prabhupada who was then in South Africa. "Amazing success



from your Library Party. 152 standing orders sold in just 17 days of September in New England. Latest report: Ganasam prabhu sells 13 standing orders at Harvard. There is no limit in sight. Ramesvara.” Prabhupada wrote back that “The report of the BBT Library Party is very encouraging to me.” This is dated the 14th of November from Bombay. He talked about the quotes from college professors and how we should print them up in posters.

And he concluded by saying, “This book distribution was my Guru Maharaja’s purpose. He said that ‘I have got so many temples and now in Calcutta I have got a marble temple. But I would have wished that if by selling the marble I could publish and distribute books. ‘ Now by the mercy of His Divine Grace Sri Srimad Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Maharaja Prabhupada I am doing both by the cooperation of my American disciples. I am constructing so many marble temples and I am distributing so many books on Krsna consciousness. This does not mean that I am excelling my Guru Maharaja but it is the mercy of my Guru Maharaja that he is giving me the facility for doing both.”

## **One million copies of BTG printed for the first time**

So the competition went on getting more and more heated and as a result the book distribution was increasing on all fronts. On November the 18th I sent the follow-ing telegram to Prabhupada in Bombay. “1,000,000 copies BTG just printed. Devotees gone wild. Promise to distribute all within one month. Spanish Gita just off press linking hundreds of millions to your lotus feet. All possible by your mercy only.” This was the first printing of the Spanish Gita and we had just raised the monthly distribution of Back to Godhead to 1,000, 000. So this was a result of the transcendental competition that was taking place. I have quite a number of letters of Prabhupada referring also to the Library Party during this period.

## **Temples Compete for “World Champion of Big Book Distribution**

Then on November 27th I wrote to Prabhupada a letter about a transcendental competition amongst the U. S. temples for the coveted title, the World Champions of Big Book Distribution. And I wrote, “The chief contestants were ISKCON Chicago, Los Angeles and Atlanta. The day was carefully picked as the day most people travel by airplane in the U. S. which is the day before the Thanksgiving holiday. All the book distributors rose very early, chanted all their rounds before mangala-aratik. Right after aratik took some prasada, had a short class and went off to the airport by 6 or 6:30 in the morning not to return until at least 16 or 18 hours later when all the flights were finished.

These men had to contend with the usual hostile officials at the airport, police interference, ugly announcements trying to blaspheme us publicly. But despite these harassments superhuman efforts by the devotees resulted in the most incredible distribution of your books in history. In one day the men in Chicago led by Tripurari Maharaja of the Radha-Damodar party and Manasuta prabhu of Chicago combined together with 25 distributors to sell 2,029 hardbound books. In Los Angeles, the distributors led by Gopavrndapal and Janaka Rsi prabhu distributed 1,869 big books with 21 devotees, and in Atlanta the distributors led by Carudesna prabhu distributed 1,518 big books, a total of 16 devotees. For a combined total of 5,406 big books sold in one day at these three centers.”

Then I went on to describe in this letter to Srila Prabhupada how the competition was going between the temples. So he was being informed first hand of exactly what the mood was of his disciples. It’s not that Prabhupada was out of touch, it’s not that he didn’t know the level and the pitch of our enthusiasm. He was being informed in great detail. And I’ll just give you an example. “Every

few hours Los Angeles would call Chicago or vice versa to find out how many books the opposite side had sold. The atmosphere was saturated with great desire to please you by selling the most books and the BBT is awarding Chicago yatra a first class painting as a transcendental award for out distributing everyone else.

There's no doubt about it, they organized the greatest book distribution in the world. 9 devotees in Chicago personally distributed over 100 big books. And 2 of them personally distributed over 200 big books. Manasuta prabhu 210 and Praghosa prabhu 200 in one day. In Atlanta Carudesna prabhu distributed 200 big books. These feats are beyond all imagination. For so many men to stay out for so many hours and sell so many books, Your Divine Grace must have empowered them all, otherwise it is impossible to sell this many books. No publisher of religious or philosophical books could ever imagine such a thing happening. In each center all existing records were broken. In Los Angeles the results are three times better than ever before. Our men are willing to do anything to please you. And all of them have dedicated their whole lives to distributing these books. Our only desire is that you may kindly bless us with greater and greater desire to distribute these books all over the world until every home has whole libraries of your books.

By Your Divine Grace's blessings we will never stop distributing these books. We are thinking that this is the highest pleasure in all the three worlds." And then I wrote a P. S., "And so much credit must go to Uttamasloka prabhu, president of Chicago, who personally organized their victory." And Prabhupada wrote back on December 3rd, 1975, "Your report of book sales is over encouraging. You are all becoming very very dear to my Guru Maharaja. I started this movement by book selling. I was never a beggar for money but I was writing books and selling. My Guru Maharaja very much liked me writing and he used to show others in my absence, 'Just see how nicely he has written, how he has appreciated. '

He encouraged me and my Godbrothers they also liked my writing.

After I wrote that poem for Vyasapuja of my Guru Maharaja they used to call me poet. Anyway, I was working, writing books and publishing BTG alone but I could not give the thing shape. So I decided to go to U. S. A and now you all nice boys and girls have helped me so much. It is all the mercy of Krsna. Thank you very much.”

## **Prabhupada fans the fire of competition**

By the end of 1975, Srila Prabhupada had signed a contract for the construction of Bombay. He fanned the fire of this transcendental competition between Tamal Krsna’s Radha-Damodar party and Jayatirtha’s west coast zone. And this fire was so intense that devotees were actually feeling scorching heat and pangs from this intense fire. And Prabhupada fanned it. If you read the letters to Tamal and Jayatirtha from Prabhupada you’ll see how much he personally organized and fanned what was already there. And all during that fanning Prabhupada was thinking, “Now the time has come to finally build our greatest temple.

The huge complex of hotel, restaurant, cultural center, theater and temple in Juhu, Bombay.” So while Prabhupada was fanning and fanning and fanning and knowing that it would increase the book distribution, he was signing con-tracts in Bombay to start the construction. And towards the end of 1975 the contracts were signed and Prabhupada was ordering that the American BBT send between 50 and \$75,000 every month like clockwork right to the Bank of America in Bombay to pay for the construction.

## **The biggest ever Christmas marathon**

That year’s Christmas marathon was the biggest ever. The fire of competition was so deep that devotees who you would never have

imagined going out on sankirtana were lining up to participate in the book distribution because the feelings had...developed to such an extent that everyone really wanted to defeat the other side. Here's an example of a letter that Prabhupada wrote to me from Nelor, South India, on January 3rd based on a letter I wrote to him on December 15th (date?).

My letter to Prabhupada was more about the successes of the book distribution, how the Radha-Damodar had already ordered 50,000 big books just for December. And actually this was an interesting letter because in this letter I wrote, "I have one question regarding big book distribution. In a recent newsletter one leader from Radha-Damodar writes of a new system for distributing your big books. I am enclosing the newsletter for your reference. Previously you once said that even if someone gives a big donation for one of your books we should not give away a book to the next person on the basis of the previous person's donation for less than \$3 or \$4. In other words, even if somebody gives a \$20 donation we shouldn't give the next person a free book. We should make him pay for the book also.

Now this new method suggested by Tamal Krsna Maharaja, the devotee can give out big books to anyone just provided he's collected enough money throughout the day to pay the BBT invoice price. Of course the idea is that gradually the devotees using this new system will become expert to increase the donation from each person. But some-times he may give out a big book for as little as \$1. If you approve this system, then the temples would like to adopt it because it certainly will increase big book distribution many times. Already Radha-Damodar parties have ordered 50,000 big books to sell in December and more than half of them will be sold by this new system. Since the temples are uncertain whether to switch over to this system, they've asked me to write to Your Divine Grace for clarification."

## **Temples must pay the cost of printing — they can sell for any price they like**

Prabhupada up to this point had said each book has to be sold and you have to collect a certain amount for it. So this was a new idea. And then I wrote, “This month there’s terrific competition between Tamal Krsna Gosvami and Jayatirtha prabhu to be the outstanding zone for the month. Here in New Dvaraka we’re breaking all records and out distributing everyone in BTG distribution. Just this past weekend in two days we sold 30,000 BTG’s in Los Angeles alone.” This was dated December 15th.

Everyone at the BBT including myself is going out on book distribution two days a week for the competition and we’re planning to sell 100,000 Back to Godheads in L. A. just for the 6 day Christmas marathon, December 19th-24th. In this way book distribution is going on nicely in America and our warehouse is exhausted to ship so many books out to the sankirtana parties day and night. In Los Angeles never before in history have so many transcendental literatures been distributed in one city in so short a period of time. Our goal for this month, for the whole month is to sell at least 200,000 Back to Godheads and 12,000 big books in Los Angeles. By your divine blessings we would like to be able to increase these figures even more and become absorbed in book distribution day and night without stopping. Everyone agrees that to distribute your books is the highest pleasure and even the demigods may take birth here just to be able to distribute your books and taste this great pleasure.

I hope you are well and enjoying the book distribution results. I have never seen the devotees in America work so hard to please you as now by their book selling.” And Prabhupada wrote back, “Regarding the suggestion for book selling,” this is regarding how much to pay for each book, “the point is that temples must pay the cost of printing. Then they may sell for whatever price they like.” So

that was the final word which actually doubled book distribution again. Because we were constrained by this principle that we had to collect a certain amount for each book.

## **If Jayatirtha defeats Tamal he will have a heart attack**

Then he writes, “The transcendental competition is nice. If Jayatirtha prabhu defeats Tamal Krsna Maharaja, then Tamal will have heart failure. Go on selling books. My Guru Maharaja was very much anxious about selling books and preaching. So you are pleasing him by this bombastic flood of books all over the world. Thank you.”

## **The books should not be given for free — otherwise it will like Bible selling**

At the end of this letter after Prabhupada talks a little more about the Bombay project, sending 50,000 to 70,000 a month and then he says, “Immediately after the Bombay project is finished we will begin the Mayapur temple.” He makes an interesting comment at the end here. “The new 6th Canto Bhagavatams are very nice. Yes, actually they are worshipable Deities. Be careful that our books do not appear like Bible printing. Sometimes the Christians also put gold gilding on their books, but people are adverse to purchasing Bibles. Neither our books should be given free. There must be some remuneration, otherwise it will be like Bible selling.”

So some very interesting closing comments. So all through 1976 this 50 to \$75,000 a month was being given. Altogether the American BBT contributed over 1 million dollars to the construction of the Bombay project.

## **The Krsna Consciousness Movement is Authorized” booklet**

In early 1976 January, Srila Prabhupada approved of the booklet *The Krsna Consciousness Movement is Authorized* and he wrote a letter which you can refer to on January 12th ordering that hundreds of thousands of copies of this book be mailed out free of charge as advertising to the leading men, important people, of government, business, entertainers, sportsmen, etc. The leading Americans. That was a major undertaking. It cost something like \$40,000 and Prabhupada ordered it to be done. *The Krsna Consciousness is Authorized* with a cover letter. We got a Who's Who and we just got the leading names, a hundred or 200,000 names and we just mailed it out all over America.

## **The men are working in trance, not on the material platform**

Also at the end of this letter Prabhupada wrote what I consider one of the most important quotes about the Christmas marathons in which he compared the Christmas marathon to transcendental samadhi. He said, “The men are working in trance, not on the material platform. No common man can work so hard, it is not possible. Your book distribution is really intoxication.”

This was a statement that had a great effect on book distribution. This was a letter Prabhupada wrote on January 12th from Bombay upon hearing the results of the Christmas marathon in which the western zone actually defeated the Radha-Damodar party. Hare Krsna.

Finally, on January 18th, Prabhupada had received the end of the year BBT newsletter and he wrote me a letter about that. He had read it very carefully and he wrote me a letter on January on Jan-



uary 18th. And this letter is all about transcendental competition. And it also discusses how there is no limits to our book distribution. On January 23rd Prabhupada wrote me a letter explaining that in addition to the Bombay construction, the Mayapur festival is fast approaching and Prabhupada authorized the BBT through Tamal Krsna's Radha-Damodar party to simultaneously pay for the construction of the long residential building. So Prabhupada was draining the American BBT of all of its money for the construction. He was pushing very very hard.

## **BBT should not loan money for Gurukulas**

Also in that letter Prabhupada gave an instruction... I wanted to loan money to Jagadisa for saving the Dallas Gurukula by doing a legal construction. Because we were being forced to close the school because we weren't up to codes. I proposed as a loan to Prabhupada and Prabhupada cancelled the idea and said the school should just move out of Dallas and come to India and we'll start a school in Vrndavana. Prabhupada in a number of occasions told me that the BBT should not loan money for Gurukulas.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** The householders should pay?

**Ramesvara:** Yes, he said the householders should pay. Now there was one final problem that was developing at the end of 1975 or very early 1976. Again in relation to the Radha-Damodar party. And this involved Prabhupada also, I don't think it's really suitable for the Lilamrta but I'll just mention it.

## **Double paying Prabhupada — It's OK**

Tamal Krsna Maharaja was sending his BBT payments directly to India in January and February and March rather than going through

the central BBT account. And this was creating a very big problem because at first I didn't know he was doing it so I was sending my money to Bombay expecting Tamal's money to come into our accounts. When Tamal was sending his money at the same time to either Bombay or Mayapur, this created a very serious cash shortage at the American BBT and it nearly wrecked our whole relationship with our printers. And I tried to explain to the Radha-Damodar party accountants and treasurers that this was completely, this is creating havoc that the money's not going through one account but that we're both sending the money.

They expect me to send my money plus Tamal to send his. It's like double money. And they wouldn't stop sending it. So this was creating a big disturbance and I kept writing letters to Prabhupada, "They're sending the money twice." And Prabhupada kept writing me letters back saying, "It's all right. Why are you in anxiety?" I must have about 2 or 3 letters. And I thought, "My God, what's going on? I can't seem to express to Prabhupada. I must be such a fool that I'm not expressing the situation properly." I kept thinking, "Prabhupada didn't understand." I didn't want to be offensive. But finally the situation became explosive for the BBT was actually having severe difficulties. So the thing came to a head at the Mayapur festival of 1976. I had now gotten involved because of this in the feud with Tamal. And many other temple presidents were a little annoyed that they had lost so many of their collectors.

## **Tamal becomes the leader of US ISKCON & Prabhupada reverses it**

So by the time the temple presidents arrived at Mayapur and I traveled with them, the GBC had already finished their meetings. And the initial resolutions included dismantling the western U. S. A. zone into three zones so that there would never be again competition for the Radha-Damodar party, sending Jayatirtha to

England to be the new GBC there, making me the GBC for Los Angeles, making Tamal the BBT trustee alongside myself and so on. And Tamal was now effectively the principle leader in America by these resolutions.

And during that festival Prabhupada came to learn of the strong feelings held by his temple presidents and by myself towards the Radha-Damodar party's activities and their practices. And at the end of the Mayapur festival Prabhupada had reversed some of the GBC resolutions and decided that there was such a big disturbance that actually Tamal Krsna Maharaja would have to leave the scene. Because as long as he was on the scene Prabhupada felt whatever problem there was which had caused this disturbance would somehow continue, it wouldn't go away. And that's when Prabhupada sent him to China. So I don't think it's necessary for me to go into the whole history of this, is it?

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Why, he tells it?

**Ramesvara:** Who does? Needless to say, I had a lot of discussions with Prabhupada at that Mayapur festival on this topic. We went over the philosophy quite extensively with Prabhupada over sannyasi versus householders and whether we should be caught up in these designations or whether we should just be looking at what service a person is doing. So at the 1976 Mayapur festival this more or less preoccupied everyone's attention.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** The whole situation...

## **The fighting between Radha-Damodar and ISKCON**

**Ramesvara:** The fighting between Radha-Damodar and ISKCON.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** I mean how much was it sannyasi versus householder or was it losing the book distribution or...

**Ramesvara:** Well, the basis for losing the book distributors was by telling them that “You’re associating with householders. Householder means such and such We’re sannyasi, sannyasi means such and such.” So that was the main argument for stealing the men or getting them to leave the temples. So it was very much an issue. Prabhupada had very strong comments to make about it.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Well it’s got to come out. I don’t know if it has to come out but it should...

**Ramesvara:** Well, in a nutshell, Prabhupada called in the sannyasis at one meeting that I was having with him. Myself and Radha-ballabha and Jagannathasuta were there, we were talking about BBT matters, and as soon as we finished the BBT matters we got right into the sannyasi-grhastha thing. And I was trying to be like a champion of temple’s rights. So we discussed with Prabhupada the problem the temples were experiencing economically, that it was impractical for them to keep losing their men and remain operating. And how can they remain enlivened just collecting to maintain? They also want to have the ecstasy of book distribution.

And the whole argument is that because they’re grhasthas they’re not supposed to be managing brahmacaris. After all, grhastha means sex life and so on. So Prabhupada told the story of Lord Caitanya. and Chota Haridasa of a sannyasi who thinks about sex life being rejected. And then Prabhupada told the story of how Lord Caitanya embraced Sivananda Sena when he found out that his wife was pregnant. Almost like congratulating him. So Prabhupada said Lord Caitanya’s relationship with the sannyasis and His relationship with the grhasthas was both transcendental and both completely different. The grhasthas were respected and encouraged to have family life. And he said this in the presence of all these leading sannyasis...And then Prabhupada said that for our sannyasis to be harping so much on what the householders are doing, whether they’re having sex or not, this is completely inappropriate. That means that the sannyasis are thinking more

about sex than the householders themselves.

Because all the sannyasis do all day long is talk about how the householders are having sex. And he gave an example of a man, two brahmanas, they were about to cross a river and one lady needed assistance in crossing. So one of the brahmanas offered to carry the lady on his back across the river. The other brahmana was shocked out of his mind. But he didn't say anything out of respect. So they crossed the river and the lady thanked them very much and parted and then the two brahmanas started walking. And for hours and hours and hours the other brahmana couldn't stop talking about it. "You let that woman climb in you, hold your body, almost like embracing you." So the brahmana went on talking about it for hours. Finally the brahmana said, "Look, I carried that woman on my back for 20 minutes. You've been carrying her in your mind for 2 hours!"

So Prabhupada smashed the whole conception that sannyasis have any business meditating day after day, talking and talking and finding fault with what the grhasthas are doing in their private life by using this story. It was a powerful story and it just made everybody surrender. It just established that the preaching was overdone, it was inappropriate, it was even bordering on offensive and Prabhupada nipped it. And when Prabhupada saw the temple presidents reaction to the GBC resolutions, it was practically a revolution against the GBC. All these GBC resolutions were aimed at restricting the activity of grhasthas in relation to managing brahmacaris. The temple presidents actually had a revolution against the Radha-Damodar party.

## **Tamal I'm taking away your service. It's finished**

When Prabhupada heard the resolutions that had come out of the temple presidents meeting, that night he had a dream Tamal Krsna should go to China, the next morning very early he called Tamal

in his room, there was an argument, finally he had to surrender because Prabhupada said, “You either go to China or you just stay here and chant but either way I’m taking away your service, you’re not going back to America, it’s finished. I have that authority and I’m doing it.”

## **The temple presidents went wild! They were cheering!**

So it was a very intense scene. And then finally Tamal surrendered and that morning on the morning walk, it was right on the roof and Prabhupada announced that a great event has occurred, Krsna has arranged for our Tamal Krsna to open up the largest country in the world and preach in communist China. And all the temple presidents on the walk went wild! They were cheering. And it was a very intense scene.

The temple presidents were feeling like they had won a victory, that their positions had somehow been vindicated and that the philosophy had been straightened out. And after that there were new arrangements, new GBC for the Radha-Damodar party, the Radha-Damodar party was then assigned to help New York. Let’s open New York, let’s use the Radha-Damodar party for doing something like that, building a temple. Connect the Radha-Damodar party to a temple and then they’ll actually understand the importance of temples and the practical problems involved in maintaining temples. So that was the decision, that Adikesava would take over, Radha-Damodar would be connected with the New York temple and supporting that temple and the farm and getting it ready for a grand opening.

Tamal was to go to China with Dhrstadyumna and that was the...that was quite an event. And also at that Mayapur meeting of 1976 we had had meetings with Prabhupada about the Bhagavatam. We prepared for that Mayapur festival a color board which showed

all the volumes of the Bhagavatam drawn in for each Canto what the color would be. And Srila Prabhupada approved the color scheme for the Srimad-Bhagavatam for all the reprints. But he warned us emphatically that this must be the very very last change that is ever to be made in the Srimad-Bhagavatam.

## **A lot of devotees were buying books from the Gaudiya Math**

One thing I just remembered from the 1975 Mayapur festival, a lot of devotees were going to buy books from the Gaudiya Math temples.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** '75 or '76?

## **And Prabhupada got furious**

**Ramesvara:** It was definitely '75. We were too sick to go on parikramas in '74 so '75 we had a first class parikrama program. But the Gaudiya Math had set up little book tables at the Bhaktisiddhanta Samadhi and the Yoga Pith temple and so on. And ISKCON devotees were buying all these Gaudiya Math publications and Prabhupada got furious. And he ordered the devotees to never again buy any of these publications or read them. He said, "These are edited by men who are not pure. And therefore we don't want to hear Srila Bhaktisiddhanta's teachings through them. You can approach Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati only through me. And so you learn everything about Bhaktisiddhanta by hearing from me." And that was a very strong incident that took place in '75.

## **One Day ISKCON will have to maintain all the Gaudiya Matha temples**

Now in '76 I was sitting with Prabhupada on his veranda and he was taking massage and we were talking about the future of our movement in India. And it was at that time that Prabhupada revealed something very wonderful. There was a pleasant breeze at that time, it was just a very wonderful day, very sunny but the nice breeze was coming, very auspicious and pleasant. And Prabhupada was taking massage and he was just looking into the future.

Prabhupada occasionally did that with me. He would like to tell me things that were going to happen in the future. So at this time he told me that gradually one by one all of the different temples in the holy dham which are operated by the different Gaudiya Vaisnavas are going to fall into either disrepair or economic difficulty. And one by one they're going to be turning every single one of them over to ISKCON. The day will come, he said, where they will be coming and begging us to maintain these temples. Including the Yoga Pith, the samadhi of Bhaktisiddhanta, he named everything. And he included everything, Bhaktivinoda's house, this was Prabhupada's prediction.

It was a very significant prophecy. And based on that, ISKCON developed a policy towards taking on these temples. And Prabhupada even set up the Gauramandalabhumi Trust to give money...Or a different trust, maybe it's the Bhaktivedanta Charity Trust, I'm not sure which one it is, to actually take on the maintenance of some of these temples.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Did he say why?

**Ramesvara:** Because our movement was the real Krsna consciousness movement. We had the potency, we had the strength, we had the blessings, we had the economic to do, all the blessings of the whole disciplic succession was coming down on our movement. So



it would be our responsibility to maintain these holy temples in the Dham. No one else could do it. He said they had no potency. Gradually after some time, maybe a few generations, everything would be finished and it would be up to us. And we have to be prepared to take them on. It was an important statement.

## **On Srila Prabhupada respecting prasadam**

This is completely out of chronological order but I just saw it in one of my notes. There was once in 1975, I was up in Prabhupada's bedroom and we were talking about something and I can't remember exactly what the topic was. But we were talking about some BBT printing and something to do with Prabhupada's books. And right in the middle of the conversation Prabhupada's prasadam arrived and it was carried in to this little table that he would eat off of in his bedroom.

So as soon as the prasadam arrived, Prabhupada rose up from his seat and moved over to that room and sat down and became totally immersed, almost like in a trance, of honoring Krsna's prasadam. And it was so transcendental, it was as if I ceased to exist. Right in the middle of the sentence Prabhupada just stood up and moved over to the other room and just became totally absorbed in prasadam. And when I saw that I was just surprised.

Not even a word, nothing. It was just the prasadam and Prabhupada became absorbed in Krsna. So I very quietly offered my obeisances and scampered out of the room. But I always remember that. How much Prabhupada became like completely above everything that was taking place in the world. The prasadam came and it was Krsna coming. Prabhupada saw Krsna in the prasadam. That was one nice story I remember.

## **Prabhupada on killing Ted Patrick deprogrammer**

There was another time at the very end of 1975 when I was with Prabhupada and I began telling Prabhupada about this demon, Ted Patrick. It might have been early '76 or late '75. In any event, I kept describing Ted Patrick in such a horrible way and I kept...every time I finished the description of what he was doing I said, "And Prabhupada, we're always wondering what we should do to this man. What should we do to this man." And I have to admit I had a motive. I wanted to present it in such a way that Prabhupada might even tell us to do away with him.

So although I tried very hard to present it in such a light that it would seem obviously the thing to do, Prabhupada never even hinted it, us getting involved in any kind of physical retaliation towards Ted Patrick. He never encouraged it. And I tried my best to paint the picture. So I took it from that that Prabhupada never would have authorized anything like that. At least at that stage in our movement he would not have authorized anything like that. No devotee in my opinion should take such action into his own hands. Because I tried so hard to get Prabhupada to give that order and he wouldn't. Didn't even come close to giving that order regarding Ted Patrick.

## **Prabhupada's "transcendental phobia": Don't change my books!**

Before we talk about Prabhupada's travels in '76 I want to mention another important theme which was Prabhupada actually instructing about the production on his books. I've already mentioned the conversation that took place in '74 about the art paintings. I think that you should get a copy of the letter that I wrote to the

art department because practically word for word Prabhupada's instructions were there and you can get a first hand understanding of how intense Prabhupada was and how concerned he was that in the future no one ever be allowed to make changes in his books. This was more than just a preoccupation with Prabhupada.

This was a, you could call this a transcendental phobia, that the entire movement would without any shadow of a doubt be completely wasted and all the work and effort of all the devotees that Prabhupada was directly as well as his own efforts would all be ultimately lost if his books were changed. That was his attitude. He expressed that attitude very clearly in 1974 in that conversation and in that letter you'll see the statements Prabhupada made about how everything will be ruined if his books are changed. Then prior to that I mentioned the incident about the Isopanisad cover where Prabhupada was revealing how much thought went into planning out his books when he was involved. He got very furious when we wanted to put Krsna on the cover instead of Visnu.

## **Prabhupada made all the book production/publishing decisions**

In 1975, I think I also mentioned this, that we had a very big problem with the printing of the hardbound Krsna Books. We wanted to change it from two volumes to three volumes. And there was literally like a fight. Not even a fight, Prabhupada was just furious. And he went on for about 1 hour talking about the Krsna Book and how he had planned it out to be in two volumes.

And it became very clear to me that Prabhupada was training me to understand that these books are transcendental manifestations of Prabhupada's devotion, Prabhupada's realization of God which I consider to be perfect absolute God realization coming from Krsna Himself. And that no one is allowed to change anything. The size, the shape, the number of pages, everything. Actually

Prabhupada did make the decisions. If you read through the letters that Prabhupada wrote to me and to Radhaballabha you'll see.

## **Aim for 400 pages per book**

I got a letter from Prabhupada wherein he instructed that each book should be 400 pages. We asked Prabhupada where to draw the line, where to cut off one volume and start the next. How many pages do you want in your books? And Prabhupada said, "Aim for 400 pages per book." It could be a little less, a little more, but that should be the average. So Prabhupada was planning that out. Obviously Prabhupada planned out the first three Bhagavatams when he was in India.

And his meditation was that this is the way I want the books for the West, especially for the American market. But basically speaking for the western English market I want them to have cover jackets, ultimately I want them to have color plates, ultimately I want them to have a nice binding, nice cloth, nice paper, this is the size. When you consider Prabhupada's external poverty while he was in India, then there is no excuse for the book being that size, it could have been a lot smaller, it would have been a lot cheaper for Prabhupada.

## **You cannot change, you cannot make any changes**

So obviously Prabhupada was not considering economics. Otherwise he would have made the books smaller like sometimes we see our European books are smaller physically. This was the size. Prabhupada had to strain economically to get the book that size, to pay that much more to get the book that size. That means that's the size he wanted. And then he would pound it into our heads that you cannot change, you cannot make any changes.

## **When we suggested reducing the large Krsna Book he threw us out of the room**

So in 1975 we went through that. But Prabhupada finally agreed to extend the Krsna Books to three volumes like the paperback, it had already come out as three volumes. But when we suggested moving the size down from the large Krsna Book size to the Bhagavatam size, he became so furious that he literally threw us out of his room. He threw me out of his room. He wouldn't hear of it.

## **He didn't want the books to look like Bibles**

We talked to Prabhupada about whether the books should be with gold edges and gold gilding and he emphasized in letters and in personal conversations he didn't want the books to look like Bibles and he didn't want them to be distributed the way people distribute Bibles. And that can also be found in letters. Many other statements about the nature of Prabhupada's books, how he wanted them to be can be found in these letters.

## **We did not have any authority with the American editions of Prabhupada's books, he was making the decisions**

I remember one incident in 1976, I think I already mentioned about the color board. I think I should go over this one more time just in this context. We had been preparing to reprint all the old Bhagavatams for the standing order program was really picking up. It started in '74. In '75 it was rolling. By the end of '75, early '76 they were finishing up America, Ganasam was getting

13 orders at Harvard, 135 orders in one month in New England, it was rolling. And we needed to reprint the old volumes. We wanted to standardize the lettering, the format and so on. Every single standardization had to be approved by Prabhupada. We did not have any authority with the American editions of Prabhupada's books to be innovative. He was making the decisions. This was his BBT, these were his books.

## **The foreign editions were given more freedom**

Now when his books were translated into foreign languages he gave far more latitude to his men. They could decide on how to design the book and try to make improvements obviously was the motive. But in terms of the size, the lettering and so on, they could chose. But with the American books, they were Prabhupada's books. So Harikesa Maharaja and Bhagavan Maharaja and even Hridayananda Maharaja are going to have a much different experience. Although originally Prabhupada said that all the foreign languages should just follow the American format, they should use the same cover art that the American books use, originally Prabhupada wanted it standardized all over the world.

That's in a letter to Karandhar. But gradually Prabhupada said that the foreign editions they can, because of different conditions in their countries, cultural things related to design, economic factors, they were given much more freedom. Hansaduta Maharaja, all the foreign publishers had a lot more freedom. But with the American books, they were Prabhupada's. That was like one of Prabhupada's personal projects. Just like his sankirtana party, so this was his personal publishing.

## **There can never be any more changes — Prabhupada**

So in 1976 at Mayapur we brought the color board. We had been talking about how we wanted to standardize everything for the reprints for the Library Party. Prabhupada at that time approved the new design for the Krsna Book trilogy and then he approved the standardization in terms of lettering and so on for the Bhagavatams and he approved the new color board. That is what the 12 Cantos are going to look like. Prabhupada was very happy to see that we had made a plan. But then he got very grave and said, “Now, this is the final plan, this is the final approved standard, there can never be any more changes.” He was emphatic, he was insistent, and he pounded it into our heads. I was there with Radhaballabha I think Jagannathasuta was there, Prabhupada Kripa Maharaja was there.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Where was this?

## **This changing business is the disease that the Americans have**

**Ramesvara:** This was right on his veranda outside his room in the back part where he was taking massage. Mayapur festival '76. Prabhupada Kripa remembers this vividly because he just brought it up at the recent BBT trustees meeting. That Prabhupada was absolutely emphatic that this is the way the Bhagavatam's going to be presented to the western English speaking people. Now there'll no other way that it will be presented. Later on in that Mayapur festival, I presented to Prabhupada an idea for Beyond Birth and Death reprint.

That was a very popular book at the time and a new...all kinds of new arty and very innovative and creative cover design was going on in the American paperback market. And just going to

bookstores, especially in airports, I would see that these publishers, karmi publishers are putting a lot into their paperback covers. And one of the things that had just come out was something called dye cuts. A dye cut is where you have a hole in the front cover and then the inside front pages are actually laminated or glossy paper and you have color printing. So you have color printing that kind of comes through that hole. And it's like a teaser. And when you see that you're intrigued and you immediately want to open up the cover and look at the two page spread on the inside front cover and the inside page, that's called the dye cut. And many books, especially like thriller books, horror books, ghost books, those kind of books use this technique. So I thought that *Beyond Birth and Death* as a title and as a book lent itself to that. So I proposed it to Prabhupada. He completely smashed the idea.

This was inside his room, myself and Radhaballabha. At this time we were showing Prabhupada the...I can't remember what we were showing him. We were showing him something, maybe color art or something. But anyway, when we presented this idea to him he smashed it and again he gave us a lecture on changes. He used to say, "Change, change, change, for the sake of change. This changing business is the disease that the Americans have. It's a disease." And he told this story, I just can't remember it but I think it's written in one of the letters too and Tamal Krsna will remember it. That if an American, just to be different, instead of walking on his feet he'll walk on his hands. Just to be different. Change without real purpose. Now in that letter that I wrote to the artists in 1974, so many specific points are made about changing. When you're allowed to change and when you're not.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** You don't have a copy of that?



## **You cannot change one comma, not even a punctuation mark, that is the etiquette**

**Ramesvara:** I can find a copy. It's a good thing to refer to. Especially he talked about, as I said earlier, "You can add things but you can't delete. If you want to replace a painting you have to actually make an improvement and do the exact same subject matter. Once it's approved it's eternal." That was his quote. "Once it's approved it's eternal." One of the heaviest incidences came up I think in '76 or '77, we wrote to Prabhupada about publishing his spiritual master's book the Brahma-samhita. Because it had already been introduced to chant in the Gurukulas, we were chanting it all over ISKCON. And although Prabhupada in '75 said, "You cannot read the Gaudiya Math publications, you cannot approach my spiritual master or Bhaktivinoda directly.

You have to learn their teachings through me, through my books, through my lectures." This was a big incident in '75 because the devotees were buying Gaudiya Math publications and reading directly. And Prabhupada completely smashed it. So it was either '76 or '77 we wanted to print Brahma-samhita. Prabhu-pada approved it and he wrote a very heavy letter. to Radhaballabha. Because we were asking Prabhupada about editing changes. I'm not sure if he wrote the letter or if it's on a tape or maybe it's both. I think Radhaballabha had a room conversation with Prabhupada and I wasn't present. Tamal was there. And in addition to that I think there's a letter. Anyway, between the letter and the room conversation, the instruction was given that "You cannot make any changes in my spiritual master's book." "What about the incorrect grammar?" Prabhupada's reply, "You cannot change one comma, not even a comma, not even a punctuation mark, that is the etiquette."

So that was just another one of those super heavy instructions

that the etiquette in dealing with a great acarya's books is that whatever he has done it's eternal and it can never be changed. And I believe that all of this was part of Prabhupada's training us. He wanted to train people who would be entrusted with his books. And who would in turn train the next generation of BBT men, managers and production managers in this fanatical, literally fanatical transcendental phobia about changes. Prabhupada went out of his way to train us. Some of the instructions were so extreme that one might say they're exaggerated. But they're not exaggerated. This is exactly what Prabhupada wanted.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Can you give an example of that?

## **No one is willing to change the size, we're all so afraid**

**Ramesvara:** Well, just the economics of why we can't publish the Krsna Book anymore. Because we're not allowed to change the size. This has been hanging up the BBT trustees for the last five years. The publishing industry has just exploded in terms of inflation. Every-thing is a 150, 200% more expensive than when Prabhupada was here. We no longer can afford to print the Krsna Book hardbounds in such large volumes. But no one is willing to change the size, we're all so afraid. But that's the way Prabhupada trained us. Maybe one day it is changed for economic reasons because ultimately Prabhupada wouldn't want the book to be out of print. But this training was ultimate to insure that the instructions in his book, the words they weren't changed and pictures and illustrations were not added which make the book incorrect and therefore would cause a person to just dismiss the whole book. Prabhupada said, "If there's one mistake then the whole book is useless."

## **If you put these in my book the whole book is ruined — Prabhupada**

When he was rejecting Pariksit's line drawings for the Teachings of Lord Caitanya he said, "These are mistakes, these pictures do not illustrate properly. Actually some of the illustrations here are subject to great mis-interpretation and if you put these in my book the whole book is ruined." So this was Prabhupada's training to us about his books.

## **Prabhupada decided the size, he decided the number of pages**

So he was very involved in the designing of the book, the format. We talked to Prabhupada about the number of pages, we talked to Prabhupada about gold stamping, we talked to him about color pictures, ultimately he wanted 50 color pictures in each book. Prabhupada was a very active publisher, not just author. He was a very active publisher. We would discuss with him as we've already mentioned about the Macmillan contract, about American printer versus Japanese printer, Prabhupada would give us the go ahead and we would go.

And by the momentum of his order we would become expert in international publishing. We became expert in understanding the publishing industry of different countries, the paper industry of different countries, we became expert in negotiating, but all of this was by Prabhupada's order. How he moved into Dai Nippon and established a credit, how he authorized us to move away from Dai Nippon. Prabhupada was an active publisher, he was not just someone who just turned it all over and didn't know what was going on. We were sending him monthly reports. I had to send Prabhupada a monthly report during his life. On the income of the

BBT, on the expenses of the BBT, on all the loans of the BBT and how current they are, on the production that the BBT is engaged in and the upcoming production, on the quantity of books printed. Prabhupada was getting monthly reports and he was writing me letters indicating he was reading them. It's not like I was just mailing them and they weren't read to him. He was reading them and he was writing back comments. What about this? What about that? So Prabhupada was not just an active author, he was an active publisher.

He was involved in designing. He created the marketing strategy which involved as I mentioned this ingenious, ingenious idea of mixing philosophy and gorgeous art work. That's a marketing strategy which enabled us to sell hundreds of thousands of the Bhagavad-gita, literally millions of copies of one philosophy book. Prabhupada decided the size, Prabhupada decided the number of pages, he always pushed us to improve and increase the quality and so on. He wanted high quality paper in his books. This was something we talked about with Prabhupada and he insisted on high quality paper. And good binding. And in terms of our sales strategy, it was Prabhupada who gave the approval for the airports.

## **The airports are the best place for distributing books**

Prabhupada once wrote in a letter to me that there is no more important place for distributing our books than the airport. Also there's a conversation in Hawaii which is reprinted in a BBT newsletter between Prabhupada and Mulaprakrti. I was sending Mulaprakrti to join Prabhupada's sankirtana party, the Nama Hatta party. We wanted to make an experiment, girls in Japan. So on the way Prabhupada was in Hawaii so she visited Hawaii. And there's this fantastic conversation between Prabhupada and Mulaprakrti. And it's recorded and it's been transcribed and I published it in a BBT

newsletter. I think that BBT newsletter came out in 1980.

It's available. Because we were having a hard time in America with the BBT sales and I wanted to inspire everyone with that. And in that conversation Prabhupada says, "Yes, the airports are the best place for distributing books." So Prabhupada, he's the one who authorized the airport sankirtana and he's the one who authorized us hiring lawyers to open up airports. He approved of that. "Yes, go ahead. Hire the lawyers, these are public places, these are the main transportation centers of the world, we want our books distributed there." He approved of that whole strategy. Now you could call that legalization work our what another company would spend in their advertising budget to generate markets we spent in our legal budget. In a sense that was to expand our markets.

And we spent a certain percentage of the BBT money, maybe 5% or something like that to expand our markets for sales. And that was done with Prabhupada's authorization. He knew about these legal cases. There were times when he heard that... Once we heard LAX was closing down or another airport was closing down. He said, "They cannot do this. You must get the lawyers and fight." So he knew what was going on with this marketing program. And in terms of the criticism of book distribution, in general Prabhupada took a very conservative approach in order to preserve the book distribution.

## **Anything that will distribute my book is legal — Prabhupada**

There was a famous conversation between Prabhupada and Bhurijana which is one of the extreme examples of Prabhupada's preaching that the ends justify the means. And there are a number of letters like that, there's a number of personal conversations with Prabhupada and the GBC. In 1977 at the GBC meeting, the entire GBC went before Prabhupada and told him, "These are the

complaints: The Santa Claus...the devotees are dressing in outfits which cause people to laugh at us like these Santa Claus outfits. And the devotees are doing this, and the devotees are doing that, and the public is becoming infuriated." So the whole GBC met, we made a presentation to Prabhupada, Satsvarupa Maharaja was the spokesman. What did Prabhupada reply? This was on his, he was very sick. He was lying on his bed actually, sitting on his bed when the GBC came into his bedroom in 1977.

Another extreme example. We talked about the jiva party, the scandal of the women's parties, the whole thing came up in 1977. And what did Prabhupada reply? "Anything that will distribute my book is legal." That's the definition of what is...Prabhupada at first said, "Everything you do must be legal." O. K., now what's the definition? Whatever sells the book. So these were extreme positions. Very very conservative, extremely conservative stands that Prabhupada was taking. He wouldn't let anything interfere with the book dis-tribution.

In 1975 there were a lot of complaints about Tripurari's BBT party. That BBT party, I started it in 1974 as soon as Karandhar left. I spun Tripurari off from the Los Angeles temple and Tripurari started collecting men from different temples to join his BBT party. It was like the forerunner of the Radha-Damodar party, stealing men. And I was caught in the middle trying to balance between the temples flipping out and screaming about it and Tripurari getting their men and doing the biggest book distribution that had ever been done. Because in 1975 Tripurari had, in '74 rather when he was building his party up, we were legalizing airports and he had his men in every airport in America. By 1975 his party, his little party of men was out distributing every temple in the world and they were out distributing the Radha-Damodar party. Which is why Tamal was so anxious to join and merge to create one super party.

So anyway, at the 1975 GBC meeting there was a discussion. The GBC were mad, he's stealing our men, nobody's controlling him,

nobody's controlling his lines, he's just going to our airports and supposedly training up our men but who knows what's...who's the GBC for this? And this was taken to Srila Prabhupada and at that time Srila Prabhupada said, "He doesn't need a GBC. I don't want anything done to Tripurari which in any way will slow down his party, which will in any way put any kind of limitation on it or curtail his own enthusiasm." That's how Prabhupada dealt with it.

## **Prabhupada was the defender of book distribution**

Prabhupada was the defender of book distribution. Siddhasvarupa, Tusta Krsna, Bhurijana, the GBC. Once Sri Govinda wrote a very heavy letter about the tactics in 1975 or '76, this is a very important letter. Prabhupada's reply...Because they were talking about how Tripurari says everybody should go out to the airport or you're not pleasing Prabhupada in the best way, the cooks, everybody should drop your service and go out if you want to please Prabhupada in the best way. And he accompanied his letter with some bad newspaper articles about us. Prabhupada's reply again is an extreme example of Prabhupada, the defender of book distribution. He said, "Yes, actually Tripurari's right. He is right. If you want to please me in the best way, yes, this is what you should do.

And as far as if you just distribute books all money will come and you don't have to worry about anything else, he's right about that." And the letter went on and on and on like that. And it was a very extremely heavy letter. So this is an example of how much Prabhupada was involved not only as the author but as the publisher, as the defender, as the planner. He was approving the marketing strategy and then he was defending the salesmen. And what to speak of defending the salesmen, he was pushing them. He was writing letters back in 1971, "Whoever out distributes the other temple, I'm going to that temple. I'll stay there. They've captured

me.”

And the letters that he wrote to me and other leaders of the book distribution that “There’s no doubt about it, this is our most important program, nothing is more important, everything depends on this, whatever we’ve got, it all depends on this, this is the only solace in my life, don’t think of anything else, don’t divert your mind for a second for the rest of your life, just do this, this is what I want, this is what my guru wanted,” these letters, they were just creating the deepest spirit of sacrifice. Plus the transcendental competition that Prabhupada was openly calling for.

He approved of the newsletters, he read them, he would send encouraging letters back to the writers of the sankirtana newsletter and myself as the writer of the BBT newsletter. I must have 5 or 6 letters from Prabhupada telling me, “This is very encouraging, keep on writing. Go on, go on, go on.” And the BBT ratings. Who’s number one? Who’s the biggest distributor for Prabhupada? Who’s doing the most service for Prabhupada? Prabhupada would hear those reports regularly. All of his secretaries would read them when they came in the mail.

Tamal Krsna has a lot of experience reading these to Prabhupada and seeing how...I got a letter in 1977 from Prabhupada via Tamal Krsna where Tamal’s describing Prabhupada’s response to hearing the sankirtana scores. And of course I got that letter, “Regarding the sales figures, this is the only solace in my life. Please endeavor in this way.” Another letter, “I beg you, go on distributing in huge quantities and Krsna will pour His blessings.” And then these instructions, “Every year it must double, everything depends on everything must double.”

And then the transcendental competition, Prabhupada was openly calling for it. He openly encouraged the competition between the western zone headed by Jayatirtha and the Radha-Damodar party headed by Tamal in ’76. Prior to that he was encouraging the competition between Karandhar in Jayatirtha’s zone and Mad-



huvisa in Australia. And in terms of the ratings we would list Gurukrpa giving the special donations. And Prabhupada loved it, he orchestrated it. He was the conductor of the orchestra. So this is Prabhupada's involvement. It's on every level.

So now by 1976...Oh, I mentioned I think on the tape about that important instruction Prabhupada gave regarding our movement having to be prepared to take over the Gaudiya Math temples and other Vaisnava temples. So now the Mayapur festival was over...

## **Prabhupada as a doctor**

When I came back from India that year, I got acute infectious hepatitis and I was very very sick for about a month. My skin was livid yellow and my eyes were yellow and I couldn't get off my back, and I was in the weakest condition I had ever been in. I was trying all these different cures. So when Prabhupada was in Hawaii, Radhaballabha had the intelligence to call up. I think his secretary was still Pusta Krsna. So when Prabhupada heard I was sick he asked what I was taking for it.

And there was one Indian doctor in Trinidad who had visited New Vrndavana who had prescribed some kind of a mung dhal diet and different things. Prabhupada said, "This doctor is a rascal. He doesn't know anything." Prabhupada was angry, and he gave a whole new prescription over the phone. He instructed Pusta Krsna, "Call immediately. Tell them immediately Ramesvara must take this, this, this and this." So he gave me a whole new prescription and within a week I had recovered. So Prabhupada was...I'm sure there are many stories of Prabhupada acting as a doctor.

## **Prabhupada was concerned about his name and Founder-Acarya on all the books**

So then we had told Prabhupada that we were putting this big sign on the Press that said, “Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Founder-Acarya His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada,” and it would be seen by all the people on Venice Boulevard. So in one of those calls from Pusta Krsna about my health, Prabhupada told him, “Now you tell them that Ramesvara has promised me that this sign is going to be up by the time that I arrive, but I know it is not going to be up. Now you tell them that.” So Pusta Krsna relayed that message and I was just getting off my back and I was in complete anxiety because Prabhupada was right—I had forgotten about the sign and he was coming in about a week or ten days. So we did a mad scamper and we somehow got the sign up so that when Prabhupada arrived the sign was up. It is still there, Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, and his name, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

So I remember a previous incident in 1973 there was a big thing about Prabhupada’s name being on his letterhead. And Prabhupada got so angry. He said that “If you don’t put my name and the title, founder-acarya of ISKCON on all ISKCON letterhead.” He said something to the effect that “this is a conspiracy against me.” There’s a letter signed by three GBC men, Bali and two others and it is initialed by Prabhupada. I have a copy of it in my files, explaining that this is the new policy in ISKCON. This goes back to ’73.

So Prabhupada was really concerned about his name on all the books, on letter-heads, on signs, on buildings, that he is the founder-acarya. He never wanted anyone to think that this was not his movement but maybe this was Bhaktisiddhanta’s movement. Because he never wanted his Godbrothers to be able to take advantage. “Oh, this is our movement because it belongs to our Guru

Maharaja.” No. This is Prabhupada’s movement, he is the founder-acarya, and if you want to get involved in this movement, you have to actually surrender to the founder-acarya. Prabhupada was anticipating the plots of his Godbrothers. And therefore he said, “If you don’t put my name on all of these things, it’s a conspiracy.” So I related this sign incident in 1975 to the same mood that had gone back to ’73 and even before that when Prabhupada’s name was not properly listed on his books or his title wasn’t there he would become furious.

In the early days we didn’t understand why he would become so furious because we had no contact with his Godbrothers. But by 1975 when that sign incident came up, I related it to his Godbrothers because I had already been in an incident where this boy Santosh was writing letters to one of Prabhupada’s Godbrothers, sending him books and Prabhupada was furious. He wrote me a letter, “Why is this going on? This has to stop immediately. This is a great offense.” And so on. So I had already had experience dealing with Srila Prabhupada’s Godbrothers, especially Bon Maharaja. So I related the sign incident to that and it stuck in my mind in that way. Prabhupada was happy when he came and he saw it. We made a point of showing it to Prabhupada when we drove up and he said, “Oh, very good.” He was pleased.

## **Jadurani’s “faith healing” by Prabhupada**

So then when Prabhupada arrived we were having a problem at that time with Jadurani. She had become gravely ill. Her health had deteriorated to such a degree that she couldn’t even hold a spoon and sip her own broth. It was so serious. It was a crisis. We had to have a devotee spoon feeding Jadurani and she was being treated by one of these health doctors in Laguna Beach, a man named Dr. Benish. He did a special kind of diagnosis where you look in the

eyes, an iridologist. They analyze with different techniques.

Prabhupada said the man is a quack. At that time in Los Angeles and Southern California this man had a great reputation amongst our devotees, that he was a great healer, a brilliant physician. A lot of devotees were going to see him, and in one sentence Prabhupada dismissed him. "He's a quack. Not more than 25% of any treatment he gives will be successful." So we brought Jadurani, she was; in a wheelchair. We carried her in the wheelchair up the stairs to Prabhupada's room. We helped her crawl out of the wheelchair and she literally crawled into, through Prabhupada's sitting room to his bedroom. Prabhupada was taking massage in the massage room. Prabhupada has three rooms, a sitting room, bedroom, and massage room. Jadurani crawled in.

Prabhupada asked what was wrong. He completely dismissed Benish as a quack and then he touched his hand to Jadurani's forehead to feel her head, and he just announced. ...It was so wonderful to see. It was some kind of a mystical thing going on. It wasn't just the way you normally touch a person's forehead to see if their head is hot. There was something much more going on. Then when Prabhupada took his hand down he said, "You will be all right." It was almost like a faith healing. Jadurani was literally in ecstasy because we had so much faith in Prabhupada. We helped her back to the wheelchair and carried her down the stairs. As we were wheeling her back to her apartment she was screaming, "Benish is a quack. Prabhupada said it. Benish is a quack." Within a few days Jadurani was up and walking and eating and it was like a faith healing. Just the kind of thing that the Christians sometimes pull off. Prabhupada had performed right in front of our eyes a faith healing just by touching her on the head and telling her, "Now you will be all right." Everyone in LA was talking about it. It was one of those amazing pastimes.

## **Human flesh is the most tasty of all**

In 1976 also when Prabhupada was in Los Angeles Tamal Krsna was visiting and we had a wonderful talk with Prabhupada in the car. This was one of the most amazing talks that I had ever had the privilege of participating in with Srila Prabhupada. It began when we were telling Prabhupada about some crazy news stunt that had been pulled off by some demented, popular pop artist named Andy Warhol. He and his people had just captured the news in America by eating dead fetuses that had come from aborted babies.

And it was the most gross thing. It got newspaper coverage because they had eaten them. So we began the conversation in the car, we were driving to the place of the morning walk. And we mentioned that to Prabhupada. I can't remember if I was sitting next to Prabhupada and Tamal was in the front, or maybe Tamal was sitting next to Prabhupada in the back and I was in the front. Rsabhadeva of Spiritual Sky was driving and Prabhupada's servant was in the front also with me holding the tape recorder. So then Prabhupada said, "Yes. They have not yet learned that the human flesh is the most tasty of all."

And everyone in the car was just silent because we all knew that people eat meat and cows because actually it is tasty to the material senses. But it's just horrible and cruel, but it's tasty. And when Prabhupada said this, that the human flesh, they just haven't discovered it yet, but that is the most tasty of all. We were just astonished that Prabhupada seemed to know everything about every subject matter. He seemed to be the world's expert from A to Z. You name it and he could speak on it. His answer had that impact. He was appreciating how we took his reply and he was smiling seeing our appreciation. He liked that.

## **My books will stand for the next ten thousand years, they will be the law books for the human society**

So we went on and on in the car ride talking about Prabhupada and his book publishing. I asked Prabhupada...I'm not sure if I asked or I think I made a statement of praise of his books, how his books are so perfect, his purports explain everything one needs to know for actually becoming Krsna conscious. And it seemed to me, I said that even though there are many different acaryas who have written before you, it seems to me that your books are especially unique that your books have a certain quality to them that they are so practical. They deal with every single thing that's going on in the world now, but they are more than that. They are more than things that are going on now. They anticipate things that are going to be going on in the future, and they already cover them.

So I was praising Prabhupada's books like that. Then Prabhupada said that "Yes My books will stand for the next ten thousand years. They will be the law books for the human society." And I remember Tamal and I were just in awe. We were just in a state of awe, that Prabhupada's writing was on such a level that he can anticipate every single thing that would come up in the Kali-yuga and that his books would not have to be replaced in the future by someone on the grounds that, "Well, now the times and circumstances have changed. We need a new purport, we need a new angle of vision." Prabhupada dismissed once and for all that we would ever rely on a different angle of vision because of times being different.

He just completely dismissed that. He said, in fact, "I am writing with that in mind." It was a very awesome statement and we were held in awe, we were just so inspired to be Prabhupada's servants, to be his men, to be so close to such a person who is so empowered with such vision. It was a very important conversation. 1976, Los Angeles. That was the last visit in Los Angeles. Probably what?

May? No, June he was in New York.

**Baladeva:** I have here June 1 to 10.

## The Importance of Dioramas

**Ramesvara:** Ok. End of May. Early June. Now also I think I should go through a little bit of the history of Prabhupada and the dioramas. We talked about it briefly before. Prabhupada had taken an amazing step in 1973 by sending Baradraj and his wife and Adideva to Bengal. Baradraj was the art department for four years. He was the designer of Back to Godhead. There was nothing that Baradraj was not involved in. He personally designed every painting in the Bhagavad-gita, he designed the Krsna Book paintings, he was designing Back to Godhead. He was the whole artistic and creative work that was going on in ISKCON Press in Boston and in Brooklyn was centered on Baradraj and Prabhupada just plucked him out at the height of his career and said, “I want you to learn this dying art of earthen doll making.”

So we can understand, as much as we know about Prabhupada’s feelings for his books, and as much as we know that Prabhupada’s marketing plan was based on the use of gorgeous color paintings in his books, and as much as he knew that this was going to slow down the entire art production for his books, he took the head of the art department, the fastest and most talented, and still the best artist in ISKCON—he took him right out and sent him to India to learn something that no one had ever heard of before.

So you can just imagine how much Prabhupada wanted to introduce dioramas. It was astonishing to everyone that Prabhupada did that. It is part of the reason why we fell behind towards late ’73 and throughout ’74, that the BBT was producing one book every four months. We just didn’t have the artists. We were left with Jadurani, Muralidhar and Pariksit had just come up. He had just gotten involved, and; that was it. So it was a pretty major thing.

They spent a year in India and it was a big hassle for them to get these old Bengali craftsmen to teach them anything, because they didn't think they were serious. They're Westerners, they don't have the patience, they don't...They didn't take it seriously. I'm sure Baradraj has a lot of interesting stories that he could relate in an interview about all the conversations he had with Prabhupada about FATE. It makes up an important part of Prabhupada's personality, Prabhupada's plan for making the world Krsna conscious. It's a very important part. He was willing to sacrifice his books. It's very significant. Baradraj, of course, is the most important, central figure, and he had the most contact with Prabhupada.

Anyway, by 1974 they were ready to leave India and Prabhupada did want them to go to London but Baradraj convinced Prabhupada that there would be more facility given in Los Angeles. So Prabhupada agreed and they came to Los Angeles and we set them up. By the time Prabhupada arrived in 1975, which was that famous period of the Caitanya-caritamrta rush, at that time Baradraj had prepared an entire plan for the first diorama museum. He had trained up a number of artists in doll making, but also he had seen that in America the wax museums are beginning to add special effects, but the big thing was like Disneyland.

Disneyland was the big thing. Audio animatronics, sound tracks, lighting effects, animation. This was just at the time people were beginning to get very creative with slide shows. People would be putting on slide shows with thirty or fifty different slide projectors with dissolving slides and Baradraj was going to a few of these state of the art shows. He was beginning to see that the American art scene is involving audiovisual, film, slides, sound, very sophisticated things.

So he presented to Prabhupada that in order for our diorama shows in the West to be effective, we have to use the state of the art technology. In India it might be enough just to have the dioramas, but in the West, the state of the art is so rapidly expanding that we're



going to be left in the dust and we won't be able to impress people. Prabhupada agreed. He approved it. Baradraj shows Prabhupada an entire model for the Los Angeles museum with the addition of a computer system controlling lighting effects, sound tracks, slide projections, and Prabhupada loved it and said, "Spend any amount. Just do it." And where was the money coming from at that time? Prabhupada had all the money coming from the BBT.

Every penny of it he had it coming from the BBT. And at that time Baradraj showed Prabhupada his first completed diorama which was a miniature diorama of Krsna and Arjuna on the chariot. Prabhupada loved it. There's a picture of myself, I am seated just at Prabhupada's feet. Prabhupada is on an elevated seat, I am seated right next to him and I'm smiling like a little boy. What that picture is is the picture in 1975 of Prabhupada going into this room in the yellow building which faces the temple. We had Baradraj's diorama of Krsna and Arjuna on the chariot and that's what Prabhupada is smiling about and that's what I'm smiling about. And everyone was in the room and that was the first showing to Prabhupada of finished ISKCON diorama. That was the very first. It's also one of my favorite pictures.

## **Bhaktisiddhanta on keeping temples in debt**

So then, also in January 1975, when I went to Dallas, that was before Prabhupada came to L. A. for that showing of that art Prabhupada gave me personal instructions about the dioramas. I mentioned he went through the whole story of how Srila Bhaktisiddhanta would literally keep his temples in debt. Prabhupada said, "My Guru Maharaja introduced this." And he would get his disciples to collect for a project, they would give him the money and he would take it and spend it on dioramas. Then he would go back to his disciples and say, "Okay, I need the money now." And they

would have expended all their money. “But, we gave it to you; Guru Maharaja.” “No no. It’s already spent. I need it for this.” And they would have to go out and collect again. In that way Prabhupada told a number of stories about the dioramas and how important it was to his Guru Maharaja and how his Guru Maharaja was convinced that this would convert people in the West. And how Prabhupada was intent on carrying out this plan of having diorama museums and exhibits all over the Western world.

So the next incident with the dioramas came in 1976. The thing had been dragging on, we were having a hard time getting the computer because the technology in the computer industry for this type of sophisticated programming did not exist because there was no market. So we went to computer companies and for them to actually manufacture such a thing would have been extremely costly. So we decided, “All right. We’ll do it ourselves.” Which proved ultimately to be a mistake because today the state of the art in the computer industry is there, the market is there, and we could buy something today which would work properly. In any event, by 1976 the museum still wasn’t ready.

So I wrote a letter to Prabhupada begging Srila Prabhupada to order the FATE devotees to do with FATE what the Press devotees had done with the Caitanya-caritamrta the year before. I told Prabhupada, “This thing is never going to get finished. But only if you empower them. They are surrendered, they will take your instruction to heart. You empowered the Press to do a miracle, now you empower FATE if you so like. If you like, it is up to you.” I wrote a letter like that. My letter was dated Sept. 9, 1976 and I also talked to Prabhupada about making this movie Audrey Rose in that letter and encouraging Yadubara. So Prabhupada’s reply from Vrndavana dated Sept. 18, 1976, he wrote, “I am in due receipt of your letter dated Sept. 9, and noted the contents with care. I am very pleased with your report and your contact with this author (the man who wrote the book Audrey Rose) and the film producer.”

Then he goes. “Now, you may take it as my direct order that you must finish the theistic exhibit before the Mayapur festival. Otherwise what is the use of all this endeavor?” Then he wrote, “Yadubara should be encouraged as he is giving good service. Both his wife and himself are both serving nicely. I approve their work and they should be encouraged in all respects. In the future we shall get more and more valuable services from them. These management affairs sometimes disturb me. Kindly manage nicely. I want that the properties should not be jeopardized. So the idea of the declarations from the presidents is absolutely required. Nobody can do anything without my signature. That should be enforced.”

So in this letter, that was his order in 1976 for FATE. Then in 1977 the FATE museum basically was completed. The computer still was not working properly and to this day we have not had the necessary funds to buy a computer system which would cost about 50,000 dollars, and is one of the unfortunate histories.

## **Tamal complains about the cost of FATE**

There is one other incident in 1975 when Tamal came, he got a little upset that the BBT money was being spent on this FATE museum for the benefit of the Los Angeles temple and he discussed it with Prabhupada. There were two topics: One, the cost. I don't know if it is '75 or '76 when this took place. No it had to be '75 because Jayatirtha was still GBC. So in '75. So one of the topics was the overall cost because of the electronic effects that Baradraj wanted was going to be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Did Prabhupada realize how much it was going to cost? Then the second topic was is this really something Prabhupada wants the BBT to pay for?

Now as I said previously from '74 on Prabhupada had the BBT paying for everything when they first showed up. So we went over this with Prabhupada and we told him how much it was going to cost.

And Prabhupada said, "I don't care. Let them spend any amount. I want this effect. I want these special effects. Let them spend any amount. Cost is no object." Those are exact words from Prabhupada. Then the second thing, Tamal was really pushing, "Why should my remittances go to build something for Los Angeles?" This was part of his competition with Jayatirtha. This was the other side of it. So Prabhupada kind of..

Prabhupada sympathized with Tamal's point because after all Tamal was responsible for raising so much of the BBT money. So then the question was, well, who is going to pay for it? So then the answer was let us split it. From here on in lets split it between LA and the BBT. So Prabhupada agreed to that. My personal feeling is that Prabhupada wouldn't have cared if Tamal, who had been raising so much of the money had not objected. Prabhupada had already set it up that the BBT was going to pay. He already knew how much it was going to cost. When we presented it to him he wasn't surprised and he didn't care.

So that indicates he didn't have any objection about the BBT paying. But when someone who was raising the money became discouraged, Prabhupada would become concerned. He didn't want any dampening of enthusiasm to distribute books and raise money. So therefore he was always like a mediator between all of his different disciples, making sure that everybody remained enthusiastic so that things kept going on. So that was a role that Prabhupada played and this is how this particular incident was resolved.

There is one other major incident that took place in '76. I was looking ahead, what is next. What comes after LA? What is the next museum? So I had the idea that if we really want to capture America, let's build a museum in Washington, D. C., the capital, and let the Congress, the Senate, the President's staff, let the government of the United States, let the people who run America have a huge museum. There is no real tourist attraction like that in Washington, D. C. There is the Smithsonian, but it's all dead.

## Engage Ambarish in funding Dioramas

Only in the aerospace building do they have some films with their bogus, atheistic, godless theories about the origin of the universe. But other than that, everything is dead. It's just buildings that you look at. So I had this idea and I was writing letters to Prabhupada about building a museum in Washington and he loved the idea. I kept thinking, "How in the world are we going to pay for this?" Then an idea came. "Ambarish needs a project. Ambarish. The rich Ford, is doing nothing. What is he doing? He doesn't have a project to sink his teeth into, and as a result, he is not inspired. As a result of not being inspired, he is drifting into bad association and getting a little bit away from his spiritual practices." So I wrote a letter to Prabhupada that proposed that Ambarish would be the patron of the FATE project from here on end. Let this be his thing.

This will save him, because if we don't come up with something juicy, he's not going to be saved. And this will engage his money in something that you obviously want, and will also help the BBT. Prabhupada loved it and he wrote me back a letter approving the idea and I begged Prabhupada to write Ambarish a letter if you like this idea. So Prabhupada wrote a personal letter to Ambarish which he has taken as his lifetime instruction, because that's the way Prabhupada wrote it. So the stage was set. The Washington museum was on. Ambarish was the patron. Prabhupada had given him some new thing. He flew out to LA, saw the LA museum, he loved it. "Let's go!" So in 1976 we flew to Washington, we were looking at buildings and at that time Tamal Krsna Maharaja who had been sent to China in March...The. China trip was cancelled by Prabhupada in May.

Tamal had done two or three months of research and at that time Mao Tse Tung was absolute authority in China, there was no possibility for any American entering China and doing anything. It was hopeless. Their cultural revolution had destroyed the libraries, the universities, the professors. The whole intellectual community

of China had been killed. The whole place was in the dark ages and it was just hopeless. So Prabhupada released Tamal from his project and sent him back to be in charge of the Radha-Damodar party. The Radha-Damodar party had already been sent to ISKCON New York as part of the you could say rectification or part of their process to increase their understanding about the way Prabhupada structured ISKCON.

This party had been assigned to a temple. They were now temple devotees. They were assigned to New York and of course that included the Gitanagari farm. In May when Prabhupada released Tamal he was sent back to be the GBC of New York. His task was, "Get that building ready for the grand opening. Prabhupada is coming in June or July." So they were working feverishly of course. That was a big impetus to get that building going. Tamal had heard about the idea for Ambarish, he had heard about Washington and he started making a counterproposal. Why not New York? The goal is to put the museum in a place where the people who control America are going to see it. Well, that's New York.

So there was this going between New York and Washington. Rupanuga was in Washington, and Tamal was in New York. We saw a beautiful building two and a half blocks from the White House, right off Pennsylvania Avenue, or New York Avenue and 14th. It was an unbelievable location. We took Ambarish out there to see it and we were ready to buy it. Then Tamal brought everybody to New York and there's this fantastic building, where is it, Tamal will have to tell you, on 57th right by Central Park. One of the most famous buildings in New York and it was for sale.

So we all flew to New York and we went to see that building. Baradraj, me, the whole gang. Meanwhile in '76 we decided, "Okay. Let's have a brain-storming session and plan out the Washington or New York museum." So we went up to a mountain lodge and we got me, Swarup Damodar, Karandhar, I think Rupanuga was there, Rabindra Swarup was there, Naranarayana, Baradraj, Jayatirtha.

We locked ourselves in for two or three days and we just brainstormed and wrote the entire script, the whole thing, the scenes, the electronic effects, the whole concept, the basic everything.

And it was fabulous. It talked about the purpose of life, how a human being discovers the purpose of life, how he comes to understand everything about life, karma, reincarnation. Then there is a whole section about what is this material world, how is it created. There's a huge scene with creation of MahaVisnu, Garbhodakasayi Visnu. Finally it takes you to liberation, right into the spiritual world. There's a boat ride as you go through the Krsna lilas on water. It was wild. We mailed it to Prabhupada and he loved it. "Do it," he said. So that was our thing. We now had the script. We were ready to do the big project and it was going to cost a fortune and Ambarish was supposed to pay for it.

So we were haggling over which building to get. · In the meantime Jayatirtha had the idea, "Look, we're haggling, we don't have it ready yet. We're not ready for this big project yet. Let's do some thing to keep Ambarish going. Ambarish wants to show some thing to his family so that they will understand that he's not just throwing away all of his money in the Hare Krsna movement." This is a big problem with Ambarish and his family, how he is always trying to convince them that he has not gone crazy. There's a lot involved. Not only his own personal feelings and relationships but also their continuing support of him, including their financial support and ultimately inheritances, and so on. So then Jayatirtha came up with the idea, "Let's do an intermediate museum in Detroit. Some thing small and quick, kind of a fill in museum. Just so Ambarish will have something fabulous to show his family."

We presented that to Prabhupada and Prabhupada approved that also. He said, "Okay. Very good." Prabhupada's mood was, "Just do something. Get it going." So each time Prabhupada was approving. Unfortunately the main figure in Ambarish's life was Govardhana. Govardhana had this idea, he didn't want any philosophy, he

just wanted Krsna lilas. So Govardhana designed the museum, Ambarish approved it, and we were off. And for the last, '76, '77, '78, '79, '80—five years they've been working on the Detroit museum. So in spite of the desire of Srila Prabhupada pushing, taking his best artists, wanting. ...

Prabhupada's original instruction was the artists would go from temple to temple training up local men and traveling and doing museums right on location made of straw and clay. Baradraj convinced Prabhupada that this is not practical to uproot everybody. There is too much involved to get set up in a new place and get the supplies and everything. Let's just have one big base. Prabhupada approved. Ambarish paid for a huge factory from '76 through '79. A huge artistic warehouse turned into like a factory in Culver. City. Prabhupada liked it. He authorized, "Yes. You can do everything from one location."

Because in 1977 when I was Prabhupada's secretary I went over with him what were the plans for Detroit in detail. I started showing him pictures of some of the work. And every single thing I showed Prabhupada he approved, one after another. He just approved it. So Prabhupada was involved in FATE but the person who could really tell the story is Baradraj. Of course Baradraj had spiritual difficulty and was asked to leave his position of leadership of FATE.

Then the whole story of FATE, I think that if Satsvarupa Maharaja wants to include more lengthy descriptions, I could go into it and Baradraj could go into it. Basically I think it's enough at this point to say this was a very important project. It will come up in my diary in 1977. I can say that practically speaking, every day for 30 days in a row, Prabhupada was pounding into my head the instruction, and I had never gotten a pounding like this before. "Cultural preaching, cultural presentation, cultural conquest. This is the best way to make America Krsna conscious and then the world." For 30 days in a row Prabhupada pounded this message into my head and I took it that this is involved with festivals and FATE and restaurants



and everything that has to do with art, cultural presentation—film, video, TV.

## **ISKCON Cinema**

That’s why I wrote this letter about Yadubara and the film that we were working on Audrey Rose, and I tied it in with the theistic exhibitions. Prabhupada in 1973 had actually authorized the first grant from the BBT to ISKCON cinema. We bought all the equipment. That was unusual because even though Prabhupada said you can only spend BBT money for the things that are mentioned in the BBT Trust agreement of 1972, it was Prabhupada who authorized that the BBT buy the camera equipment and the film board, the mixing board for Yadubara to get started.

Thereafter Prabhupada wanted him to try to be self sufficient but the principle was set—BBT can buy the equipment. We also invested in a film which we made for Prabhupada’s pleasure and showed it to him in the 1976 Mayapur festival called, “Brilliant as the Sun.” It’s a film about how his books are produced and distributed. It became a popular film and the BBT paid for it because it was like our own kind of company film promoting our company. So I was involved in these kinds of things with Prabhupada.

## **Prabhupada Tape Ministry funded by Alfred Ford (Ambarish)**

Actually, another cultural project that I was involved in with Prabhupada was the radio show. This goes back to Ambarish’s first donation to ISKCON. We were getting letters from a person named Alfred Ford and nobody had the slightest idea that he was “the” Ford family. So we were getting some letters and Krsna Kanti found out about it. At that time Krsna Kanti was still this working at Spiritual

Sky and he wrote this Alfred Ford a letter at his ski resort in Hawaii and asked him to please give a donation. "I'm trying to start a tape ministry to record all the lectures of Srila Prabhupada. There is no system at all."

And Alfred Ford gave a donation and Golden Avatar was started in 1972. We bought the Uher tape recorders, we bought whatever equipment there was, you could interview Krsna Kanti. It's a very important thing. This was a monumental thing. From that day on Prabhupada's servant or secretary had to carry a tape recorder and every single thing Prabhupada said was recorded.

That was a major event for the history of the world. It ended up by 1977 that Prabhupada said you could use his talks and his classes, his lectures to produce books. It's a very major event. It started in 1972 with this donation, the very first donation Ambarish ever gave ISKCON went to pay for Prabhupada's voice to be recorded and preserved for as long as there is a Krsna consciousness movement. That is an important event in the history of our movement and Prabhupada approved it. Obviously he allowed his disciples to carry that tape recorder and stick that microphone in front of him and if it was annoying to him he would have mentioned it.

## **The photographers annoyed Prabhupada, but not the microphones**

Because he mentioned that the photographers were annoying to him. Whenever Prabhupada would come to LA there would be five photographers sticking their bodies in front of all the sannyasis. Visakha would be there, Bhargava, Muralivadana, different photographers would be running up and taking pictures. Prabhupada would get so annoyed, he would push them aside, "Get out of here," practically. It was something he didn't like that much. Although when there were nice pictures of Srila Prabhupada, he appreciated. He used to look at the pictures we picked for his books and he looked

at the pictures in the Vyasapuja and he would tell us which ones he liked and which he didn't. He told us. But still they were an annoyance to him.

I remember when the Caitanya-caritamrtas were finally finished. Prabhupada's comment was, "Bhargava, he has done nicely. He is always annoying me but he is sincere and he has done nicely." There are a lot of wild stories about how Bhargava got those pictures. He was jumping into temple compounds by climbing walls where no white man is allowed to go and he was chased by gundas who were trying to beat him to death. It was very wild, dangerous photographic work, and we explained that to Prabhupada when he was looking at the books. And he said, "Well, even though he annoys me so much by always taking my picture, still the boy Bhargava has done nicely." It's written in a letter like that. "The boy Bhargava has done nicely."

So the taping didn't annoy Prabhupada. We used to tape his room conversations, his morning walks. From that day on we had Prabhupada on tape. And we set up a system for duplicating the tapes in Los Angeles and mailing them out all over the world. That system is going on to this very day. And as I mentioned, in 1977 I was working on a book called the Science of Self-Realization and I asked Prabhupada if this book was approved by him. This was in my final meeting with Prabhupada in October. Prabhupada approved it. And I went on to say, "Prabhupada, even though you may not be writing, you have given so many lectures and those lectures are so wonderful that we have enough material to write so many dozens, even hundreds of books.

And we can go on publishing books by your Divine Grace even after you return to Krsna." It was a very emotional conversation because to talk about Prabhupada leaving was so emotional. And Prabhupada said, "Yes, you may do it. And this is very good." He approved it. So these tapes are a very important part of our movement's preserving Prabhupada's vani. And of course now

the Prabhupada Archives is one of the samadhis of Prabhupada, preserving the pictures of Prabhupada and the tapes of Prabhupada and the transcripts and original manuscripts of Prabhupada and so on, the letters of Prabhupada.

## Krsna Radio Show

So anyway, by 1974 we started a thing called the Krsna Show. Actually in '73 we started a thing called the Krsna Show and Prabhupada loved it. He loved it. Karandhar and myself and Krsna Kanti started it, we presented the idea to Prabhupada and he made some comments. There's a letter that Prabhupada wrote to Karandhar to the effect that if you can get on TV or radio the whole world will become Krsna conscious in 18 days. Something like that. I'm not sure if that's the 18 day letter. We could check the Karandhar file and you'll find these letters talking about the importance of broadcasting the transcen-dental sound over the airways.

The whole world will become purified and the whole world can be made Krsna conscious. And Prabhupada definitely said, "If you can get me on TV I'll just sit in one place. I won't travel any more." That's how important it was to Prabhupada, this mass media. It fascinated him. He wanted us to get into it. But it took us a long time to understand how to. We tried the Krsna Show and it was a success for about a year or two, and Prabhupada liked it very much. So by the end of the Krsna Show it was becoming too difficult to continue to produce original material, so we were using Prabhupada lectures. And again, if you interview Krsna Kanti, I think he might have written to Prabhupada about that.

But I know that I told Prabhupada that that was the format and Prabhupada approved again. He liked the idea that his lectures were going out on the radio. So he encouraged. He wanted us to use the mass media. I think that there's about three or five major letters that Prabhupada wrote to people like Karandhar, Yadubara, maybe

to Krsna Kanti. Definitely I have one or two where Prabhupada is talking about the mass media, radio, television, video, film, and pushing it, pushing it and wanting it.

## **Macmillan agreed to publish Prabhupada's biography, but Prabhupada said: "No biography..."**

So that's another aspect of Prabhupada's vision. It's just that we weren't expert enough to take it up so much during his lifetime. Again in 1976 when Prabhupada came to Los Angeles, right about this time two things were going on in relation to a Prabhupada biography. One is that this boy used to be the sidekick of Syamasundar. I can't remember his name. Mukunda will know his name. He was like Syamasundar's assistant. Anyway, he wrote a letter to Macmillan and sent them a proposal for them to publish a biography of Srila Prabhupada.

And they said, "Okay. Write a table of contents. It sounds interesting." So he wrote a table of contents and it really was an excellent table of contents and Macmillan Company bought it. "Okay, you're on. We'll give you money, we'll pay for it. But we want to make sure that you've got permission from the person, Srila Prabhupada." So this boy started writing me letters. "This is it, Macmillan is going to do a big promotion, a big thing, there's a budget. We've got to ask Prabhupada if he'll let us do this. So I wrote one or two letters to Prabhupada about it and I proposed it. I thought this was a big thing.

The Autobiography of a Yogi was Paramahansa Yogananda's biography and although he's a rascal impersonalist, his movement became famous and he attracted many many followers. So I think I mentioned that to Prabhupada. I wanted to do it but Prabhupada said no. No biography. He said, "We are writing books about

Krsna, not about me.” So we could all understand that this was Prabhupada’s humility. We could also understand that he was teaching something to all of his disciples who would one day in the future also be gurus.

## **Prabhupada agreed to a film biography**

The whole emphasis of Prabhupada was on Hare Krsna. We were known as the Hare Krsnas, we weren’t known as the Moonies. We weren’t known as the people who were the followers of a particular personality, even though Prabhupada was such a fit personality. We were just known as the Hare Krsnas. This is Prabhupada’s pure devotion and his humility, that during his lifetime he did not let us write a biography, even though we had a great offer from Macmillan. So right about this time Yadubara proposed to Prabhupada that we would like to film as much of you as possible and make a film about you.

And somehow or other because Prabhupada was so fascinated by film he approved it. And if he was annoyed by the photography, what to speak of the filming. That means big bright lights, putting on microphones, tying them around his neck, or holding things. But Prabhupada approved and he let Yadubara travel with him for months all over the world filming him. Filming conversations of Prabhupada meeting scholars in the LA garden and so on. Filming Prabhupada on morning walks. So then Prabhupada was up in his room and he was being filmed chanting his rounds and so on. Then Prabhupada told Yadubara, “Now I will let you film me doing business. Go send for Ramesvara.” So they sent for me. I came running over and there was a whole scene which Prabhupada was staging for this film. He had me opening up his secret red case and taking out the keys and going into his almira and talking about checks and banking and so on, and it’s all on film.

And also at that time, 1976, the new volume of the 7th Canto had

just come—Prahlada Maharaja. I think it was either volume two or volume 3 of the 7th Canto. We had just picked it up from the printer, and Prabhupada was in LA. We had planned it to give it to Prabhupada while he was in LA. So I ran and told Visakha and Yadubara, “Get your cameras. This is it. You’re going to be able to film Prabhupada receiving one of his new books. This is a very rare event.” We’ve already explained how auspicious and rare and special it was to Prabhupada. So we went up there, myself and Radhaballabha and we gave the book to Prabhupada and I believe that they have the whole thing on film. I think this should be reviewed. It’s a major event. You can see how Prabhupada dealt with receiving one of his new books. That was something that took place in ’76.

## **Prabhupada’s last tour of America**

Also while Prabhupada was still in Hawaii I had the idea this may be Prabhupada’s last tour in America. I didn’t think of it in terms of his health, I thought of it in terms of the media. I was thinking let’s tell the media this is Prabhupada’s final tour of America and let’s get People Magazine, Time, Newsweek, let’s try to get the biggest media in America to come and interview Prabhupada. It had never been done in an organized way. Again, at this time Prabhupada had just sent me the letter instructing that this book, *Krsna Consciousness is Authorized* should be mailed out to the most important people of every category—scholars, educators, lawyers, judges, political people, entertainers. So we mailed out hundreds of thousands. So the whole mood now was like branching out even more. The movement was becoming more sophisticated, more broadened. We had art, we had culture, we had publishing, we had businesses, we had money. It was all developed to such a degree.

Now we were getting into PR; and Prabhupada was orchestrating it. We spent forty, fifty thousand dollars on this mass mailing. It

was a PR mailing, all under Prabhupada's orders. You can see the letters. It's very interesting actually to see exactly what Prabhupada did with these letters. I'll tell you the exact date. This is a letter I received from Prabhupada January 12th, 1976 from Bombay. In this letter he orders, "The book *The Krsna Consciousness Movement* is Authorized is very important. From each city find out important person's names and post it from each city. You can send it to important members of the government, businessmen, entertainers, sportsmen, etc. Another device is you can address it to any respectable gentlemen, post office..., city..., state.

The postmen will then deliver it to some respectable gentlemen. Anyone who gets it will think, 'I am a most respectable gentleman because he has given it to me.' The best thing is to find out the customer list to some big magazine like *Time* or *Life* and post it to them. I think the post office can give concession rate for huge numbers of postings. Yes, go on adding any new important quotes in the reprinting." This is a book that we compiled on our own in Los Angeles. We mailed it to Prabhupada and this was his reply. And then in a letter that I wrote to Srila Prabhupada thereafter when the whole thing was finished, explaining exactly how we conducted the mailing and what the costs were, Prabhupada was very pleased. In 1976 there's a few other things related to PR.

Of course, all the letters related to the library party, a number of them, I shouldn't say all. A number of them also dealt with the library conventions, which was also a promotional thing.

We were starting to go to book fairs. We were starting to go to conventions by Asian religion scholars and the Academy of Religious Professors of America. We were starting to become even more sophisticated than ever before.



## BBT Book Catalogues

In 1976 we published deluxe catalogs under the guidance of the library party. One for college professors, one for college libraries, and one for public libraries. All with different quotes with different sales angles. Prabhupada loved it. So our movement by '76 was getting sophisticated. Mass mailings, PR mailings, conventions, book fairs, book catalogs, and so on. So in this mood at this time Prabhupada was pushing cultural preaching, PR, films, and so on. So I had the idea, "Okay. Let's get a tour going for Prabhupada and get the major news magazines to interview him." S

o I presented it to Prabhupada, he approved. Then in 1976, whoever we could get in Los Angeles we lined them up. We hired a PR firm that works for Peter Sellers who was also connected to our movement. Peter Sellers had been brought to the movement by Syamasundar and he was also friends with George Harrison some years ago. So we found his PR firm in Los Angeles and they were into it because they knew that Peter knew about Hare Krsna. They said they needed more time than just one week's notice. So they got a few magazines. They got a big magazine in LA called Coronet. They did a very nice interview with Prabhupada in Los Angeles. One other paper did a nice interview with Prabhupada in Los Angeles. The rest of the interviews we had planned for New York. We got some major newspapers to interview Prabhupada by the time he came to New York. Those interviews can be found in the PR file. This was the first organized PR attempt we had ever done for Prabhupada on a national scale in America.

So then Prabhupada left Los Angeles. There were one or two other scenes. One day Prabhupada called me up to his room in Los Angeles and he just said, "Open up my almira." I opened it up. Then he said, "You see those shirts? Those kurtas? Pick one." So I picked one. It was a very bright orange. Prabhupada was even surprised. "You like that one?" I said, "Yes." He said, "All right. That is for you." And I was just overwhelmed. Prabhupada was distributing

his mercy. On the day that Prabhupada was leaving Los Angeles, Radhaballabha and I were upstairs as Prabhupada was dressing and preparing to leave. There was something wonderful about this, watching Prabhupada prepare.

He carried himself with such an air. It was not ordinary. It was something so grand, so high class, so elegant, so regal. And we just were watching in great..We had great feeling of love and awe actually at the beauty of Prabhupada, at the way he was dressing. It was like a king actually. So I remember saying to Prabhupada as he finished and turned towards us. It was majestic. Everything about the way he carried himself and dressed and put on his cloth, it was all majestic and opulent. So I said, "Prabhupada, you appear to us to be just like a king." And Prabhupada turned around and said, "I am much more than any king." And with that we walked downstairs with him and the devotees had this huge sendoff and we took Prabhupada to the airport and he was off on his 1976 tour.

## **Prabhupada enjoying sankirtan stories**

I'm not sure if it was the '75 or '76 tour, but one of those tours Yadubara and Visakha traveled with Prabhupada and they wrote a series of articles called, "Summer Session," in BTG and that makes for very interesting reading. That's a very good thing for the Lilamrta. The only other thing I know about Prabhupada's tour in '76 other than New York, which I will get to, was when he went to Washington. In Washington they had also fixed up his quarters very nicely.

And Pragosh, one of our top book distributors, the number 2 book distributor he was distributing at the Washington airport. In 1976 Prabhupada was out for an evening walk by the pool and Pragosh was wearing his Western clothes. He had just returned from the airport sankirtan. He was walking across the lawn and he saw Prabhupada and he ran, "It's Prabhupada!" He just ran up

to Prabhupada and Prabhupada said, “Oh, what is this?” He said, “I’ve just come back from the airport; Srila Prabhupada.” “Oh,” Prabhupada brightened up.” And you distributed my books?” And there ensued about a thirty minute conversation where Pragosh was describing to Prabhupada the most amazing sankirtan stories and Prabhupada was hearing these stories and commenting.

Now unfortunately this was not taped, but Pragosh will never forget this. It was the main conversation he ever had with Srila Prabhupada. It would make a very wonderful interview. As I said, you can refer to that 1980 BBT newsletter. There is that wonderful conversation between Prabhupada and Mulaprakrti. That should also be looked at, because again, she was asking Prabhupada very specific questions. Like, “Prabhupada, how do you want us to distribute your books? What do you want us to tell the people about your books? What would you tell them?”

And then Prabhupada tells her the answer. He says, “You can tell them this Bhagavat Purana is as brilliant as the sun and it is arisen just after the disappearance of Lord Krsna to His own abode, accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in this age of Kali will get light from this Purana.” So that is an important conversation between Prabhupada and Mulaprakrti. But this is also an important conversation, part of the 1976 tour.

## **The grand opening of the New York skyscraper temple**

At that time book distribution was still raging. But now Prabhupada arrives triumphantly in New York. And this was a very triumphant occasion for Prabhupada. This was the grand opening and the first visit to the skyscraper building, an 11 story skyscraper building in Manhattan. Tamal had gone all out. The rooms, the temple room, the hallways, Prabhupada’s quarters, everything was gorgeous,

considering the amount of time. Plus the first New York Rathayatra with permission from the city to have the Rathayatra down Fifth Avenue.

So this was a most triumphant visit for Srila Prabhupada. And the whole atmosphere of the temple was that mood that we were talking about earlier, that ISKCON is on the move, ISKCON has got so much momentum, so much enthusiasm, there are victories coming at every turn, and our movement is expanding. It was an expansionistic, optimistic, euphoric mood in the air “we’ve got a skyscraper in Manhattan, we’ve got Fifth Avenue, and we’ve got Prabhupada. The devotees were in ecstasy basking in the glory of Prabhupada and his movement. That was a great event. Of course Tamal will remember this much better than anyone else. We would take drives around Manhattan and Prabhupada would describe his life in Manhattan in the early years, driving around, and he would point to different buildings where he used to stay that...we didn’t even know about. He would point them out and Tamal asked Prabhupada, “Prabhupada, should we have a temple in uptown New York also?” And he would say, “Yes. Have more than one temple in New York.”

And he would tell stories and he would talk about Central Park and how he would walk. Prabhupada was feeling so happy that our movement was so successful. It just made him remember the struggle when he first came alone, to start with no money, living in such austerity, difficulty, and now to be in an 11-story skyscraper in Manhattan. What a triumphant turn of events. It’s hard to describe how happy Prabhupada was because he was so immersed in remembering his New York lila of ’65 and ’66 in light of where we were now. I remember a very important conversation on the roof of the New York building. Just before this conversation, Tamal and I were with Prabhupada in his room and I started telling Prabhupada stories about how degraded the society had become.

We started telling Prabhupada about the drugs, illicit sex, pornog-

raphy, and the child pronography and the homosex and for some reason Prabhupada was letting us give this report. And we were being somewhat graphic. And Prabhupada's comments were so strong that "We are not preaching to human beings. We are preaching to animals. This is not human life. This is all animal life. It was so heavy. Prabhupada's comments about the state of the Kaliyuga. It was something that Tamal and I would never forget. Years later we would talk about this conversation and how Prabhupada allowed us to describe these gross things and how Prabhupada listened and told us, "Do not give these people credit. Do not be so concerned what they have to say, what their opinions are. These are not people these are animals." It was just a very unusual scene to be talking with Prabhupada about such things and have him say those things. It made a lasting impression.

So then we were up on the roof after that. Prabhupada loved sitting on the roof. The skyscraper was in Manhattan and yet it was on the side, the west side near 9th Avenue. It wasn't in the center. So in a sense you were in Manhattan but you had the feeling of being a little distant from it. From the roof you could look at the Manhattan skyline which was a little bit away towards mid Manhattan. The breezes were there and Prabhupada loved it. We were sitting on top of our own skyscraper. He loved it. We had a big seat for Prabhupada up there and all the devotees would sit with him. I am remembering asking Prabhupada in this atmosphere...Again, it was the same euphoric mood. Prabhupada is a king. He's more than a king. He's on top of this skyscraper, he's conquering New York, we're about to have Rathayatra on Fifth Avenue.

In that mood we were sitting and Prabhupada was talking and just enjoying the atmosphere. It was just a triumph. In that mood I asked Prabhupada "Prabhupada, can you please tell us what are your plans for actually taking over America, turning it into...just conquering it. What are your plans for conquering the world?" I asked him, "Please tell us your plans." Prabhupada sat back on his Vyasasana up there and looked at all of us, myself, Tamal, Tripurari Swami, Adikesava,

Dhrstadyumna. Even Bali Mardan was there. Tamal had gathered a whole crew of people. Sudama was back. It was quite a crew Tamal had. Radhaballabha was there. He looked at all of us very closely. There was a few moments of silence. It was almost as if he was looking at us to see if he could trust us or to see if we were mature enough or ready to handle what he was going to say.

He looked over all the devotees on the roof and then he shook his head, and he said, “No. Because if I tell you my plans, then they may be spoiled.” Then he quoted some Bengali proverb about how you should not reveal your plans to anyone lest they be spoiled. And we were just dying. “Prabhupada, please trust us. Please Prabhupada. Just tell us anything! Anything at all!” “No. Nothing.” He wouldn’t speak. He just left us in unlimited anxiety. But he made it clear that he’s got the plan. He’s got the whole plan, but we’re not ready to hear it. But the plan is there. And as we surrender more to him and as we become more attached and more trusted by him it will be revealed to us, but it has already been made.

The plan has been made by Lord Caitanya, by Bhaktisiddhanta, and by Prabhupada. It’s already been made. That was the very clear understanding from what Prabhupada was saying and how he...He indicated that the plan is there but I’m not going to tell you because it will be spoiled. You’re not ready yet. There were some other incidences like this long in the past. Prabhupada said “If people knew what I was thinking, they would have me killed.”

## **Varnasrama walk tapes are edited**

Prabhupada said that in 1974 on the varnasrama walks in Vrindavana. Those varnasrama walks are very heavy. When I published that book in 1974 called the Varnasrama Walks, I edited out statements that Prabhupada made about Vaisnavas having to kill demons, Vaisnavas dealing with blacks or other minority races, because they are very heavy statements. Also, Krsna Kanti was

releasing the tapes. So I told Krsna Kanti, “you can keep the master, the original but you have to make a new master for duplication with the same editing that I am doing on the walks. You can’t release this even on a tape. It’s too heavy.” And I had remembered that Prabhupada said, “If they knew what I was thinking they would have me killed.”

And someone else had told me Prabhupada once said, “If they knew what I was thinking they would put me in jail.” So having that in my mind, the general tapes that were distributed to the Society on those varnasrama walks in about four places are edited. Things were taken out. Just a few sentences here and there, about four places. So that means there were two masters, one the original and one for the duplication. So I don’t know which versions Gurupada and the biography staff has to work off of. Probably the second version. Prabhupada had revealed a lot of very heavy things at those varnasrama walks about a future Krsna conscious government, an army under a Krsna conscious government, conquering the world for Krsna. He revealed very heavy things in addition to his vision for varnasrama.

## **Krsna speaks directly to Srila Prabhupada**

That evening in 1976 he wouldn’t tell us. Then another part of that visit was news reporters coming to visit Prabhupada. I remember one incident in particular. This was printed in Prabhupada Remembrances in BTG, so it can be referred to. We had this reporter who just could not believe that any human being could actually know God and speak with God. He just didn’t believe that those things could happen, that God speaks to somebody, a person can hear God speaking. He was very doubtful and he was challenging Prabhupada in the interview about this. I spoke up at that time and I said, “Well, according to the Bhagavatam, the intelligence of the living

being comes from God, knowledge, remembrance, and forgetfulness comes from God.

And intelligence is described in the Bhagavatam as the form direction of the Lord. So what's happening is God is within the heart of the devotee as well as the nondevotee. But for the devotee, God is actually transcendentalizing, spiritualizing his intelligence. So through his intelligence, which is the form direction of the Supersoul, the devotee knows exactly what to do and that is actually under the direction of God." So I explained it like that. Prabhupada looked at me and frowned and said, "No. It is not like that. It is not like that at all. Why do you say like that?"

God speaks to His devotee. He speaks just like I am speaking and you can hear if you are pure." And the reporter just couldn't believe what Prabhupada was saying. He said, "You mean God is speaking to you?" "Yes." "You mean he tells you what to do?" "Yes." "You mean, when you make decisions, like if you want to appoint somebody to a particular position in your society, that is because God spoke to you and told you to do it?" "Yes." It was very heavy. Prabhupada was revealing something that he very rarely revealed. He was revealing what his exalted position was and he was revealing that he is always established in this consciousness, and that the decisions that he makes, not only when he was writing his books, which we knew was like that. We all knew that Prabhupada's book writing was like that.

## **The books are coming from Krsna**

There were two ways we knew. One is this very amazing letter that Prabhupada wrote. Let's see if I can find it. It's a letter that Prabhupada wrote to all Governing Body Commissioners on May 19, 1976. This is a most amazing letter. "My dear GBC disciples, Please accept my blessings. Over the past ten years I have given the framework and now we have become more than the British Empire.



Even the British Empire was not as expansive as we. They had only a portion of the world and we have not completed expanding. We must expand more and more, unlimitedly. But I must now remind you that I have to complete the translation of the Srimad-Bhagavatam.

This is the greatest contribution. Our books have given us a respectable position. People have no faith in this church or temple worship. Those days are gone. Of course we have to maintain the temples as it is necessary to keep our spirits high. Simply intellectualism will not do. There must be practical purification. So I request you to relieve me of management responsibilities more and more so that I can complete the Srimad-Bhagavatam translation. If I am always having to manage then I cannot do my work on the books. It is document. I have to choose each word very soberly. And if I have to think of management then I cannot do this. I cannot be like these rascals who present something mental concoction to cheat the public.” Right there he is saying these books are not mental concoction. “I am choosing the words carefully. They are coming from Krsna. He has to be free from all other thoughts on his mind of management so that he can deeply enter into a meditative trance and hear Krsna speaking.”

So this task will not be finished without the cooperation of my appointed assistants, the GBC, temple presidents and sannyasis. I have chosen my best men to be GBC and I do not want that the GBC should be disrespectful to the temple presidents. You can naturally consult me. But if the basic principle is weak, how will things go on? So please assist me in the management so that I can be free to finish the Srimad-Bhagavatam which will be our lasting contribution to the world.”

## **When prabhupada speaks God is speaking to me through him**

So from letters like this and also from the purports of the Caitanya-caritamṛta describing how Vrndavana das was writing and how Kṛṣṇa das was writing. Prabhupada explains transcendental literature is not written by ordinary men. It is written by men who are God realized. God speaks the book within their heart and they are simply recording the message of God in that way. So the combination of these kinds of letters and Prabhupad's purports, we already knew that when Prabhupada writes his books it's just as if you were standing or sitting next to Kṛṣṇa Himself and Kṛṣṇa is just speaking.

It's on that level. But here in this conversation Prabhupada revealed that he is on that plane not only when he is writing his books but even when he is arranging practical things, like the structure of ISKCON, the leadership of ISKCON, practical decisions, when to buy a building, when not to buy it. Prabhupada revealed that even those practical things, his level of relationship with Kṛṣṇa is so advanced that he is in touch with Kṛṣṇa on every single matter. And that's what he revealed in that meeting and it was just overwhelming. Not only did I feel foolish and insignificant, but that same feeling of awe that I always had for Prabhupada, that awe that this person is with God.

When he speaks, God is speaking to me through him. It was just so clear. And my whole relationship with Prabhupada was based on that understanding of Prabhupada, that whenever I see Prabhupada, the way he walks and holds himself, the way he sings and chants, the way he speaks, that is God communicating through Prabhupada, and I was always very careful and very much in a state of awe and reverence because Prabhupada was training me to see him like that. To me that was a very significant statement.

## New York city Ratha-Yatra

Then of course there was the Rathayatra festival which I'm sure Tamal Krsna Maharaja has given an adequate description of. Well, he should because he and Adikesava know it better than anyone. So to get the real information on that New York Rathayatra festival, which was glorious. Fifth Avenue! You have to get them to give you the interview. Of course, Jayananda. We can write a biography about Jayananda. He had an important role to play. Prabhupada knew he was very sick. It should be mentioned. Prabhupada knew he was dying, practically speaking. He knew he was sick, but he built that Rathayatra cart and he pulled it personally.

He was the steering man on the cart and he pulled it for Prabhupada. He was dancing and chanting in ecstasy. Nobody could understand where he was getting his strength from. We all knew he was dying, but he was going without sleep the days before the festival, pulling the cart, getting it all ready. Then dancing like that the entire route. One hand on the steering wheel, one hand held up in front of Prabhupada. It was Prabhupada's cart. And dancing the whole way. Extraordinary personality. One of Prabhupada's eternal associates. He did that for Prabhupada. Prabhupada's lecture was great, everything about the festival was great. There was one crazy Christian. Do you know the story? Who told you the story?

## Pushing the crazy christian into the pool

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** The boy who pushed him in the pool.

**Ramesvara:** Some crazy, mad Christian had been following us the whole route, holding the sign. We were all annoyed because he was shouting out, "Repent sinners! Pagan religion!" The whole thing. So when Prabhupada was on the stage, in the middle of the...It was a cement park. It wasn't grass. There was this pool and the guy stood on the ledge that bordered the whole pool and with his sign was

shouting and screaming and Prabhupada was on the stage. One boy just became overwhelmed. This person is offending Prabhupada. Right in front of Prabhupada he's doing this. And he just took off like a football fullback or tackle, and with a full charge. And we were all on the stage with Prabhupada and we were watching it.

Prabhupada was watching it and his devotees were watching it. The devotee just didn't slow down as he approached the person, but he picked up speed, held his arms in front of him like a football tackle and just rammed into him and the guy went flying in the air backwards and landed on his back in the pool and we all saw it. We looked at Prabhupada and Prabhupada beamed, he smiled. I think that the most important incident for me, took place when we were getting ready to leave. I already mentioned that scene where me and Radhaballabha came and showed Prabhupada the book? We were holding it behind our backs. Is that on the tape?

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** No. You mean the Seventh Canto?

## **Presenting a newly printed book to Prabhupada**

**Ramesvara:** No. We gave one Seventh Canto to Prabhupada in LA but now we just picked up another one. This is special. I thought I told this. We went to pick up this new book from Kingsport. We wanted so badly to give it to Prabhupada while he was in New York. So Radhaballabha and I went down to the airport. and we waited there for an hour or two. It was very late at night. We finally got the book. We were in ecstasy. We came back to New York and the door was locked. It was about 1:30 or 2:00 in the morning and we were banging on the door for about 15 minutes and finally we woke up somebody and they let us in. We raced upstairs, we took the elevator. We couldn't wait to get upstairs to show it to Prabhupada. We burst out of the elevator.

The light was on in his room. Now it was about 2:00 and we very quietly opened the door to his room, but he wasn't in there. So we walk around the whole hall of the 11th floor. We look in his bedroom, which was a different room. We couldn't find Prabhupada anywhere. We saw the light on in the washroom, so we assumed Prabhupada was there. So we ran back to his sitting room, which is the room on the right hand side as you get out of the elevator. Very beautiful room. That's the room we had all the interviews in. And we waited for Prabhupada to come. Each one of us held a book. Finally after about five or ten minutes we heard the door closing and we heard Prabhupada's foot steps coming and he was walking. We were acting like little children.

We were so happy we were going to present Prabhupada with this transcendental gift. So we held the book in our two hands behind our backs like little children hiding something and we were trying to control our ecstasy, our smiling and laughing. As Prabhupada turned the corner he saw us and he said, "Oh, you are here?" And he could see that we were holding something behind our backs and that we were trying unsuccessfully to control our smiling. And he said, "Oh, you have something for me?" He was getting right into reciprocating like we were his little boys and he was playing the way an adult will play with a little boy.

Sometimes you talk a little bit like a child yourself when you're playing with a little child...So he was doing that with us. Then he walked right past us, opened up the door of his sitting room and looked over his shoulder playfully and said, "Come on," and tossed his head. We just jumped right into his room and we kept holding the book behind our back. This was the Seventh Canto; Volume Three. Prabhupada sat down very expectantly and we were beaming, bursting with joy to be able to offer Prabhupada a book that we had worked on for him.

Then we handed Prabhupada the books. "Ah!" he said. He took the book and touched it to his head and he looked at the cover and then

he turned at and looked at the back cover. He asked who painted them and we told him. Then he opened up to the front page. The title page of the book always has a quote Which we select, which we consider to be one of the most important verses from the book. He read it out loud, then he went through the whole front matter and very carefully he looked at all the pictures. Then he just started reading the book out loud. Verses, turning to his favorite verses.

Because the Seventh Canto part three...we really should check this, which book it was. I may have been 7. 1 in L. A. and part 2...I vaguely remember Prabhupada reading the prayers of Prahlada. That would make it 7. 2. We should check this. Anyway, Prabhupada was reading his favorite verses. I think it was Prahlada's prayers to Nrsimhadewa. He was just reading and reading and reading. It went on for about thirty or forty minutes. He was almost forgetting we were there.

I had that experience once before. I told you that story when Prabhupad's prasadam came. After about thirty or forty minutes of reading it he said, "All right. You can go now. Thank you very much." He was just absorbed in a trance of ecstasy and he remembered we were there and dismissed us.

## **This boy has been connected with me before**

This reminds me of something that happened back in '72 or '73 when Prabhupada was in his room in LA during the Syamasundar philosophy classes. One little boy, Bhakti Visvareta was always coming up. He was a two or three year old kid and he would sit in the back of the room and just watch Prabhupada and listen and listen and listen. And it was amazing. There was a special relationship going on between Prabhupada and this kid. He was perfectly silent and attentive.

He wasn't like a little kid spacing out. It was almost as if he was understanding everything. It was clear this was Prabhupada's disciple from his past life. It was very clear. It was black and white, and Prabhupada said it. Prabhupada said this boy has been connected with me before. That was really amazing Prabhupada talking about one of the children like that, revealing how special these children are. And Karandhar wrote in one of his newsletters to the society, there was always the nectar of Prabhupada. So there's a section in one of those newsletters. If it's ever required by Satsvarupa Maharaja he can call me and I can dig it up. There's a little description of Prabhupada's comments about this boy sitting in his room. It's a nice thing to talk about Prabhupada's relationship with the children.

That's a very important part of the Lilamrta, Prabhupada going to Dallas, teaching the children Sanskrit, guiding their hand, you know that picture. The whole way Prabhupada related to children and all the things Prabhupada said about children makes a whole section of the Lilamrta. Prabhupada's vision of the schools and children. Here's a personality starting a whole new world, civilization, schools and so on. So that was very nice.

## **Laguna Beach ISKCON drug selling**

Now the most important thing about the New York trip to my mind was that Prabhupada was getting very sick. Wait, there is one more scene. On the roof again; we were talking about the problem in Laguna Beach. It had just been exposed, these guy are selling illegal intoxicants and so on. Although Pusta Krsna was Prabhupad's personal secretary, he was the GBC for Laguna Beach and San Diego and I was the GBC for Los Angeles and that's all.

Because I had just been made the GBC for Los Angeles in March 1976, when Jayatirtha got transferred to England. Now this is the summer of '76 and the scandal is coming up. So Prabhupada told

me, “Now you take charge of Laguna Beach.” He removed Pusta Krsna and put me in charge and we talked a little bit about it and Prabhupada said, “You clean it up, we don’t condone any of it. We don’t take any more of their money. Now that we know where their money is coming from we won’t take it.” He gave that instruction. At that time he chastised Pusta Krsna also for something else he had done in relation to Madhudvisa. Madhudvisa was a sannyasi who fell down and Prabhupada wanted very much to rectify him but Pusta Krsna broadcast the details of his fall down to such an extent that Prabhupada said, “You made it impossible for him to come back.

This thing should have been kept quiet. It should have been just between the spiritual master and his disciple and maybe one or two other GBC men. We could have rectified him and he would have still been accepted by the devotees. Now you ruined it and he can’t come back, his pride, he won’t be able to come back.” I take it that was an important instruction. It’s a well known instruction that Prabhupada didn’t want the fall downs of his disciples being broadcast. He wanted them dealt with in a very particular way. This is another part of Prabhupada’s training and his personality. There were quite a number of fall downs.

## **Prabhupada tried to rectify his fallen disciples**

There was the fall down of Bhakti Caitanya in 1976, a homosexual molestation of several of the boys in Gurukula. The way Jagadish and Yasodananadan, they wanted to beat him up to practically near death and then kick him out. Prabhupada didn’t deal with him like that. Same thing with the way Prabhupada dealt with Bali. He didn’t deal with him like that. He kept trying to rectify him. He kept giving him one chance after another. Now the reason Prabhupada didn’t deal like that with Syamasundar and Karandhar, he gave more chances to the others, was because Karandhar had written



a letter that he didn't have faith in Prabhupada.

And Syamasundar indicated the same thing because he gave Prabhupada deliberately and knowingly a bad check in the name of daksina. He cheated. So because of this polluted consciousness, it's guru aparadha, so therefore Prabhupada did not deal with them at all the way he dealt with sannyasis or GBC men who broke the principles but didn't reject Prabhupada. There was a difference the way Prabhupada dealt with fall downs.

## **But he rejected offenders**

Just like the fall down of Nitai. Prabhupada said he's a snake, he'll take birth as a snake. He wrote a letter to the whole society, "He's a poisonous snake. Don't hear from him, don't let him come to your temple." On guru aparadha, no question of reconciliation. Now later Prabhupada gave Karandhar a chance because Karandhar wrote a letter to Prabhupada begging forgiveness saying he wanted to come back and try again, "I do have faith in you," and so on.

So Prabhupada got a little excited and said, "Well, let him come to Bombay. Maybe he can help manage in Bombay." And he did for awhile. All through 1975 I had Karandar managing FATE in LA, finishing the museum. All through '76 Karandhar was managing in Bombay during that period of Bombay construction. So Prabhupada did give him a position when he tried to rectify the guru aparadha.

## **Prabhupada releases bogus disciples**

But there is another very famous that took place in '73 between two of Prabhupada's disciples Janmadagni and Kanupriya. These men were preaching the most rascal philosophy." The women in ISKCON, they're not being treated like persons, they're not being treated according to their feelings. They're just being treated like

robots, like wives, like servants.” And the whole motive behind this preaching was that these women are being artificially dealt with. There should be sex between husband and wife. You can’t repress these things. It’s a gradual process. They quoted Bhaktivinode, it’s a gradual process. But what they were really aiming at was actual sex with other men’s wives.

You have to treat them as persons. You can’t treat them as wives. It was the most polluted philosophy. Prabhupada came to hear of it. Rebatinandan was their friend so he was kind of supporting that they not get kicked out. But Prabhupada could see that by the way they were preaching they had already rejected Prabhupada. They rejected his philosophy, they rejected his line of understanding. So when Prabhupada called these two men up to his room, the only other persons who were there was Karandhar and Rebatinandan. And Prabhupada did the most amazing thing. This was in 1973 and it’s the first time it had ever happened. Prabhupada...I can’t say it’s the first time.

1970 was the first time. But it was the first time I had seen it happen. Prabhupada had released his disciples. The connection between him and them, which was eternal, was now over. It was over. And the way Prabhupada did this was amazing. Prabhupada started flattering them, that “I can understand that you men have come to these realizations because you are now past the stage of sadhana-bhakti. You have actually come to the stage of raganuga.” They actually told devotees that they were now at raganuga, and Karandhar related that to Prabhupada.

So Prabhupada used that and said, “I can see that. But did you know that in the stage of raganuga you no longer need a spiritual master. Did you know that? Krsna becomes the spiritual master from within your heart as caitya-guru. You no longer need to follow the spiritual master. So if you boys are really advanced at raganuga you have to understand this is what it means.” Prabhupada was tricking them. It was almost like when Krsna convinced that demon who got the

benediction from Siva to touch his own head. So these two rascals, Janmadagni and Kanupriya, they accepted, “Yes, Prabhupada is acknowledging we are that advanced. Yes, we are raganuga-bhaktas and that means we don’t need a guru.” So they went downstairs telling everybody, “Prabhupada confirmed it.

Everything we told you is true. We’re raganuga-bhaktas, we’re the most advanced devotees in ISKCON and we don’t need a guru any more.” Prabhupada got them to agree and they were disconnected. It was an amazing way of dealing with them. And later on the same Janmadagni caused great havoc. He polluted Sudama. I told that story; didn’t I? In Hawaii when Prabhupada banged his fist and said, “Just see the hypocrisy.” That was Janmadagni’s philosophy. Just before that Janmadagni said, “Prabhupada, I can see my nature, my quality is ksatriya. So what service should I do in ISKCON? What is the program for the ksatriyas?” And Prabhupada said, to him, “I’m sorry. I cannot help you. My movement is for brahmanas.” So that’s the way Prabhupada dealt with these people who committed guru aparadha and guru tyaga. He didn’t give them mercy. That was the time when we saw Prabhupada withholding mercy.

## **Prabhupada was getting very sick**

So anyway, how Prabhupada was getting sick and I didn’t know of course, that this was the sickness that was ultimately to culminate in his disappearance. It began in New York in 1976. It began there. By the end of the Rathayatra, by the end of the visit he was very very sick. He had already gone up to Gitanagari and come back. So I went into Prabhupada’s room every day for three days in a row and I had Tamal coming with me and I was pleading with Prabhupada, “Please don’t go to England and don’t go back to India. Don’t travel. Go back to Gitanagari. It’s the most beautiful farm, this is the summer season and the early autumn season will come next. Spend two or three months there please. Just rest, recover your

health, and go on translating. That is more important than traveling.” So every day I would make this appeal to Prabhupada, the same appeal and every day Prabhupada would say, “All right. I will consider it.” But meanwhile his tickets had already been booked to go to England and then to India. And although Prabhupada would say, “I will consider it,” he never decided on it. He never made any indication that he was going to take it up seriously. And all the leading men were now pleading with Prabhupada, “Don’t travel.” Because he was really sick. So it was the day of Prabhupada’s departure, in the morning. I remember going into Prabhupada’s room and just not understanding why is he traveling? Why? He is so sick...And I was still pleading with Prabhupada. I walked with him from his sitting room to the elevator and I got in the elevator with him and we were going downstairs together.

And right in the elevator I was still, “Prabhupada, please reconsider.” This had been going on for days. And finally Prabhupada’s whole face changed. I can never forget this experience as long as I live. This instruction from Prabhupada is equal to any instruction I ever received. I take it as my lifetime instruction, along with the instruction about never diverting my mind from books. His whole face changed. He was in a very jolly, happy mood, but now his whole face changed. He became very very serious and he had a very deep look in his eyes, very deep and faraway like he is not of this world. That kind of a look. And he turned and looked at me with these eyes that were blazing and I was afraid.

There were a few other devotees in the elevator with me, Tamal, maybe Adikesava. We were all silent, and he just looked. I had just been begging, “Prabhupada, don’t go. Stay. Sit down. Don’t travel. Just stay.” And he turned to me and he said, “I want the, benediction to go on fighting for Krsna just like Arjuna.” There was a slight pause. Then he said, “Up until my very last breath.” And we were just overwhelmed. Our hearts were melting. We just felt so much love for Prabhupada at that moment. He is giving up his life, he is giving up his health, he is giving up all personal comfort and

he is teaching us to do the same. This instruction was burned into our memories. The way he said it was so powerful. We didn't say another word. We couldn't.

There was nothing left to be said. We very silently left the elevator. When we got downstairs, all the devotees who didn't know what had just gone on, they were just having their kirtan and cheering. So we got with Prabhupada in the car and just drove to the airport. On the way to the airport we had a very nice conversation. Again we talked about the Kali-yuga and how degraded it was. And Prabhupada kept telling us the whole time in the car, "But you have to go on preaching. You have to go and try to save these people." Then Prabhupada left America.

## **Deprogramming problems come to a head in 1976**

By the end of 1976, the problem with deprogramming had come to a head in America. We had already talked with Prabhupada about this in 1975 because we were losing some devotees to this Ted Patrick and so on. But by the end of 1976 the famous New York case hit and the leaders of our New York temple were being charged with kidnapping and false imprisonment through mind control. And the entire Krsna consciousness movement was on trial, that this is a cult which manipulates people's minds through repetitive mantras and so on. And it was the most amazing thing. Psychologists were going to be witnesses, and religionists and our whole movement was on trial. So the later part of '76 our movement tended to be preoccupied with this whole deprogramming issue.

## **Problem at Chicago airport because of Yanoff family**

Also in the later part of '76 we were having a major problem with the Chicago airport. The Yanoff(?) family had lost their son to the movement because the former wife had taken the boy to Los Angeles for two months and then instead of turning the boy back to the father, ran off to France. So the Yanoff's were picketing our devotees in the airport and airport book distribution; in Chicago, which was our biggest airport spot, came to a halt for about a month or two. We were getting bad publicity from that and the New York case, so our movement was under attack.

Prabhupada had said that there would be three stages to our movement and everyone knew that Prabhupada had said this. At first they won't take us seriously. They'll just laugh at us. Then the second stage is that they will take us seriously but they will hate us and attack us and try to destroy us. And then the third stage is they will finally come to understand that we are their saviors and they will adore us? So Prabhupada predicted we had now entered the second stage. Now the attack will begin. He said at first it will be psychological and then later on it will become physical and you must be ready for it. That was the mood in the later months of '76. Also during this time Prabhupada wrote a very important letter to Balavanta. It was in November of 1976. It was one of Prabhupada's final instructions. Balavanta prabhu was talking about the harassment, the bad PR that was coming and talking about, how people are really getting uptight that everywhere they go we are there asking them to buy our books.

What should we do? How should we think about this? Prabhupada's reply is again an example of one of those extreme times when Prabhupada was defending the book distribution. This letter is very important. It has been quoted in many newsletters. Prabhupada said, "Yes, they are feeling the weight of this movement. Now

go on increasing it.” The GBC, maybe Balavanta was expecting Prabhupada to say, “Okay, lighten up. It’s getting too much.” He said. “Yes, this is very good that they are feeling the weight of this movement. Now increase it more. Push it more. This is the only hope. The more you push it, the more people will be polarized. The more you push it, the more the pious will come up. But you have to expect that the demons will also come up.” Prabhupada had written a purport about this in the Caitanya-caritamṛta, that when the demons really come out, that means your preaching work is very potent. Otherwise what are they coming out for? That was in the *Adi-lila Volume 3* about Lord Caitanya’s civil disobedience movement against the Chand Kazi.

## **The opposition was proof that we are bona fide, we are genuine**

So that purport was already there, that Prabhupada considered the opposition was proof that we are bona fide, we are genuine. So again this was the implication in Balavanta’s letter. And the whole understanding in our society was like this. That when you’re not potent, like a Siddhaswarup type of person, you don’t really make devotees that do anything and you don’t create any enemies. It’s all mellow, good vibes. And Prabhupada considered that useless.

That wasn’t Prabhupada’s personality at all. He was aggressive. He was an aggressive personality towards bringing people to Kṛṣṇa. So the whole understanding was that if you are aggressively preaching and your preaching is potent and genuine, then that preaching will push the pious up. But you have to understand that the demons will also be pushed out of their homes and offices to attack. That has to be expected and you have to deal with it. So when he wrote this letter to Balavanta, he said, “Go on pushing more. Don’t push less. This is a very good sign. Of course the demons are coming out. What did you expect? Now push harder. You are getting close to

victory.” A very important letter.

## **Use that womans body and be aggressive and get people to take these books”**

There’s another letter Prabhupada wrote to a girl, one of the few letters Prabhupada wrote about book distribution to a girl, named Jagadhatri. This letter also explains about women going out on sankirtan. There are two famous purports in the Caitanya-caritamrta about women performing sankirtan. Revolutionary! Prabhupada revolutionizing Gaudiya Vaisnava preaching, using Western clothes, using women. Talking about this is going to increase with redoubled strength the whole preaching. Foolish people...All of his Godbrothers were completely criticizing that Prabhupada had brahmacaris and women going out on sankirtan parties, harinama parties, book distribution parties.

This was the biggest point that they were on Prabhupada for. There’s a letter Brahmananda wrote to the Society in 1973 explaining how Prabhupada was so uptight about his Godbrothers because they were just criticizing all these things, and he wrote those purports in Caitanya-caritamrta about women. So then he wrote this letter to Jagadhatri. And he said, “Yes, I came to your country and I was very aggressive. Now you have to be just like your guru. You have to be aggressive. You go out there and distribute books, use that woman body and be aggressive and get people to take these books and give donations.” It’s one of the heaviest letters. I don’t remember the year but if anyone needs it I can find it in my files.



## **Sue Ted Patrick - the deprogrammer" — Prabhupada**

So this is how, as I remember, 1976 came to an end, that the demons were really beginning to attack and Prabhupada was saying, "Yes, now we have to expect this." I wrote a letter to Prabhupada on October 19th talking about the articles that had come out from his tour. They had finally been published and I sent this Coronet magazine to Prabhupada and we talked about the press coverage that was beginning to hit with the deprogramming.

Again I talked in this letter about Ted Patrick. I also mentioned to Prabhupada that we just published the first BBT Krsna conscious calendar which we were going to give free to all the professors. So again the promotional aspect of the BBT was constantly being reported to Prabhupada. It wasn't being done independently. Prabhupada replied on October 29th from Krsna-Balaram mandir and he said, "I am in receipt of your letter. It is a fact that we are different from all bogus groups. Now we should present our movement very nicely so that people will be able to understand we are trying to raise the animal like humans to real human status. I approve your efforts to sue this Ted Patrick and his publisher. It must be done."

Ted Patrick had just written this book, "Let Our Children Go," about how the cults imprison children and there's a big chapter about us and it kind of led up to the New York case. Prabhupada said, "Go ahead, sue him. It must be done." So Prabhupada was in a fighting spirit about this New York case. He also criticized us very severely for jeopardizing our airport sankirtan by keeping this boy in France, this Yanoff. And he ordered the boy returned, and that relieved the pressure and the bad PR that was coming out of that.

On November 24th Prabhupada wrote me a letter saying that he would approve that the BBT would pay for books to be printed that were written by scholars who were friends of the movement, like Dr. Judah and a psychologist named Dr. Gerson who had done a

study on us. But he said they have to agree not to charge royalties. If they want royalties then we cannot print. But he approved that even though they are not acaryas, we could print their books. And he really liked Dr. Judah's book. That's a whole other thing Subhananda can describe.

## **These attempts to stop our movement will completely fail — Prabhupada**

Then he said, "Yes, these attempts to stop our movement will completely fail." Right at this time the biggest kidnapping, case came up in LA, the Madana Slaven case, and this made world wide news. We were on the front page of the LA Times for five days in a row or three days in a row. We had turned it into a major kidnapping story. And then the girl ran away and called the police and the Arcadia police picked her up in a police airplane and flew her back in and the devotees were at the airport. It was a media event. It was the biggest media event we ever staged in LA. I wrote to Prabhupada about that and how she finally escaped; it made the press,. I sent Prabhupada all the clippings. Then I mentioned, "In trying to convince the media (my letter on Nov. 3rd) that we're not a strange cult, but that we're a bona fide religion, we have enlisted the help of the Indian community, scholars, psychologists and even our parents to speak out for us. I'm enclosing a list of quotes from parents of the Los Angeles devotees.

These parents express gratitude to your Divine Grace for...helping their sons and daughters. I am recommending to all GBC and presidents that they have each devotee get a testimonial from their parents so we can prove their parents do like our movement." Then in this letter I talked about the agreement that we had come to with these scholars to write books. So this was a period where we started mobilizing. We sent Subhananda around and he was getting statements from psychologists that our movement was

not brainwashing, but that our men are psychologically healthy, normal, and not only sound but very happy and well adjusted people. So Subhananda was in charge of those psychologists. We had different people, especially Adikesava, he was in charge of the Indian communities. We were mobilizing all over America different groups to support us. We had gotten this fantastic testimonial through our library party from the American Academy of Religious Scholars. 200 scholars signed a petition stating that the Hare Krsna movement is a bona fide religion, it is not a cult, there is no brainwashing.

It was an amazing thing. It made the papers. So we were mobilizing and we were sending reports to Prabhupada. He wrote back to me this letter of November 24th. "Yes, these attempts to stop our movement will completely fail. It is Krsna's plan for us to become more prominent. In Bengal the press tried to defame our Bhavananda Maharaja but now he has become a great hero. He signed 20,000 autographs on Rasa Purnima. Go on increasing the book distribution more and more. That is the key to our success." So Prabhupad's comment was, "This is great. The demons are coming out, they are attacking. This is all meant to make us more prominent. Now push harder." Then Prabhupada wrote me this PS: "Today I have received the December issue of BTG. The interview with the London reporter is very important." This is Prabhupada's famous article in the Science of Self-Realization. It's called "Reincarnation and Beyond." So Prabhupada said, "This interview is very important. It should be presented in the courts. It is 95% of the evidence we require to prove that Krsna consciousness is genuine.

This is not a sentimental faith or religion, It is a great science. Everyone is changing bodies regardless of his so-called faith. The Christians as well as the Hindus are changing bodies. This is science. There is a Bengali story. A deaf man used to call his wife. She would reply, "I am coming," but he could not hear her. He would think, "The woman is deaf." Actually he was deaf, but he accused her of being deaf. Similarly, these people are brainwashed and they

are accusing us of being brainwashed. This we have to prove. We have the...real science. This should be preached and proven in the courts. Use this article as evidence and with a good lawyer, prove that Krsna consciousness is the real science and that all others are brainwashed.” This was Prabhupada’s mood. This was a letter on November 24th, ’76, from Vrndavana.

## **Problems at the US Airports**

Then I wrote to Prabhupada on (November?) 26th and I explained, “Now in America we are experiencing some problems with the court battles regarding the airports. They feel too much pressure from us because we distribute over a million books a year at the airports. And by word jugglery or outright harassment they have closed LA airport and Atlanta airport. The New York airports are closed because the judge is deliberately delaying in making a decision to open them. This is beginning to affect our book distribution and we are using all our resources to re-open the airports as soon as possible. If the airport reopens very soon in LA then the LA temple has vowed to distribute 22,000 hard bound books and 200,000 BTG’s in the month of December.

Meanwhile, the airport distributors are selling at the shopping centers or at other smaller airports waiting for these big ones to reopen.” Prabhupada wrote me back from Hare Krsna Land in Hyderabad on December 2. He said, “If they are giving us trouble to distribute at the airports then go to the courts. What can be done? We already have favorable decisions from some courts. We are doing something good to the whole world. Present the scholars opinions. They have the power, we are powerless. What can be done? Depend on Krsna.” Then he said, “You write to say we are getting some good responses from the latest issue of BTG. These testimonials should be presented in the court. Dharmadhyaksa’s article is very nice. Such articles should be published. Take the

psychologist's opinion in writing.”

Dharmadhyaksa's article was based on interviewing or writing about how psychologists view meditation as bona fide and Hare Krsna meditation as especially being bona fide. Prabhupada liked it so he said, “take these psychologist's opinion in writing. If some how or other people chant, they will be our men. So somehow induce them to chant.

Regarding these deprogrammers, we must defeat their false accusations in the courts. We do not force anyone. They may stay or go. The freedom is there. Out of their own accord they don't want association with meat eaters, drunkards, and debauchees. Just as there is warning from the government that if you steal you will be punished, we are convincing people not to commit sinful activities or associate with sinful persons. Are these bad tactics? We are making men of good character. It is folly to be wise where ignorance is bliss. Even ten year old boys are smoking. So much degraded. We are trying to convince people to become first class men rather than fifth class men. We have to fight.”

This was Prabhupada's mood. Then the final letter that I got at the end of the Christmas marathon. This is dated December 27th from Bombay. “My dear Ramesvara, Please accept my blessings. I am in due receipt of your telegram as follows ‘Christmas week book distribution in Los Angeles. Despite closed airport, better than ever. By your grace, 112,000 BTGs and 8,000 Gitas sold.’” Prabhupada is repeating my telegram. That was just in the final week of the marathon. “

On invitation of Governor Brown of California, 50 devotees visited the state mental institutions to help improve conditions and morale by giving religious message. Publicity very good. Hare Krsna.” So then Prabhupada, after repeating the telegram said, “Thank you very much. This is very good. Fight and depend on Krsna. That will bring you victory.” So over and over again. This was the closing mood of the year for Prabhupada. He was getting reports

constantly. I'm sure Tamal and Adikesava went through the whole interview with the NY court case because Prabhupada gave so many personal instructions. He became very involved in this case and he gave so many instructions to both Tamal Krsna and Adikesava. You have those interviews about that? Very important, how much Prabhupada got involved.

## **Ramesvara as Prabhupada's secretary for one month**

So now comes 1977. I had written a letter to Prabhupada in '76 begging that I could be his secretary in January. I just wanted to spend one month with Prabhupada and have him just give me a final training or something. I wasn't thinking in terms of final but I just wanted Prabhupada to train me whichever way he wanted. So he welcomed me to come. So I arrived in early January. Prabhupada was so kind to me when I arrived. I arrived and I ran in the room to meet him and I said, "Prabhupada, how are you feeling;" Because the last time I had seen him he was very sick. I had written a letter that we are all praying for your good health, and he said, "Yes, please go on praying to Lord Nrsimhadeva." He was so kind he said, "Well, now that you are here I am feeling very well. Thank you."

That afternoon Prabhupada had me eat lunch in his quarters, myself and Gopal Krsna, and he has a few guests. It was very funny. This was not in the new temple, it was under construction, but this was the old Prabhupada quarters in Bombay. So he had a sitting room and then there was kind of a big room you go through to get to his sitting room and was the prasadam room for his guests. So Prabhupada had us line up in two rows and then he told the devotee to bring the prasadam. And they started bringing the prasadam and Prabhupada came out and he stood there and he started directing the serving. He was looking at everyone's plate and he got completely absorbed in organizing the serving of prasadam.

He kept telling the servers, “Now bring more of this. Now bring that,” and he was directing.

The Indian guests were full and they were just saying no. But for the devotees, how can you say no when your spiritual master is ordering you to eat more prasadam. Prabhupada got into this whole pastime of filling up our plates and then somehow we would eat and it was clear we were full, and then he would tell the servers, “Now bring more of that.” He was forcing us to eat up to our necks. Finally one last time he filled up our plates and he just smiled and chuckled and walked back into his room and left us with all this prasadam to eat and he was relishing this distributing of prasadam and making his devotees eat prasadam.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** That was the day you arrived?

**Ramesvara:** Yes. My month with Prabhupada was the greatest opportunity I had ever had. I was becoming an older, little more mature devotee and I had been planning questions that I wanted to ask Prabhupada about the future of the Krsna consciousness movement.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Ever since the roof in New York.

**Ramesvara:** Yes, ever since the roof in New York. My nature is such that I am very fascinated by historical things. I just have that kind of a mind. So although during this time with Prabhupada—I was with him in Bombay, on the trains, we were organizing the big maha Kumbhamela festival in Allahabad and we went there with Prabhupada, and there were a lot of important things that took place. Prabhupada’s health was so bad. Prabhupada was giving instructions to Gopal about the Russian book fair and printing books in India. So there were a lot of things going on.

But the thing that stands out about my trip with Prabhupada was Prabhupada the world reformer, Prabhupada the revolutionary, Prabhupada changing the world, planning out how he was going to conquer the world, Prabhupada the visionary, describing what

the future of the world was going to be. There were conversations where Prabhupada was talking about World War III and the aftermath, gradually the development of the one world government. So this is really the main thing that came out of that trip. I wrote this all up in the January BBT report which is dated February, 1977, and I want to give you a copy of this because this is kind of like a summary of the highlights of the kind of visionary things Prabhupada was saying. Then using this I can fill in some other things.

## **Prabhupada's 50/50 BBT book finances formula**

I arrived on the evening of the 8th and that luncheon I had at Prabhupada's; that was on the 9th. In my diary on the 9th I see that we had a major discussion with Srila Prabhupada regarding mass advertisements of his books in Indian newspapers. Prabhupada was planning out a big campaign with Gopal Krsna and he was very excited. Gopal was explaining to him that with this system we would be able to distribute lots of Prabhupada's books.

Prabhupada explained at that time his famous "50/50" formula regarding books. I didn't really speak about this much because I kind of took it for granted that this would be included in the explanation of how Prabhupada set up his book fund, but it is an important principle which Prabhupada reiterated. First he established it in the BBT Trust agreement of 1972. In numerous letters to me, in his purports in his books, in his verbal instructions to the GBC. He was always saying 50% is the book printing and 50% is for temple construction and you have to just follow this very strictly. It was Prabhupada's basic formula that the BBT would mark up a book 100%.

So 50% of that would go back to the reprinting and the other 50% would be for the construction, the profit. Then the temple, whatever



price they would get it for, they would mark it up 100% and sell it to the conditioned soul, the karmis. So the basic formula Prabhupada had for every temple was that 50% of your income is spent on books and 50% is what you get to live on. This was Prabhupada's magic formula, both on the temple level and the BBT level, 50/50 formula.

So as we were discussing this mass advertising campaign, and I'm sure Gopal could give a wonderful description of this and what Prabhupada's involvement was, Prabhupada then explained a different variation of his 50/50 formula. He said "Regarding BBT expenses, 50% is for printing and the other 50%, that is business expenses and promotion." Then he went on to say, "Even opening a temple is promotion, or extra grhastha wages, maintenance. That is also considered part of our business expenses." Then I have just some random statements by Prabhupada that I would jot down whenever they caught my transcendental fancy.

So on that day, the 9th of January, I wrote down this quote from Prabhupada. "There should be no duplicity. Either sannyas or grhastha, but do not keep any women friends." That was Prabhupada's definition of no duplicity. Then, because Prabhupada's health was not good at that time, Prabhupada was seeing a doctor regularly who was an extremely annoying personality. This doctor Prabhupada was seeing was an old personal friend of Prabhupada's and he would treat Prabhupada in such a familiar way that it appeared to us to be contemptuous.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Dr. Gosh?

## **If my books are selling I will live — Prabhupada**

**Ramesvara:** I'm not sure if it was Gosh or someone else. Certainly Gosh was an obnoxious person. He would boast that he would outlive Prabhupada or something. But Jagadish was the secretary

just before me and just before I had arrived there had been some extremely provocative morning walks where the doctor was arguing and speaking in such a mundane way. And Jagadish was describing to me when I arrived that it was intolerable to be on the morning walks with this doctor but Prabhupada would insist upon him coming and being allowed to...So Jagadish can tell you more about that.

Anyway, so Prabhupada made a comment about his own ill health on the 9th. He said, "If my books are selling, then I will live. I do not require any medicine. I will live for one hundred years." Then he told Gopal and myself, "Bring more money and spend the money on huge advertisements, propaganda in India in newspapers and in billboards. We have to take advantage of the newspapers." Then Prabhupada gave one of his pearls about banking money. "As soon as there will be money in the bank there will be headache." Then he elaborated. "This tax, that tax." That was Prabhupad's opinion about the banks. I believe that these quotes cover the period January 9th and also they include January 10th. We were still in Bombay.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Was there an urgency? I mean, Prabhupad's health was off.

**Ramesvara:** No. It was off but it wasn't that off because we were just getting ready to leave for the Kumbhamela in two days. There wasn't the appearance of some kind of fatal illness. It's just that his health wasn't good, but it was good enough for him to plan on traveling. There was no question of him not going to the Kumbhamela.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** But was there any urgency in that Prabhupada was wrapping things up or giving so many new ideas, do this, do this, do this.

**Ramesvara:** No. There was no feeling that we had of that, that Prabhupada preparing for his departure. None at all. Another quote from Prabhupada, "Print books and sell and spend. Follow this policy and push these books. That is our main preaching. Somehow or other

it must go from door to door, hand to hand. Then our preaching is successful. Anyone who will read it will get some benefit. That is sure. Because such literature is not available throughout the whole world, the new revolution for the people in general. Then do it now.” That’s an exact quote. Here starting on January 10th. “I am a very learned man. I can speak when I see the books. I have so much money. I just have to realize it.” This is Prabhupada speaking in a very sarcastic way about how conditioned souls may speak when we approach them.

## **Print books as many as possible and distribute — Prabhupada**

Then Prabhupada wanted a recommendation for a one lakh loan for a traveling van. Some traveling van program, Prabhupada wanted recommendation for a one lakh loan. Here’s another quote on the 10th. “This is our main program. Print books as many as possible and distribute. All other programs are secondary. With this aim in view, cooperate together.” One of the most important statements Prabhupada made. Actually I took, in retrospect, these instructions as Prabhupada’s final instructions to me.

Although at the time I wasn’t thinking of them as final but as very complete and comprehensive instructions because you have to bear in mind that Prabhupada had in one sense singled out different devotees and trained them to do certain services for him. Some devotee’s service was very general but some devotee’s service was so specific that that service became inseparable from their relationship with Prabhupada. So in my case it was related to printing and distribution of books. Prabhupada had told me, “This is your life. You can’t divert your mind from it for a moment,” and so on. I had no choice ever to give up book distribution. I had no choice.

That’s how I took it that Prabhupada had trained me in that mood.

So when I asked Prabhupada if I could be his secretary for 30 days or so, it was because I wanted Prabhupada to train me more in whatever way he wanted me to be for the rest of my life. And it was with that understanding that I was going to be his secretary. So these instructions; I took them at the time to be definitely Prabhupada's permanent instructions to me and it turned out that they, were also his final instructions...

This quote I published in the newsletter and it had a very big impact. "This is our main program. Everything else is secondary." At one point Prabhupada said to me, "Why not spend some money on advertising in America in very prestigious papers, the New York Times book section, Reader's Digest. It must be prominent. It must immediately be noticed. You can spend a little money in this way." Prabhupada was encouraging this kind of advertising.

Then I told Prabhupada that we were now contracting to print the largest print in the history of the BBT of the Bhagavad-gita As It Is at Kingsport Press we had signed a contract to print one million, five hundred thousand copies. And I told Prabhupada how many truckloads of paper, it filled up an entire train of paper. Prabhupada was in ecstasy when he heard this and he said, "In the future, there will be history how Vedic culture was introduced in America."

I have another quote from that day. "Hindi, English, Oriya, Asani, Bengali My Guru Maharaja had magazines in six languages. If one man stopped ordering a subscription the question was should we stop supplying? No, my Guru Maharaja said. Are we a commercial house? Supply for free. Just see to the numbers of books sold." That's a very interesting quote in relation to our upcoming BTG subscription program.

## **Prabhupada approved the concept of “Coming Back”**

Then we discussed with Prabhupada an idea that I had had for some time. I wanted and I proposed to Prabhupada that we would write a book in a popular style on reincarnation. It would be the most popular and most readable and most authoritative book on reincarnation on the market. When I presented this to Prabhupada it was in Bombay on January the 10th. He approved of the book and he approved also that if Subhananda or Satsvarupa Maharaja could write such a book for the purpose of mass commercial marketing. He also suggested his interview “Reincarnation and Beyond” with the London Broadcasting reporter, that that could be included in the book.

## **Devotee record selling**

Now on the 11th of January we spent about a half a day in Bombay and then we went to the train station. The morning conversation consisted of a discussion of record distribution in America. This was a very important topic. At this time we had just released the “Change of Heart” record album and it seemed like this was going to be the next phase, devotee records. And Prabhupada made an astonishing decision. He said, “I want you to set up a separate account for all record sales and I want all the profits from the records to be used for prasadam distribution.”

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** On that kind of thing, what would be the whole interplay? How many devotees were there and how did that order expand?

**Ramesvara:** Mostly these were room conversations in Prabhupada’s room with myself, usually Gopal would be there, maybe Giriraj. That’s all. I would be giving Prabhupada either reports from

America or questions that I had brought with me. So I told him the BBT is selling these records to the temples. We can maybe make a dime or 25 cents profit per record on the BBT side. The temple profit has to be used for their overhead, but in terms of the BBT selling records, he said he wanted the BBT to make a profit by selling records and Krsna Kanti and I later decided it would be about 10 cents is all we could really afford and keep the market.

And Prabhupada said whatever profit the BBT makes from selling records, you just send it all to the prasadam distribution, which I did. India prasadam distribution. I did that for about a year or so but then record distribution stopped. But as long as it was going on we gave the profits. In that room conversation Prabhupada made a comment about the deprogrammers. “How we are saving Americans from drugs and intoxication and they are protesting ‘brainwashing.’”

## **Dioramas — There should be a program, pamphlet for each show**

Then I mentioned this earlier that in this meeting with Prabhupada I showed him pictures of the Detroit dioramas that were being built in Los Angeles. So regarding that theistic exhibit, Prabhupada said, “There should be a pamphlet, a program of ideas and pictures or purports. for each complete show.” Then from talking about FATE, those theistic exhibitions, Prabhupada started talking about cultural preaching and I wrote in my notes, “Indian culture and American money can solve all problems of the world. Lame man, blind man. This should be preached.” That’s a famous analogy which everyone knows. “Take this opportunity to expose them, the Christian religionists. When they are attacking, you must attack.”

Prabhupada kept going back and forth between things that were going on with the deprogrammers and anything else that would be brought up. So now he’s back on the deprogrammers and

Prabhupada starts giving some of the arguments that they will use against us. Because I told Prabhupada about this radio show in which I was debating a Christian minister and he had read all these bogus books on Hinduism and about Krsna being one of the many gods or the god of love and all of that. He had been bringing out all of these points and attacking us. So Prabhupada said, “Oh, Krsna may have many women, but where is the abortion? Where is the pregnancy?” “Jesus taught ‘thou shall not kill’ and you killed him. How can you expect him to explain to rascals like you?”

## **They must not dress as hippies — Prabhupada**

Then regarding Golden Avatar, this means when devotees are playing the music, the rock and roll groups. We talked about this record group that made the Change of Heart album, they might have to go on tour if it became popular. So Prabhupada said, “They must not dress as hippies. If Western dress is used it must be as gentlemen.”

## **The Indian government is hoping for our success**

Then Prabhupada said something very astonishing. “The Indian government has stopped cow killing because of ISKCON getting so much support.” The Indian government privately is hopeful for our success. They know we are turning for the first time Christians to Hindus.”

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** You say he would swing back, like he’d be on deprogramming and swing into these other things. It’s not like an obsession but it was a real topic that had to be dealt with.

**Ramesvara:** Yes. I explained that by the end of 1976 we were under attack and events were happening in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, all the major cities and we were constantly going on radio and television shows. So now I just arrived with the latest reports so it started Prabhupada talking about it again. Every once in awhile in the conversation he would reflect on it and start saying things about it.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** It wasn't that he was really worried. He was just sort of giving guidance to the whole thing.

## **He was training us to attack them...**

**Ramesvara:** He was training us. He was just training us how to think about it, how to defend, how to attack when they attack us. Instead of being on the defensive, turn it around and attack them. That was his training. Then Prabhupada started talking about the Kumbhamela program that he wanted to set up. He said there should be 24 hour kirtans, in the morning and evening there should be nagar kirtan, lecture, and Srimad-Bhagavatam recital. He said, "One lakh of books must be sold and prasadam must be distributed." That was Prabhupada's formula for the Kumbhamela program.

## **Turn it to your side, this is an opportunity to spread Krsna Consciousness**

Then Prabhupada made the following comment, "Somehow or other there is agitation," referring to the deprogramming people attacking us. And this gets back again to that point I was making earlier that by vigorous preaching the pious come out and also the impious come out. So Prabhupada said, "Somehow or other there is agitation. Somehow or other this agitation must go on, then turn it



to your side. This is an opportunity to spread Krsna consciousness.” That was his vision. ” A man is known by his company. Your constant companion is dog.”

## **There must be brainwashing, washing the garbage**

Prabhupada describing how he would have attacked people who were criticizing us.” First give up sinful activities, then understand Krsna. There must be brainwashing, washing away the garbage. If a man washes his house it is nice, so why are you protesting when we wash the dirt?” Then regarding the argument that we are just isolating people from the real world, Prabhupada said, “Isolation? Swans and crows, rich men aid poor, they live separately.” Then he said, “So who cares for your newspaper with its barking.” Then he said, “The hog is offered halavah but he only takes stool. Hog civilization, taking animal blood through the flesh, not through the milk. They do not know the art of eating blood through milk. Meat-eating, that is the cause of cancer.” Then again talking about the materialist, “I enjoy God’s property but I don’t care for His advice?”

Then I have a comment written down here which I don’t understand now. I wrote down something about “ISKCON news, list of places and people met and attended worldwide, radio, TV, etc.” I don’t know what Prabhupada meant by that, maybe broadcasting ISKCON news. Then he said, “It is not a question of this or that religion, but the religion. First question, what is religion? The laws given by God. Who is God? You must define. Dogs and cats have families. That position is not very prestigious.” Then regarding the Bible Prabhupada said, “God told Abraham to kill Isaac.” He wanted us to refer to that to show how extreme you have to be if you are following the Bible. Don’t accuse us of being a cult, fanatical. “If no Christian can be deprogrammed.” Now here they were saying in relation to a Christian cannot be deprogramed. Only a person who

is part of a cult can be deprogrammed.

## **Prabhupada seemed to know the Bible**

So Prabhupada said, “If no Christian can be deprogrammed then why did Peter decry him and Judah, for money, betray him?” Prabhupada seemed to know the Bible. “In Acts according to Saint Mathew, Jesus told his disciples to surrender everything and follow me and God will supply. Give up your family, give up everything.” And he said, “The only remedy for society’s ills and anxieties is to chant Hare Krsna and sell books.” Then something about the Harvard symposium which we were planning but never ultimately came off, Prabhupada said it must include reviews.

## **Expose the whole thing about psychology**

Then Prabhupada gave instruction for a BTG article. He said there should be an article on the field of psychology exposing the sham of freedom from anxiety for money through different methods like E.S.T., primal scream, and so on. We kept talking about deprogramming, psychology and all of their arguments. Prabhupada said, “Let’s write an article in BTG and expose the whole thing about psychology.” Then it was suggested that either Dharmdhyaksa or Subhananda write it. So this was on the 11th. I wrote in my diary that “On the 11th we left for Allahabad by train. A new life member is the second in charge for the whole Indian central railways.” I can’t remember his name. “He added a special first-class car to the train going to Allahabad and that car was just for Prabhupada and ISKCON devotees who were accompanying him.” That was extraordinary VIP treatment. It was a 24 hour train ride, overnight, maybe even two nights.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** From Bombay.

## **Travelling to Allahabad (for Kumba-Mela)**

**Ramesvara:** Yes. I think we left the afternoon of the 11th so we would have arrived the afternoon of the 12th. Prabhupada heard the tape of the radio show, he discussed Indian politics. He said, “So much land unused,” talking about how there is no real food shortage. He stressed prasadam distribution and farm communities for the unemployed with all the unused land. Then I wrote down Prabhupada’s basic schedule. Massage at 10 in the evening until 11. At 11 he would take rest until 1:30. At 1:30 he would get up and read and chant until 2:30 or 3:00. Then he would take rest again until 4:00. That was his evening schedule.

Now that train ride was one of the most extraordinary experiences I ever had in my life. Because Prabhupada was lying down at 10 o’clock and getting massage. Prabhupada was sleeping in the car. In the first class car there are four beds, two on each side. No one was sleeping over Prabhupada. Prabhupada slept in the ground on one side, then opposite him on the ground level was Prabhupada Krpa Maharaja. And right above Prabhupada Krpa Maharaja I was sleeping. So at 10 o’clock. Oh, going to the train station was another experience. We were walking down the track and there were thousands of Indian people walking and they would actually walk towards Prabhupada and kind of brush against him. It was just a never ending stream, of them coming towards Prabhupada as we were walking to get on our train.

So myself and someone else were walking in front of Prabhupada and we were literally grabbing the Indian people by their shirts and just pushing them all the way aside and Prabhupada would be walking behind us. It was a very long train platform and it seemed like a quarter of a mile walk. Prabhupada is walking nonchalantly

with his cane completely transcendental, and in front of him are two Americans acting like bodyguards out of some movie, just grabbing people and throwing them all the way to side making a path for Prabhupada.

Literally throwing people one after another for a quarter of a mile nonstop and Prabhupada is walking behind us through the clear path very nonchalantly, completely detached and indifferent. It was actually a very humorous kind of situation. Someone would have laughed at how calm Prabhupada was and there is these two Americans throwing everybody out of his way right in front of him and he's acting as if nothing is going on. We finally got to our train.

That night Prabhupada was taking his massage and by 11 o'clock the massage was over and everyone took rest. I was sleeping on my right side so that I could look down on Prabhupada. The last thing before I fell asleep I wanted to see him and the first thing when I woke up I wanted to see him. So then the most amazing thing happened. At 12 midnight I suddenly wake up and brush the sleep out of my eyes. After I opened my eye I can't understand why did I wake up?

I look down on Prabhupada and Prabhupada is sitting up staring at me, waiting for me to get up so he can talk to me. So I immediately offered my obeisances and I sat up and Prabhupada started talking and we had the most amazing conversation and it went on til about 2:30 in the morning. At the end of it Prabhupada said, "Okay, now you can take rest." It was a very extraordinary experience, as if Prabhupada had willed me to wake up.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** That's not this conversation on tape, is it?

**Ramesvara:** This is one of the conversations on the train. This is during the day because it is obviously recorded by Prabhupada Kripa. We were talking to Prabhupada about how the world is going to become Krsna conscious, whether it is going to happen by masses of people actually becoming Krsna conscious and overthrowing

their own governments or whether it's going to be a very small group of people who successfully create a revolution. So I asked Prabhupada specifically which way it was going to be. I said, "Many revolutions have been victorious with a very small minority of people behind them because they are so well organized.

Russia, Germany, all these revolutions. In history there are examples of small groups of people taking over governments because they are very intelligent and well organized. The mass of people didn't believe in them but still they took over the government, like in Russia." So then Prabhupada starts talking about Russia. "In Russia, the mass of people, they are aloof, this rascal theory, Communism" Then some devotee says, "They are not Communists, the masses of people. The Communist party itself is very small." Prabhupada, "Very small. By terrorism there will be. By terrorism." So then I say, "So, when the Krsna consciousness movement becomes so powerful that it is in charge of the government, is it because of a small group of people or is it because of the masses?" And Prabhupada said, "It is due to the quality of the leaders."

So I repeat the question in a different way." But will it be like Russia, where there is only a small group of people who are Krsna conscious?" Prabhupada said, "No, it is not like that. The quality of the people will be changed." Then I say, "So that means the whole mass population?" Prabhupada said, "Yes." Then I say, "Only then will Krsna conscious government be there, when the whole mass population is changed?" Prabhupada: "No. No. You can have government when you are in minority. But the mass of people, on account of this quality they have to see." Then a devotee says, "The idea is to convince them that what they need is good quality leaders. Not necessarily that they have all to come to that stage themselves." Another devotee says, "Krsna consciousness can be appreciated by any man because it is very simple."

Prabhupada: "Simple and natural." Hari-sauri: "The desire for good leadership is there, so if we present good leaders, they will naturally

take it.” Prabhupada: “And leaders must be very ” Harisauri: “That means we have to move in political circles and do a lot of preaching there.” Then I say, “In America there is a rule that there is separation of church and government.” Then Prabhupada says, “It is not a church, our movement.” Then I say, “But they think of us like that.” Prabhupada: “Not stereotype church.” Then I say, “but they think of us as a religion.” Prabhupada: “They may think. It is not a fact. It is a culture.” Then I say, “The only hope is if Krsna gives us the intelligence, because we are so stupid,” to get on television.

Here are some quotes from my diary. It says on the 12th but I think that this is the evening conversation with Prabhupada. Anyway I’ll read it and if I think of other things I will add. “We are the only hope for the human society for real knowledge and our books are the only real thing, so it may take some time. But all this rubbish literature, rubbish philosophy, rubbish culture, will all be replaced.” “Scientific advancement is turning, men into asses, directing whatever little intelligence they have in ass like activities by creating an illusion that although life is temporary, it can be prolonged. By Krsna’s grace the mass of people in India are still illiterate so they have been spared from hearing scientific bluffing. Real advertisement is if you want to become an ass very quickly, then come to the university.”

This is on the 12th. So at this point Gopal said, “We should publish a little red book of Srila Prabhupada’s sayings.

## **The japanese will like Lord Nrsimhadeva**

When the Japanese Gita was presented to Srila Prabhupada he said, “Thank you very much. You have done something. The Japanese will like Nrsimhadeva. If you install a big temple of Nrsimhadeva killing they will like.”

Then Gopal told the story of how the Home Minister who is a Christian named Brahmananda Redi had told Gopal, “We want

your movement to spread all over the world. We very much like what you are doing.”

Another Home Minister, Tarun Kanti Gosh announced at a big public Nabadwip meeting, “I am going over to see my good friends, the Hare Krsna movement for prasadam. Some may say they are CIA but all I know is that I have been all over the world and seen the good work they have done in spreading the mission of our Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.”

So these were stories that Prabhupada was being told. Prabhupada made a plan to lay the Bhubaneswar cornerstone on Lord Nityananda’s appearance day which was coming up on February 2nd.

The conversation Prabhupada and I had when I woke up at twelve midnight: I only remember a few parts to it. One of the parts was about Japan again, and Prabhupada told me again about this Nrsimhadeva temple. He said that actually outside of India, Japan’s culture is the closest to Vedic culture. They take their shoes off before they enter the house and so on. So he said that Japanese people will take to Krsna consciousness. He again talked about having a big Nrsimhadeva temple and he said the deity of Nrsimhadeva should be 50 feet tall, huge Deity. Then he talked about how we have to have diorama museums for Japan. I didn’t understand why he was explaining to me all the things that had to be done in Japan.

Because later it ended up that I became GBC for Japan. Prabhupada gave me a lot of instructions for Japan that night. Then I started asking Prabhupada about World War III. This was still the big topic on the devotee’s minds since that fateful prediction in 1975. So I asked Prabhupada about WW III and he explained that this world war was inevitable and there is no way it can be stopped from coming. Then at one point Prabhupada said that if the Americans do not start this war we will force them to start it. These were some of the topics that were being discussed that night. Prabhupada also gave me the list of books that night that he would translate once he

finished the Srimad-Bhagavatam. I wrote that list in a newsletter. It involved certain Puranas, like the Padma Purana, certain Upanisads like the Svetasvatara Upanisad, the Taittiriya Upanisad, and so on.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** That's all you can remember from that night?

**Ramesvara:** Yes. There was a lot about Japan, a lot about WW III and somethings about his books. It was so intimate that Prabhupada was talking about these things. Everything I wanted him to say on the roof in New York when we were amidst all the devotees and he wouldn't speak. But now he was giving me his mercy when we were alone practically. Prabhupada Kṛpa was asleep and he was speaking so intimately and personally and confidentially. I felt very blessed. I felt I had no right to be with Prabhupada hearing such things.

## Arriving at Kumbha-Mela camp

So we got off the train and Abhirama and Gurudas were there in a car and they picked us up and drove us all the way to our camp. We had to drive through all the pilgrims' campsites along the banks of the river. The campsite they had picked for us was really out of the way. It was a bad location. So when Prabhupada arrived he was really upset. The camp was poorly financed, there was no gate. It was a very distant location. There was no electricity. All the other camps had electricity because they were closer to the city lines. Ours had no electricity.

For all of these reasons it would be poorly attended darshans. Prabhupada was upset. Also it was very cold because it's winter, Kumbhamela. Prabhupada was very uncomfortable and he wasn't pleased at all. Then on the 13th, "Prabhupada gave instructions regarding food relief and regarding a new BBT movie. There were no lights or electricity in our camp and we had to get a gas heater for Prabhupada. There was no facility for his translation work. Because



there were no outlets to plug in his dictaphone. The pandal was very disorganized. There was minimum kirtan and book distribution.”

Now regarding this new BBT movie, I actually had this idea because it tied in with the deprogramming fight that was going on in America. I thought why don't we make a movie filmed in India of real Vaisnavism and just show that Vaisnavism is a bona fide religion. That there are temples, rituals, temples, everything. And what to speak of millions of followers. Everyone will see it is not a cult. Vaisnavism is a pretty big thing. Krsnabhakti is a very big religion. So I asked Prabhupada can we make a movie about that and he approved it. He gave a hint that the nine processes of devotional service can be shown. You can show many people in India hearing, you can show a Srimad-Bhagavatam recital. Prabhupada also suggested that we could get testimonials from Indian professors, from wealthy and prominent citizens. So this is a major film which was never made but which Prabhupada approved in 1977. I told Yadubara about this film but instead of doing this one he did “Vrndavana: the Land of Krsna,” which served a similar purpose but wasn't exactly the same.

Then again Prabhupada talked about the record money going for food relief. He said especially it should go for farm projects in India. When Prabhupada earmarked it for food relief, that's what he meant: farm projects in India. He said “No record money should go for book distribution. All the record money should go for food relief.”

Then Prabhupada approved that for BTG if we wanted to we could list our legal names for the authors and then in parenthesis you write the Sanskrit names. Also for the staff. He said you could do that if you wanted to.

On that day Prabhupada had planned that he was going to stay at the Kumbhamela until the 21st of January. The 14th was a very important day. We had what they call a maha bathing. Massive bathing. I think about 4 million people; because it was special

day astrologically in the Maha-kumbhamela. This was a very rare Kumbhamela. It only occurs once every 144 years. There was big kirtan, book distribution party lead by Hansadutta, Acyutananda, Bhavananda, Jayapataka, Gurukupa, Yasodanandan, Lokanath, Jagat Guru, Gurudas, all the nama hatta men and myself. On that day we distributed 8,000 books. What was happening was Gurudas was getting ready to bloop. He was falling down. We caught him smoking cigarettes at the festival. So the whole thing was a disaster, the location, no electricity, poor darshan, everything.

But when Gurukrupa and the nama hatta men arrived, then everything started getting organized very nicely with big kirtans and big book distribution. So this was the first day they had arrived and there was big results, 8,000 books and big kirtan. Later Brahmananda Swami arrived and he joined the kirtan party. In the evening the power failed again, but there was a big crowd for the darshan anyway. They came to such a distant tent because it was Prabhupada. Now we had only been there the 12th, 13th, and 14th. One thing that was happening in the evening; it was freezing cold, Prabhupada was extremely uncomfortable. He couldn't sleep. The way the tent was constructed was it was a huge terit and divided into three sections, a very large center section and two side sections.

On one side section which has a separate tent wall there was Prabhupada's bed and a little dresser. In the center section there were little rugs, dadis on the floor and there was a table and seat for Prabhupada. On the far right hand side was where Prabhupada Krpa and myself slept. We had a shower set up in the back of the tent for Prabhupada and Palika was there with Srutirupa, Abhirama's wife, for the cooking. For taking our bath we would have to go outdoors to a pump and the other ISKCON devotees, about a hundred, had their own tents they were living in and we had constructed a stage for our morning mangal arati. Every morning I would go outside, it was freezing cold, bitter cold winter, and you would just lean in front of the pump and pump the ice cold water and take your morning bath. It was a great austerity. And Prabhupada was taking the same kind

of baths but in a private bath behind the tent. But every evening Prabhupada was so ill and uncomfortable he was unable to sleep.

## **Prabhupada wasn't sleeping at Kumbha-Mela**

So he would get out of his bed and sit by his desk in the main tent and just sit there and sit. So when I realized Prabhupada wasn't sleeping, I woke up immediately. One of those things again. I just woke up immediately, checked the main tent and there was Prabhupada sitting there. So there was a gas heater. It was so windy that I would light the heater and it would blow heat on Prabhupada for some time and then the pilot light would just be blown out by the wind and I would light it again and the same thing would happen. I would literally spend the entire night sitting by the heater keeping it lit for Prabhupada, it would go out again, lighting it again. ]

I had two big boxes of Indian matches and I wasn't getting any sleep because this was my service to Prabhupada. He was uncomfortable, he was ill. He would sit at his desk and not appear to be doing anything externally. He would even be leaning back and it appeared that he was even resting. He was bundled up in a heavy winter coat. It was freezing cold all night in the tent, raging winds, and I was sitting there all night long lighting this heater for Prabhupada. There was no break and no sleep. I couldn't trust that heater. It would always blow out and Prabhupada would get cold so I just stayed up all night the 12th, the 13th, the 14th. Every night it was the same routine. No sleep and then go to the pump and wake up by this ice cold shower. I couldn't figure out which was colder, the water or the air outside.

## **No electricity, no heat, nothing was together...**

So that was our Kumbhamela, because they had no electricity in the tents, no heat, we couldn't get anything together. So by the morning of the 15th I started asking Prabhupada if we could leave. It wasn't because I was uncomfortable. I was having a very ecstatic time staying up all night, not feeling tired the next day, going out on the kirtans, serving Prabhupada, feeling this mercy of Prabhupada. I was very excited. But Prabhupada was getting very sick and I was getting very worried. I was really getting worried. I had never seen Prabhupada so sick. Plus there was no electricity so he wasn't able to translate anything.

So Prabhupada and I started discussing whether he should leave or not. Prabhupada's argument was that so many people had come to the Kumbhamela and they were expecting all of the holy men and spiritual teachers of India to be there. People from all over India go there just to get the darshan of these holy men, so he has an obligation to stay til the 21st. That was how Prabhupada was feeling. I argued very strongly. I said, "Prabhupada, there is something much much more important than your giving your darshan to these people, and that is your writing of your books. Because there is only a few thousand people that are going to see you here Prabhupada. But I promise you if you just go on writing, we'll distribute your books by the millions. Millions of people will have your darshan. There's no facility here, there's no dictaphone, the climate is too cold, your health is bad. Let's just go to Bhubaneswar. It's warm and they have health water.

He had told me he wanted to go to Bhubaneswar because they have this special water, the Bindu-sarovara water, and that water is supposed to have special medicinal properties. So when I pressed this argument of Prabhupad's book being much more important than him giving a darshan, he liked that. He liked that we had that

appreciation of his books and he liked that we had that spirit of distributing millions of them. So on the 15th Prabhupada agreed to leave. So again during the day after Prabhupada agreed to leave, we went out and had this huge maha-kirtan party and book distribution. Again it was properly organized by Gururkpa and again we distributed 7,000 books. It was a very wonderful kirtan party, all the sannyasis and senior devotees. We would hold open the top parts of our dhotis like the apron part and just catch the money. People would just see us and throw money at us because they had come for purification to give charity to sadhus.

## **Prabhupada was very sick and was convinced to leave early**

So later that day we left to catch the train to Calcutta and Bhubaneswar. So there's a whole interesting pastime of how we got this train. Obviously every single train car was booked up and you just had to have your reservation long in advance. Our reservation was on the 21st. Prabhupada sent me to make the reservations since I was his secretary and I had helped persuade him to leave. So I drove in from our distant camp through the whole Kumbhamela crowd. Indira Gandhi was coming very soon. The army was everywhere.

There were at least four to six million people living in tents along the sides of the river and we had to drive through all of them. So we put a "Press" sticker like we were from the media on the front of the window and we were just honking the horn making everyone think we were the media and eventually we got the army to help. We got an army officer to sit on the trunk of the car pushing people aside. We got out and got to the office of India railways. They told us there's no possibility of getting any kind of a car or compartment or anything to get out until our reservation. So by Krsna's arrangement we ran into this very same life member who is the number two man in charge of India railways. "

So this man brought up empty a special car from Bombay or somewhere and he attached a car which wasn't supposed to be attached, to the train which was going Allahabad-Calcutta. He brought an empty car just for Prabhupada. It was a very very great service. I think his name is Mr. Gupta. Gopal will know. We considered it Krsna's divine intervention. There was just no way to get out and Prabhupada was getting sick and we were in so much anxiety. Abirama and I had gone in to make the arrangement. The office of Indian railways in Allahabad is actually a railway car which was used by the British viceroy when he would travel in grand style all over India and used by the great rich maharajas and different kings of the Indian states before independence.

This car was so opulent that it was just astonishing. Later on we talked to Prabhupada about the car and how comfortable it was. We had talked to Mr. Gupta about this, whether we could get a car like this for Prabhupada. We presented the idea to Prabhupada and he said if we could get such a car, he would then just travel all over India living in that car and preaching. It was like a Rolls Royce type of car. Private living room, private bedroom, private kitchen, private bathroom. It was a very very opulent car. Prabhupada wanted one.

## **One day they will appreciate we have changed the world from darkness to light**

Now on the 15th we are leaving and I have the following comments written in my diary." That is my only ambition, that so many people can become enlightened." He's still torn that he is leaving the Kumbha mela and so many people are expecting to hear from him. So he said, "That is my only ambition, that so many people become enlightened. But they are being deprived of the chance.

One day the whole world will appreciate how we have changed the

face of the world from darkness to light.” Then he said, “American money and Indian culture. This combination will benefit the whole world. This plan is good.” Then he severely chastised the Kumbhamela organizers for not having prasadam distribution at our tent when people were coming. He really got angry at this. Prabhupada then approved the scheme for Giriraj to organize Bombay book distribution and go on traveling sankirtan. Giriraj was having trouble I think with Gopal and it wasn’t working out with the two of them in the Bombay temple. Also that day on the 15th Prabhupada said, “It is better for India that so many people are illiterate.

At least: they won’t have to hear the false propaganda of the scientists. He had said that again. Then talking about the court case, the New York court case. He said bring all the books and present them before the judge. One big stack here, one big stack there.” Here are the brainwashing materials. Here are the scholars opinion. Now you decide what it is.” This was Prabhupada’s idea for the court case.

## **Why not a revolution started on the basis of the absolute knowledge?**

Right in front of the judge you stack up all of his books on one side and on one side you stack up all the scholars reviews. It was on the 15th Prabhupada gave the list of what books he was going to write. Not that night. I’m sorry. I thought that we talked about it that night. We talked in general about Prabhupada continuing his translation; but he didn’t give me the list until the 15th, because I have written here, “If I can finish the Bhagavatam, I will immediately begin the Padma Purana, Brahmavivarta Purana, Markandeya Purana, Tattireya Upanisad, and Katha Upanisad.” Then we were reading some reviews to Prabhupada that had just come that I had forgotten to show Prabhupada earlier, from the scholars in America.

Prabhupada said, “These reviews are the blessings of my Guru-Maharaja.” I wrote the following description of that train ride to

Calcutta. "I sat in the coach after tasting Prabhupada's remnants of prasadam, feeling great devotion to Prabhupada and his mission. He asked me to read the recent review of his Bhagavad-gita which was published in BTG Vol. 12, #1. He was feeling great happiness and I began reading some of the better reviews published in the "Krsna Consciousness is Authorized." On and on the reviews went, praising his work, praying for him to go on with his mission and his writing and hoping that the world would understand his message and his gift to the ethical as well as spiritual life of humankind. Finally, smiling, he lay down to take rest.

Feeling, I think, that his work would start a revolution to change the entire course of human history. I was very inspired and I said, "The pen is mightier than the sword." Prabhupada answered, "Yes. It is a revolution. That is what I thought as I wrote on and on. The Communists have changed the lives of people throughout the world by their empty literature and false promises. Why not a revolution started on the basis of the absolute knowledge?" This was a great experience for me personally, sitting with Prabhupada for hours and reading the scholars reviews of his books out loud to him and he was just drinking in the nectarine of these reviews and praises. It was making Prabhupada very very happy. I took it that this is a very significant comment when Prabhupada said that as he is writing he is actually thinking that this will start a revolution. The pen is mightier than the sword. He thinks like that as he writes.

Also during that trip Prabhupada approved his plans for the custom made railway car with a sitting room, altar, electrical power for dictaphone or generating power, bedroom suits, an office for the transcriber, a Sanskrit editor, a secretary, and a kitchen. Just exactly like a royal coach. Prabhupada approved that plan on that day.

So now we're up to the 16th and we're still on the train and we're discussing conditions in Communist countries, scientists' false claims, a newsletter regarding prasadam distribution, and Prabhupada approves purchase of the new Sydney mandir. This



includes landing in Calcutta also because Prabhupada finishes 9th Canto, Ch. 23. So I wrote down some comments in my diary. “Cow killing has been stopped in India because of our movement. Now although the Communists have distributed many books in different dialects in India, it is finished. Indira Gandhi, Sanjaya, the newspapers are all speaking out strongly against Communism.

This is all because of our movement. They have become encouraged by our movement to continue to preserve Indian culture. Next because of our movement there will be prohibition in India.” This was an amazing prediction. All along Prabhupada had been saying, and you’ll see on the tape transcripts, that our movement was actually responsible for the stopping of cow killing in India because they became so encouraged by our success and that the Western world was taking interest in Indian culture that they started getting very serious about Indian culture. So now Prabhupada is predicting the turn against Communism and prohibition is coming up next. And sure enough very shortly this Morarji Desai became the prime minister and went on a huge campaign for prohibition.

Prabhupada wanted me to write a letter to Mr. Gupta thanking him for arranging this special car. He told me to write that “You have arranged everything so nicely, just like a father arranges for his son. So all of our thanks.” And I should invite him and his whole family to the Mayapur-Vrindavana festival. Then some more quotes from Prabhupada. “I contract means 50% stealing.” Then he said, “Now you arrange everything. There must be sufficient stock. We can keep first class cook, two or three, and they will always be engaged. Whenever anyone comes he must get prasadam. Arrangement must be made.” Oh, I know what this is. I don’t have to read this.

## **In every temple there must be sufficient stock of prasadam for distribution**

This is a letter on the 16th Prabhupada dictated which I finally typed up from Calcutta on Jan. 18. It's addressed to all ISKCON temple presidents. This letter was based on Prabhupada's extreme anger that at the Kumbhamela so many guests were coming to his tent for darshan every evening but there was no prasadam to distribute to them. So I assume that you have this letter in the files. This is a letter to every temple president in ISKCON explaining that from here on in, in every temple there must be sufficient stock of prasadam for distribution. You have to have so many cooks, arrangements have to be made whenever anyone comes he immediately gets subjis, halavah, puris.

You make 20 servings at a time and then as soon as they are distributed you make the next 20 servings. At the end of the night if you have some left over, our men will eat it. It's a very heavy letter. It explains almost that if we don't do this it's an offense, it means we don't believe in Krsna. Prabhupada ends the letter, "If we believe that Krsna is providing and maintaining anyone then why should we be misers? This means losing faith in Krsna and thinking that we are the doers and suppliers. We are confident Krsna will supply. Let the whole world come. We can feed them. So please do this nicely. Begin at once." So this is a very major letter to the whole society and it came out of the Kumbhamela festival.

Continuing with Prabhupada's quotes in Calcutta, he says,

"By chanting you get spiritual energy for working." "Material means he will get fatigued. Spiritual means he will get newer and newer ideas for working. By chanting you get spiritual energy for working."

"We are actually introducing a new style of life and civilization. Everything should be ideal. Others have never dreamt of such

civilization, free life, happy life, no anxiety, and hope, great hope that we are going back home, back to Godhead. And they accuse us of brainwashing.”

“My Guru Maharaja did not like fatty disciples. He would say, ‘Oh, he has become fatty. Useless.’”

“If we believe Krsna gives everyone to eat, then why should we be misers? This is loss in faith in Krsna.”

That’s part of the letter.

“This is the whole philosophy. Let them surrender to Krsna and everything is there.”

This was like a final statement about that letter.

## **These Mayavadi rascals have spoiled the whole world**

“These Mayavadi rascals have spoiled the whole world with their teaching everyone is God. They are already fools (the worldwide people) and they are making them bigger fools, feeding them rubbish.”

Then a note that we were talking about Yadubara’s movie, Spiritual Frontier. Prabhupada said we have to get a Hindi and Bengali soundtrack.

“The Indian government is gradually appreciating this movement and gradually accepting our principles.”

“The real problem of modern society is that they are atheists, and that enters all other problems.”

“Television will not be effective because the public will not be interested.” Then regarding appearing on the US television, Prabhupada said,

“It will not be very effective because the public will not be very interested.”

Then I presented a different point of view that using television might be very effective. Then Prabhupada said, “Okay, if you think it will be effective.” Then Prabhupada said, “When I came to America, I was determined not to make any compromise. Either you accept it or not. Even if I had to return to India with nothing, still I wouldn’t compromise. I thought like that.”

“Try to establish and present this theory, Indian culture and US money can solve all the world problems. It can make men happy.”

This was in relation to a Reader’s Digest article that I read to Prabhupada from this period that I had just picked up on my way to India. In the Reader’s Digest article was a group of scientists talking about what to look forward to in the next 200 years. Prabhupada dictated notes as I read him this article, smashing all of their happy predictions about what is going to go on in the world in the next 200 years. The scientists were talking about growing food for human beings on the floor of the ocean underneath the sea and somehow bringing it up. Prabhupada just laughed and smashed their foolish ideas one after another.

Unfortunately someone stole this Reader’s Digest and I had written the notes directly in it so I was never able to write a letter back to Reader’s Digest smashing it with Prabhupada arguments. Part of his reply to the article, he said, “Control over the forces of nature means when there is no more death or disease. So called science has failed to control these. Where is your advancement? You may become rich but when death comes, where is your control? No one wants death. Why are you forced to die? There is no history of conquering the laws of nature. Those who try artificially to control nature end up under the control of rascals like Russia.”

Then he talked about terrorism and he said, “Why has this situation developed in Russia, this terrorism? Because of nature’s law. In the future, we see through eyes of Vedic literature that these

leaders will be curtailed by three things: 1) there will be no rain from the sky, 2) there will be no food grain production, 3) there will be excessive taxation.” Prabhupada was specifically talking about Russia, predicting these things in January, 1977, and they have all come true. Massive grain and crop failures predicted by Prabhupada.

“Until you take to Krsna consciousness you cannot escape these three conditions.” Then he gave an example of England, how there is a water scarcity, food production is crippled, there is an increase of meat eating, which requires food produce. Therefore animals will not survive because food is not being grown in sufficient quantity. So Prabhupada predicted then the animals aren’t going to have feed. Then government will take advantage by taxation increase. In this way, no water, no food, more taxes. These things are due to nature’s control.

## **Scientists are hopeless with no real solutions**

Then finally Prabhupada concluded his comments on the Reader’s Digest article by saying, “All these incredible statements of the scientists, they are disclosing that they have no real solutions, that they are hopeless and that they simply imagine.”

Then Prabhupada continued the conclusion of the Russian people, “That should be quoted, how by taxation everyone is feeling harassed.” There was another article in the Reader’s Digest about the Russian people and the taxation level. Then Prabhupada said he wanted a BTG article which would give the picture of life in Communist countries. The final comments from that day that I wrote down, “There was an American Express catalog cover that Prabhupada really liked and he said, ‘take hint from this for your BTG cover.’” We should try to find that American Express catalog.

Then he said we should quote from the former judge, that should be printed in BTG. Some former judge had given a very big statement.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Sharma.

**Ramesvara:** Yes. (break) establishing in one of his disciples an instruction which was so inseparable from his whole life and his relationship with his spiritual master that there was never any option in terms of rejecting it. Some very specific service. Just like Tamal in China. Tamal knows. He openly says it that if he is not going to be working in China, that means he's in maya. So I can say the same thing. If I am not thinking of book distribution and pushing it, that means I am going away from Prabhupada, because actually Prabhupada did not give me any choice. So that's an interesting thing, that Prabhupada dealt, with some of his disciples like that. Not all of them, but a few he dealt with like that.

## **Funding for international projects**

There's two more things I should mention about the BBT and book publishing, that involved Prabhupada that I can remember. One of them was the international projects. As I mentioned earlier, they began in '72, '73 with Prabhupada forming his own sankirtan party and sending boys to Japan and encouraging it so much that the American devotees and later on the Australian devotees were actually supplying manpower to the party. Gurukrupa became the GBC to Australia I think in 1975. Uptil that point he had been getting all his men from America.

Now he was taking them from Australia. This was all being done with Prabhupada's approval because it was Prabhupada's sankirtan party. By 1975 the American BBT was also contributing to the India projects, with their first donation to Krsna-Balaram, then the Bombay project. Book distribution was at a sufficient level that Prabhupada could demand somewhere between 50 and 75,000

dollars a month. We had a quota to give a million dollars to the book fund over one year which went all through 1976 right up to the opening of the temple. I didn't really mention earlier, but this was quite a marathon, to pull out of the American BBT up to 75,000 dollars a month in 1976 was just extraordinary. All of the devotees in American knew the money was going for the Bombay project and all of them knew Prabhupada was pushing very hard for that project. As a result everybody was working very hard. Because of that extra pressure to get money for India, 1976 proved to be the biggest year for book distribution ever.

In the beginning of 1976, in addition to feeding money to the Bombay project, we were also, via the Radha-Damodar party, money to build the long residential building in Bengal. By the end of 1976 in addition to the Bombay project, we were giving over a hundred thousand dollars or around a hundred thousand dollars for the construction of the International Gurukula in Vrndavana, plus, from Mayapur-Vrndavan Trust Funds which Prabhupada has personally built up, he was pulling money to build the Hyderabad temple.

So the international projects were really rolling and by the end of 1976 I wrote a letter to Prabhupada. Actually it was my BBT Trustees report. I proposed, "Now that the book distribution has finally been transplanted all over the world, especially in Europe and South America, I propose that since these projects are international, we should make the funding of the projects international as well." Prabhupada had previously written a letter in 1973 that whenever a foreign division of the BBT springs up and they just do a translation and then print the book in a foreign language, they have to pay a royalty to the American BBT of 10% of their gross earnings from their sales to the temples.

Prabhupada said that the 10% royalty doesn't really have to come until the foreign language division BBT is financially solvent. That letter was written in '72 or '73. It was a very important letter

showing how Prabhupada was planning to keep all the money centralized for the construction projects. That never was actually enforced. No BBT was giving a royalty to the American BBT. So by the end of 1976 I referred to that letter. I sent Prabhupada a copy of it with the BBT Trustees report and I said, "Instead of sending the 10% to the American BBT why don't we have every BBT send 10% of their gross income directly to the international projects. Because after Bombay comes Mayapur and there is no way the American BBT can support it alone." Prabhupada considered the plan and he approved it and it became established.

This is very important because for a worldwide movement which is based on autonomy and decentralized management and very strong individuals as leaders, for a world wide movement to have central international projects that everyone has to work towards and contribute to, it's part of the thread that holds an international movement together. So this became a very important decision that Prabhupada had handed down. He approved the proposal and to this day we can look back over the last five years since that decision and we can see how it has brought the leaders together, how it has brought the different zones together because we were contributing to the same projects.

This was part of Prabhupada's structuring ISKCON so that it would not only survive after his departure, but so that it would survive in a way that left it intact-one big worldwide international family rather than having it splinter off into separate movements, as occurred to the Gaudiya Math. So one of the important things that keeps the movement intact of course, is the way Prabhupada structured the GBC's position. The other thing that keeps it in tact is the way everybody has to give their money to the same project. Because naturally when you are giving your money to the same project you feel connected with people far away in other parts of the world. You are all working for the same goal. You all get involved in planning and supervising it. It is actually a very important facet of keeping ISKCON together.



## **We always had difficulties with the sanskrit men**

So that decision was made by Prabhupada at the end of 1976. Now another area of publishing which is very important is the area of other translation work. Back in 1971 with Pradyumna being trained by Prabhupada, Prabhupada developed his ideas, or I should say implemented his ideas for the formation of a Sanskrit and Bengali translation department. Originally this department was to assist Prabhupada in his own translation work by adding Sanskrit grammatical and punctuation marks, diacritical marks on the word synonyms, then gradually helping with the word synonyms, and eventually getting to the point of being so expert that the translation of the text could be done by Prabhupada supervising his own trained up Sanskrit scholars.

Prabhupada would review their translation and then he would just be able to write the purports. So that was Prabhupada's plan and he felt that if he could carry out this plan it would double the translation work that was coming out. It would make the books come out twice as fast. So we had built up a Sanskrit department of three or four men when the press was in Brooklyn. When it moved to Los Angeles the department expanded to about ten or eleven men. But throughout the years we always seemed to have difficulties with these Sanskrit men. There's a history of difficulty that stretches to about 8 to 10 years. Prabhupada summarized it to us in the 1976 Mayapur meetings at the Mayapur festival. We talked with Prabhupada at great length about his books at that time.

I already mentioned the Bhagavatam color board and other matters of that nature. So we also had major discussions about the Sanskrit department. These discussions also continued into the 1977 Mayapur festival and meetings. The gist of the discussions were to what degree are we going to have our young children trained up in Sanskrit by our so called Sanskrit pandits in the gurukulas. And to

what extent are we going to allow these Sanskrit men to translate on their own? These men had a great desire to translate. Now in 1976 and '77 Prabhupada had already detected a lot of impurity in these men. In fact he said "a little Sanskrit knowledge is very very dangerous." Men who know a little Sanskrit consider themselves to be more intelligent than anyone else. Prabhupada said, "This disease will ultimately culminate in these men thinking that they are more intelligent than their spiritual master."

And in fact, two of the leading Sanskrit men, Nitai das and Jagannath das became so contaminated by their false pride that they began to think that Prabhupada was making mistakes in the Sanskrit and Bengali work and they were correcting them. They weren't thinking in a devotional way, that "My spiritual master is allowing me to serve him. He is deliberately creating a service for me because I am so fallen he is engaging me." But no. They thought, "We are more intelligent than Prabhupada." They actually began to think like that. Prabhupada had detected this impurity from the very beginning and he knew that a little Sanskrit knowledge was very dangerous. So these men were constantly working independently on their own translation projects and we would mail them to Prabhupada and Prabhupada would look them over and tell us if they were good enough or not.

In most cases they weren't good enough. In a few cases Prabhupada approved them and they got published in BTG, some songs of Bhaktivinode translated and so on. But in general Prabhupada was very conservative and very careful and guarded about these men in their Sanskrit work, even though he was letting them work so intimately with him on his books. They would even travel with him. Prabhupada's staff usually consisted of himself, a Sanskrit editor, and a secretary who was serving as a transcriber, such as Harikesa Maharaja. That was Prabhupada's basic staff.

## **The Srila Prabhupada Maintenance Fund**

The travels of Srila Prabhupada were funded by something started in the early 70's called the Srila Prabhupada Maintenance Fund. Every temple in the movement had to send money to Los Angeles for this maintenance fund and we would then buy the tickets and any other personal expenses for Prabhupada. In the beginning it was ten dollars a month as daksina from each temple. By 1975 I had raised it to 25 dollars a month.

Now we had a central fund from around the whole society and this paid for Prabhupada and his personal servant, his secretary and his servant to travel all over the world visiting temples. Now as far as the BBT Sanskrit editor, that the BBT would always pay for. That is how Prabhupada's travels were funded, and the Society was more than happy to contribute every month this 25 dollars, which was nominal because we had so many temples it was adding up to quite a bit. More than enough to cover world wide traveling.

## **Our men will never be pure enough to translate any of the Gosvami literatures**

By 1976 Prabhupada laid down the law and it was a heavy ruling which shook the foundations of the Sanskrit department in ISKCON. These men were something of an elite group of men and the Society had been looking to the day when years from now after Prabhupada disappeared, that these men would continue the work of translating the Vedic literatures and the Gaudiya Vaisnava literatures. So Prabhupada laid down the law. He said, "Our men will never be pure enough to translate any of the Gosvami literatures.

They will never be able to translate any of the literatures dealing

with Krsna's lilas. All they can touch of the Gosvami works is the philosophical texts, such as Satsandarbha. Perhaps the children of our children will be pure enough to approach such confidential works." This was the second time Prabhupada had used this phrase, 'the children of our children.' The first time was back in '73 or early '74. In Los Angeles Jayatirtha and I had a big discussion with him about a tendency we had seen in our householder community. At that time Prabhupada was exhibiting his real estate lila and he was directing the acquisition of real estate in Los Angeles to build up a very big community.

## **Our householders are not pure enough to worship Deities in their own home**

So we had noticed a tendency, which was based on information in Prabhupada's books about traditional Vedic culture, every house-holder has a Deity in his home. At that time we discussed the tendency of the householders to start their own Deity worship. Prabhupada nipped it. He didn't approve of it at all. In fact he not only discouraged, he ordered that it not be done. He said "Our householders are not pure enough to worship Deities in their own home. This type of Deity worship is completely redundant. They should all centralize their devotion on the temple Deity. They should not have independent Deity worship." Then Prabhupada made a very telling remark. He said, "The children of our children, they will be the first generation pure enough to actually keep a Deity in their homes."

## **One woman should watch everyone else's children**

At that time in Los Angeles Prabhupada also established the idea that the women raising their own children does not constitute being fully engaged in devotional service. He said again that every woman is training and watching their own children? This is completely redundant. We should organize a nursery system in our temples and one woman should watch everyone else's children, freeing all the other mothers for practical devotional service in our temples. These were important instructions Prabhupada gave in 1973 about the development of householder communities.

## **The men in the Sanskrit department were very angry**

So now in 1976 he was giving a similar instruction.” These men are not pure enough to touch the confidential works of the Gosvamis. All they can do is simple Sanskrit translations like the Mahabharata, maybe the Ramayana. These are simple translation assignments. Or if they are going to go into the Gosvami literatures or their followers, meaning all GaudiyaVaisnava literatures, then they can only deal with the philosophical texts. Nothing else.

And these men in the Sanskrit department, although they had to surrender because they had no means to publish anything outside of ISKCON, they were very angry and this led to their ultimate breaking with the Society because they felt Prabhupada is not giving the highest. He is not teaching rasa-lila, he is not teaching madhurya rasa. He is not teaching these intimate rasas. He is just teaching very simple philosophy. So although Prabhupada can get you started in Krsna consciousness, you have to go to someone who is teaching about the lilas if you want to reach the perfection.

This was a contamination that was always there in the Sanskrit department.

## The Gopi Bhava club

Back in 1975, I think, we had a phenomena developing in Los Angeles which we nicknamed the “Gopi Bhava Club.” It was spearheaded by these same type of people whose main service was not active preaching work but writing work, editing work and so on. It was a clique of devotees who developed the idea that since whatever you think of at the time of death is what you attain, ISKCON is always pushing so much philosophy that there is never any hearing and chanting about Krsna’s lilas.

So they were thinking that there’s not enough discussion and there is not enough emphasis in ISKCON on Krsna’s lilas, especially the lilas with the gopis. Now the Caitanya-caritamrta had just come out and there was the Krsna Book and sections of the Bhagavatam that dealt with it. So they started these evening readings where all they would do is read very confidential things. This started in late ’75 and carried over in ’76 and was a very big sahajiya contamination.

They were thinking that the more we read the gopi bhava, the gopi lilas the more that will be on our mind and then at the time of death maybe it will be on our mind because we have absorbed so much of our life in hearing it, then we can attain to the position of gopis. So Prabhupada came to Los Angeles in early ’76 and he just completely devastated the entire sahajiya clique. But the weed in the heart wasn’t completely gone. I wrote a letter to the whole Society with all of Prabhupada’s arguments against the gopi bhava clique. If Gurupada needs that letter I can find it in my files.

**Baladeva:** That would be good. Is it on tape anywhere?

**Ramesvara:** It may be on tape. There were two room conversations with Prabhupada where he called these boys in and blasted them. In

addition to the room conversations there were private discussions between myself, Tamal Krsna, Jayatirtha, Prabhupada Krpa about it. So between the private discussions and Prabhupada calling these people in and discussing with them the defect, between those three discussions I compiled a paper and mailed it out to the entire Society. I don't know if the other tapes are available but I can make the paper available.

Anyway, the weed continued; and so by Gaura Purnima '76 and '77 when Prabhupada was laying down the law about gopi lilas, no confidential lilas for our Sanskrit men, they are not pure. So that was a big blow to their ego and they never accepted that instruction. They felt they would be advanced enough in their life-time to deal with these things and Prabhupada was holding them back. Due to this contamination, one by one these men began leaving.

They also wanted to overly teach Sanskrit in the Gurukulas and Prabhupada nipped that also. Prabhupada also told me that regarding the qualification for translating, Prabhupada said it is not good enough that you know Sanskrit by using a dictionary. He said the real qualification in terms of any translation is that you have to be able to speak the language conversationally.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana: Speaking Sanskrit?**

**Ramesvara:** Yes. Prabhupada said, not only speaking it, but conversationally." If there's another Sanskrit pandit, you should be able to conduct a complete conversation in Sanskrit and understand each other perfectly. This was apart from the exalted spiritual qualifications that are described in the Caitanya-caritamrta that a translator has to be God realized. What to speak of being God realized, he has to be able to speak conversationally the language. Then Prabhupada went on to explain to us that to learn Sanskrit grammar, gradually vocabulary, and finally be able to speak it conversationally will take 10 to 20 years of hard, intensive work.

So Prabhupada completely deflated these men and tried to keep them humble. But that little knowledge was making them very

proud and they fell away. Most of the original men who were trained by Prabhupada have all left our movement due to these contaminations. But Prabhupada was undaunted and he went on working with whichever men were pure enough, such as Gopi-paranadhana, and so on. And of course Prabhupada did, have great hopes for our children who are being trained to be pure devotees from the very beginning that those children who have the tendencies, they would actually be able to continue the Sanskrit translating.

## **Four books are all you need to know**

There were a number of times when Prabhupada said these four books are all you need to know: Srimad-Bhagavatam, Caitanya-caritamrta, Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu, and Bhagavad-gita. So one may ask why did Prabhupada have any plans for other translation work if these books, Prabhupada said, “Everything is in these books and these are the only four books you need to know in order to go back to Godhead.”

Prabhupada did say this on numerous occasions. He once told us that these are the only four books that he knew. I remember once in that famous car conversation in 1976 with myself and Tamal, another thing I asked Prabhupada was, “Prabhupada, the scholars are amazed with how quickly, expertly, and brilliantly you are translating and writing purports to the Vedic literatures. They wonder what is your background in Sanskrit to be able to do all this work. Prabhupada became angry at me and he wouldn’t answer, but he frowned at me. And I realized that the question was actually mundane and it was implying that

Prabhupada’s qualification or writing was a mundane qualification and it was a little bit offensive. He made it very clear by his frowning look and ignoring the question completely that it was an offensive assumption and an offensive question. So Prabhupada’s



writing was a completely spiritual phenomena. He had said in that conversation also that “These four books are all you need to know and I have given everything for the next ten thousand years. These books that I have given will be the law books for human society.”

But when I was with Prabhupada in 1977 he gave me a list of books he was going to translate after he finished the Bhagavatam. So Prabhupada himself has plans. Previous to that list Prabhupada had told us he would write the Mahabharata. Previous to that, Prabhupada once said he was going to write the Vedanta sutra, and English translation and commentary. So we know definitely of those books that Prabhupada specifically intended to give to the world. In addition to that, Prabhupada and I discussed when we were in Bhubanesvar, about various Vedic...

## **This is bogus science. It will result in disaster**

Let me take a back step for a minute. When I was preparing to spend about 30 days with Prabhupada, I considered this to be one of the great opportunities of my lifetime and all the different questions that I had, I tried to think out very systematically further questions about book distribution and how the world was actually going to be changed as a result of book distribution.

And then questions about WW III and how that fit in or what connection did that have with the successful spreading of Krsna consciousness. And then ultimately what would be the aftermath of such an event? Book distribution, World War, and the final rising of a Krsna conscious government, a one world government and what would that society be like? I went to be with Prabhupada with the intention of asking these questions. So in Bhubaneswar, as Prabhupada was describing the rising of this one world government which would make the entire world Krsna conscious, we started talking about what that society would be like. What about the

modern sciences? And Prabhupada blasted modern sciences. He said, "They are not science."

I gave an example that we would need modern scientific technology in order to grow food. Today in order to feed the world modern science has practically created a green revolution, a miracle, using the most amazing chemical fertilizers and irrigation techniques. Desert areas are becoming some of the most fertile areas of the world. So I was making like a devil's advocate argument about the advances and the value of modern science. Prabhupada smashed it. He said, "We reject it completely. This is bogus science. It will result in disaster. The real science for growing food is that you must perform sacrifices to God. And only God can cause rains. Scientists cannot cause water, they can't create water, they can't cause it to fall. That is the arrangement of God and you have pay, so to speak, for it, by performance of sacrifices. That is the real science. This is the bogus science."

So then I said, "Well Prabhupada, what about the practical scientific technology, such as in the transportation industry airplanes, cars, in the communications industry. Don't we want to maintain these scientific advancements for a Krsna conscious society in the future?" And Prabhupada said, "Well, regarding these conveyances, that was already there in Vedic culture. They had their airplanes. That science was there." I said, "Do you mean flower airplanes or airplanes moving by mantras?" He said, "Oh yes." I said, "But Prabhupada, those sciences are lost." He said, "They are not lost. They are still there."

I was astonished. "Prabhupada, do you mean that the future of the Krsna conscious movement involves reviving those lost sciences?" He said, "Oh yes. That will be part of the Krsna conscious society in the future." Then my mind started going wild and Prabhupada saw I was getting a little off track because I just started thinking of these dazzling things, mantras, mystic power, flower airplanes, mantra weapons.

All kinds of things were going through my mind. I started asking Prabhupada about different things and finally he stopped me and said, “Look, it’s not that we’re going to revive these things because they have innate spiritual value. We will use whatever is available and whatever is beneficial, whatever is necessary for the Krsna conscious society. That is the principle. Whatever will help us in our service to Krsna we will use and whatever is irrelevant to our service to Krsna, even though it may be very interesting, we won’t use it.”

## The Matsya Project

So from this conversation I had the idea that the translation work in the future had a very important role and I began thinking of a project to gather up all the different Vedic literatures and the corollary literatures and the literatures dealing with Vedic architecture, Vedic sciences. We were going to have an entire civilization. We have to prepare for it. We have to have the literatures on astrology, on architecture, on everything.

So that conversation was the seed of the Matsya project which is going on now. Now in 1976 there was a similar conversation between Prabhupada and Rabindra Svarupa where Prabhupada instructed him that in order for the prestige of our society to increase, we have to build a library, the world’s most complete Vedic library. So the combination of that instruction to Rabindra Svarup and this idea Prabhupada had given to me about the future Krsna conscious society reviving all these Vedic sciences, formed the basis of this Matsya project which the BBT is undertaking to actually build the world’s most comprehensive library of Vedic Vaisnava literature. Rabindra Svarup can give you much more information about that. I considered it to be a very important, part of Prabhupada’s plan for the future development of a varnasrama kingdom of earth.

The world earth was to become a, varnasrama society and the build-

ing of this library was one of the important steps towards bringing this about. Harikesa Maharaja can also give you information about this, the role of a Vedic library and academy. You could call it a varnasrama college. The role of such an intellectual institution in actually establishing a varnasrama culture on earth. He got a lot of personal instructions from Prabhupada which are found in his book, Varnasrama Manifesto.

So anyway these are some of Prabhupad's instructions regarding the Sanskrit men. He encouraged it, he wanted men to become expert in Sanskrit. And of course at the end he authorized one of his Sanskrit men to continue the translation of the Bhagavatam. But he was also giving safeguards, guidelines and so on. He was not just letting them go wild. He was giving very specific guidelines how it was to be undergone, step by step by step.

## **Cultural presentation, cultural preaching, cultural conquest**

We're now on the 17th. Prabhupada had finally left the Kumbhamela and he was so sick it was such a great relief to all of us that Prabhupada agreed to leave for the sake of his health and for the sake of his book writing. We spent about two and a half days in Calcutta and I had to arrange the tickets to go from Calcutta to Bhubaneswar.

So now on the 17th Prabhupada launched into his major theme which he was preaching to me. Just as over the years Prabhupada had preached to me so vigorously about the book distribution, now in this time that I spent with him, almost every day I would say Prabhupada was preaching about another theme, and the theme was cultural conquest. That phrase is Prabhupada's phrase. Cultural presentation, cultural preaching, cultural conquest. The cultural presentation of Krsna consciousness will make America adopt

Krsna consciousness. He said this is the most important way to actually get the American people to accept Krsna consciousness.

And every day literally he was talking about this, pounding it into my head. He was using all of these examples about Indian culture and American money, this will save the world. This will solve all the world's problems, this will establish Krsna consciousness. By cultural conquest Prabhupada meant the presentation of our art, our theater, drama, music, cuisine, dioramas, architecture, philosophy, literature. All of the things that comprise culture. Museums, exhibitions, festivals. He wanted these things organized everywhere in the West. He said "You must conquer by cultural conquest." That is his phrase. This was a message that he was literally pounding into my head for 30 days. On the 17th he was speaking quite a lot about that.

## **Sometimes I lament that I have to speak such harsh words — Prabhupada**

Also I have paraphrased in my diary a personal statement, kind of a private statement Prabhupada made about his family. Prabhupada began talking about his family members more and more. On the 17th he said something to the effect that, "Sometimes I lament how I treated my wife. I was very unkind to her. She was very tolerant. I must give her credit." Now we already knew the story that Prabhupada's wife would never go along with him, never follow him and so on, so we were quite startled that Prabhupada was thinking like this, just out of his kindness.

Then he once said, "Sometimes I feel very sorry. I have a hotty temper. What can be done?" Then he said, "The people are such rascals. Sometimes I lament that I have to speak such harsh words." He told me, "Sita is Laksmi. So Laksmidevi is under the protection of Ravana in America. And Rama who is Narayana, He is in India. So we must get Laksmi and bring her back to Narayana." We must

bring the American money back to India. “Just like Rama and Hanuman and their army had to cross the ocean. So I have done. Rama trained the forest monkeys how to fight. Just see the lesson.”

## **Sri Isopanisad is the most important book**

Then on the 18th Prabhupada made an astonishing statement.” Sri Isopanisad is the most important book, the best book for God consciousness.” Then again we were talking about the arguments of the deprogramming on the 18th and how they claim that we are escaping. So Prabhupada said, “The difference between escaping and saving must be understood. Escaping is for cowards and saving is for heroes.

The material world is samsara davanala, like a burning forest fire. So they must be saved. Chanting even once means freedom from all past sinful reactions. You are concerned with the fibers of the coconut, not the pulp. Government has many departments in addition to prison.” These were Prabhupada’s analogies. Material world is the prison but the government has many departments.

“This year book distribution must increase more than double. We are building Mayapur mandir so we need so much money. So Krsna must increase our book sales more and more.” Then Prabhupada said, “Krsna became famous by killing demons. He has two businesses.

## **Surrender to Krsna or else we will drop this atom bomb**

After we have secured America we will use everything in Krsna’s service, even atom bombs. Surrender to Krsna or else we will drop

this atom bomb.” That’s an exact quote from Prabhupada. These are highlights, I would say, of major conversations we were having about the war. We had a very extensive conversation about the war on that train ride to Allahabad to Kumbhamela. Prabhupada told me the war was inevitable, there is no way it can be stopped.

I said, “Prabhupada, I thought you once said that if we keep distributing books then maybe the war can be stopped.” He said, “No. That will increase it. That will make it come faster. We want that. That is preparing the world for the fight against atheism, my books. They are preparing the world. This war is inevitable. If they are reluctant to fight we will force them to.” So he was speaking like this.

Let me digress a moment and go to this morning walk. Prabhupada took us to a beautiful botanical garden type of park in Calcutta. He told us that he used to walk there with his father when he was a child and many respectable gentlemen were walking in the park early in the morning and some of them knew Prabhupada. They would nod their head in respect to him and fold their hands. Prabhupada was walking with myself, Prabhupada Kṛpa and a few other men. We were just talking about Prabhupada’s childhood. Prabhupada was enjoying the atmosphere. It was a very wonderful intimate setting. So when we got back in the car

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** What kind of things was he telling?

**Ramesvara:** I just can’t remember. It’s unfortunate. So when we got back in the car, there was a question that I had been meaning to ask Prabhupada about the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa. So we were sitting in the back together and Prabhupada was relaxing after the morning walk. I said, “Prabhupada in the 6th Canto in the story of Ajamila there is the description of the Yamadutas being checked by the Visnudutas because Ajamila in namabhasa, he chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa and that one chanting just wiped away all his sinful reactions.

Then they went on preaching that just one chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra without offense can actually remove sinful reactions

accumulated over millions of lifetimes. Even if you chant the holy name unconsciously or in joking it has that effect. Prabhupada was saying, “Hm.” So I said, “Prabhupada, is this really true? Is it really that powerful?” So Prabhupada was smiling, he closed his eyes. He was in ecstasy actually. He closed his eyes and leaned his head back against the seat of the car. His head was all the way tilted back and he was smiling.

He said, “Yes. Just see how Lord Caitanya has made it so cheap.” We were actually astonished that Prabhupada confirmed so authoritatively that yes, the power of the holy name is so great. You should have no doubt. That was this quote that I read also similar to that, that chanting even once means freedom from all past sinful reactions.

## **Prabhupada meets the drug dealing devotees**

So now back at the temple, two devotees had come from Laguna Beach to meet Srila Prabhupada. One was Rsabhadeva and one was Drdhavrata. So when I saw they were out there, Prabhupada wanted to meet them. So I said, “Prabhupada, before you meet them, I have to inform you that it is a fact beyond the shadow of a doubt that these men are engaged in the illegal trafficking of drugs. We have already thrown them out of our movement so that they don’t have anything to do with us. So now they are coming to see you and what they do is come and have a conversation with you and misrepresent it, misquote you, and they tell everybody that you have fully authorized their drug dealing.

This is what these men have been doing I gave Prabhupada kind of a background of where these guys were at. So Prabhupada said to let them in. They came in and they presented to Prabhupada that with all this money they had made from drug dealing—of course they didn’t say it like that. They just said “We have all this money



and we want to start a legal business, a food distributing business.” They laid out the whole plan. They had signed a contract with Universal Studios to get the trade name of Bionic Bits which was based on some kind of a TV series they were having called the Bionic Man, Bionic Woman and so on. They wanted to start a mass cookie, snack company for distributing snacks all over America and they wanted Prabhupada’s blessings and they wanted instructions from Prabhupada how this food could be offered, how it could be prasadam, and the world will be benefited by massive prasadam distribution.

So Prabhupada said, “We want some money for prasadam distribution in different centers.” This was in reference to what do we do with the profits? They were boasting we’re going to have millions of dollars of profits very soon. Prabhupada said, “We want some money for prasadam distribution in different centers. So we want prasadam distribution to increase so we require so much money to help. How you will help? You can discuss with Ramesvara.” They wanted the practical details, they just work with me. Set up a bank account and put their profits in it and then we’ll see what happens.

## **Yeast is not offerable**

Then there was a question about what foods were offerable and Prabhupada said, “Yeast is not offerable.” Very interesting. Then in Laguna Beach there was a conversation about a private house and private ownership. This was in relation to the legal problems we were having with the city. The city of Laguna Beach considered our temple in a residential neighborhood not zoned for public gatherings so they had shut down our Sunday feast. So Prabhupada said, “Just put it in private house, private ownership and keep it as long as possible. Legally donations can be taken. Unless there is a better substitute, do not sell it.” Prabhupada had been talking about this idea that just invite your friends.

We just say it's a private residence and I'm just having a party with my friends every Sunday. Then again about their donations, they kept telling Prabhupada, "We're going to have so much money. Where do you want the money?" So he said, "Donations can be deposited in the Mayapur-Vrindavana Fund." Then after they left, Prabhupada and I continued discussing it. I said, "Prabhupada, these men are continuing their drug trafficking and they are going to get us in trouble one day. They are telling everybody that they are part of their movement. We've got to separate ourselves. We've already kicked them out of the temple but we have to separate ourselves further."

## **I've never seen Prabhupada so sad**

Then I proposed, "Prabhupada; we should go to the police and we should tell the police we suspect these men of illegal drug trafficking. They are not part of our movement and if there is any way we can help you, we will." Because I predicted otherwise there is going to be a big explosion in Laguna Beach one of these days. It's just a matter of time. These guys are so stupid, it's just a matter of time before they get caught. Prabhupada was so depressed. He was so disappointed that his disciples were doing such sinful activities.

He lowered his head and there was such sadness in his eyes. I've never seen Prabhupada so sad. Then he said in a very low voice that "Devotees should not turn any of them into the police." Such a sad voice, almost like embarrassing. He said, "After all, they are our men." That was a very important instruction. Because if we ever had a good reason to turn somebody in to the police it was them. But Prabhupada didn't let us.

## **He couldn't put his own son in jail, even if the son was a bum**

The same thing happened in 1973. The period of '73, '74 Gaurasundar decided to leave ISKCON and he felt, "Well, I built up Hawaii. It's all mine. I can take whatever I want." He took money from the bank, he had \$50,000, he took the vehicles and he sold the temple and he distributed the money to two or three people that had given donations and kept the refit. It was grand larceny, grand embezzlement. I mean it was grand theft.

Gaurasundar had been so dear to Prabhupada, so this was such a shock that somebody could just sell one of our temples and literally stop our entire movement. But even in that incident, the devotees were pursuing Gaurasundar with the police to get the money back and Prabhupada wrote very strong letters stopping them. Prabhupada stopped them from going after Gaurasundar legally. This is the way Prabhupada dealt with these incidents. He couldn't put his own son in jail, even if the son was a bum. Even if he was stealing from the father. Even if he was breaking the laws of God, Prabhupada just couldn't bring himself to putting his own sons in jail. Although this Gaurasundar thing was never forgotten by Prabhupada and every single year Prabhupada was meditating on how to prevent this from ever happening again.

This is something that constantly comes up in Prabhupada's talks with the GBC. First there was this idea about loyalty oaths, then there was an idea about affidavits, then fixing affidavits to the deed of the properties. Finally it culminated in Prabhupada's last will where it became an order to the entire Society to protect the properties by putting GBC men on as directors of the properties, and three of them.

## **Prabhupada was always in anxiety about selling of the properties**

Prabhupada was always in anxiety about selling of the properties. That will come up in the meeting with the GBC in June of '77. So then Prabhupada went on talking with me after he said we can't turn them in. He said the profits from PDI can be used for future prasadam distribution in India and Hyderabad especially. You should make a very nice arrangement in every center for prasadam distribution in India. In this way we can conquer India.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Prasadam distribution.

## **No one should be hungry within 10 miles of the temple**

**Ramesvara:** Yes. Prabhupada gave extensive instructions prasadam distribution. He wrote that letter based on the bad experience at the Kumbhamela. That's a very heavy letter. But with India Prabhupada saying something like within a region of five or ten miles of every temple, you just make a whole circle, and there should not be one person in that circle that is not being fed by our temples. Prabhupada said if you do this you will conquer India.

Prabhupada said, "Tell Hyderabad do not decrease. Just increase. I will pay for it." In terms of their distribution of prasadam. "Everywhere for a ten mile radius at every temple." Now he included temples in the West also. "Everywhere for a ten mile radius we should feed all of the people. That is the jurisdiction of the Deity of the temple." Just like countries have their five-mile limit or ten-mile limit off their shores. So Prabhupada had for his temple a ten mile radius and everyone in that radius is under the jurisdiction of that Deity for getting prasadam.

## **You cannot maintain slaughterhouses or sell drugs in the name of Krsna**

Another quote on that day, Prabhupada said, “You cannot maintain slaughterhouses in the name of Krsna.” We were talking about this argument that these guys always use that you can sell drugs for Krsna if you give Him the money. So Prabhupada’s answer to that is that “You cannot maintain slaughterhouses in the name of Krsna.” He didn’t accept that. Prabhupada never accepted that you could do that for Krsna. Then there was some banking business we had to take care of that day in Calcutta with Prabhupada’s accounts.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** He went personally?

**Ramesvara:** No. He was sending me, writing letters to the bank managers.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Was there any more, like that morning walk in the park, was there any more interactions with his friends or respectable men?

**Ramesvara:** No. Now I have to make a major correction in the chronology. Previously I said that the night conversation I had with Prabhupada when I woke up suddenly, that that was on the way to Allahabad. Now it appears from my diary that was on the way to Bhubaneswar, it was on the night ride to Bhubaneswar. So now going back to that Allahabad train ride from Bombay, when I gave that schedule of Prabhupada being massaged to 11, taking rest til 1:30 and then waking up and chanting and reading and taking rest again for about half an hour and then up again by four.

That was the schedule Prabhupada followed on the train that night. So that schedule that I gave, that was his schedule for that train ride. I do remember one thing in particular about that train ride which I didn’t tell before, which was an impression that I had which I always tell the devotees.

## **Prabhupada would travel all over the world with just these two bags**

Prabhupada was traveling with just two bags. His servant, Prabhupadakpra, would just travel with two bags. One little bag would contain all of Prabhupada's cloth. Only two or three sets was all he ever traveled with. And the other bag, the only thing in the other bag was Prabhupada's silver plate, silver bowl, silver spoon, his prasadam tiffin and his tilak and mirror. Prabhupada would travel all over the world with just these two bags.

He didn't need anything else practically speaking in each major temple where Prabhupada had rooms he kept an almira and sometimes he would keep some cloth there, but in general this was all that Prabhupada possessed. And it dawned on me when I was going on that train with him to Allahabad that this was all Prabhupada had. He is the spiritual master of the world and an international multi-million dollar very rich movement, and this is all he has. I was just marveling at how simple Prabhupada was. So when it came time for this very renounced simple personality to eat, Prabhupada Kṛpa would bring out these beautiful silver plates and eating utensils, open up the tiffin, and lay out for Prabhupada right on the train a huge ten course feast.

As I was watching this I was just amazed that how even though Prabhupada is so simple and renounced, he has put everything in the name of ISKCON. His daksina, his books, his copyrights, the buildings, every single thing is in the name of ISKCON. Prabhupada hasn't kept anything for him. He is renounced, but look at this. Here we are in the middle of a train ride and he is feasting like a king. I was thinking he is eating better than any person in the world at this moment and here we are in the middle of a dusty train ride. It was amazing the way Kṛṣṇa was taking care of Prabhupada.

Prabhupada finished about half the prasadam and then he made me and Prabhupada Kṛpa eat the prasadam right off his plate and

he would sit there and watch us eat it. We felt so insignificant and offensive to be eating in front of Prabhupada. We were just sitting on the bed right opposite Prabhupada and he was watching us eat his remnants and he was very silent and just watching us. We were afraid to look at him. We were just looking down and secretly relishing and holding in our smiles that we were getting all this maha-maha prasadam.

So that train ride where I said that famous conversation about Japan and the war, that actually took place between the 18th and 19th evenings and here it is in my diary. Here are some of the notes in my diary, the highlights of this conversation when Prabhupada just caused me to wake at 12:30 and he was already up just waiting for me.” America and India. This is the combination of Laksmi and Sarasvati. They are two sisters. This can save the whole world. America can become leader of the whole world if she takes Indian culture.”

“Durga has ten heads controlling the ten directions and Durga has two daughters, Laksmi and Sarasvati, and two sons; Ganesh, who is a public leader, and Karttikeya who is a fighter. Siva is the father, Durga is the mother. The asura, the atheist is controlled by Durga and he is attacked by the lion which is the representative of rajo guna.”

## **War between Russia and America is inevitable**

“Even if America takes to Krsna consciousness that war between Russia and America is inevitable. That is good. It will stop this Godlessness, this Communism. War in our lifetime? Very difficult to say. That depends on your bookselling and BTG. They can become Krsna conscious. That literature is the greatest weapon.”

In other words Prabhupada was saying that the more successful

we are in getting our literatures to the people the more they will actually become Krsna conscious and then the more they will fight against Godlessness. So war is inevitable because Godlessness has to be stopped. And the greatest weapon for brining about this war is book distribution.

“In Russia they are controlling everyone. Only Lenin literature. And when our books were introduced, immediately they were sold, and they (the Russians) are a little afraid. But they respect Indian culture. They know if they are to become great they must take some part of Indian culture. By increasing selling of books, America and thereafter the whole world will become Krsna conscious and historians will note this period how America became Krsna conscious.

Then he talked a little more about Laguna Beach. “Regarding Laguna Beach, that private house. We can have our practice. We can tell them that we cannot eat anything not offered to God and therefore we can justify the home altar. It is not a church, it is private ownership. Can you stop us from inviting my friends for dinner?”

“Private title. If there is some important business of ISKCON and we cannot do it then we have to lure someone, such as an accountant. So this is okay. You have to manage in such a way that there is no profit. Everything is meant for development.”

Then continuing this midnight conversation.

“So you have to push on more and more. This opposition, brain-washing charges means they are recognizing us as a culture. Like it or not, but they recognize it as something permanent. And Indira Gandhi and the Indian government? They appreciate very much this movement. But because Americans are there they are a little afraid. But they see we are getting support for Indian culture. India’s government likes Hindu culture so they had to stop cow killing and they will adopt more of our principles as time goes on.”

“They think America is taking advantage of this movement to



infiltrate India, CIA. Gradually they will realize we are not political. You send a report to Indira and all the home members about book sales statistics and opinions.”

That means reviews of scholars.

“There is no politics, except that Indian culture and American money can save whole world.” That’s our political position.

Then Prabhupada told: “You must think in terms of the whole world. Not just one nation. That is our preaching. This is the duty of the GBC.”

“Letter to Indira Gandhi. South America and even South Africa where they hate Indians are ordering these books.”

He said, “Bali Mardan must organize the BBT library work in Australia and Hridayananda in Latin America and Gurukupa in Japan.”

## **Japan is almost like Indian Culture**

Then he started talking about Japan.” Japan belongs to Oriental culture. It is almost like Indian culture. In Buddhist temples they worship like Indian temples, reading, kirtan, aratis, they leave shoes outside their house, etc. Just like the Indian system.” He was appreciating Japanese culture like that.

“Their impression of us is as beggars trained to take money. So first thing is to educate them by distributing books. Later on doll exhibit, big temple, etc.” These are his instructions for Japan. Their impression of us, because of the Gurukrpa sankirtan party, is of beggars trained to take money. So first thing is to educate them by distributing books, then big doll exhibit and then big temple. So these were the highlights of this conversation.

All I can say in terms of my impression of this is I felt it was some very very special personal instruction. It was so intimate that

Prabhupada had awakened me at such an hour of the morning just because he wanted to talk to me about these things. I felt very devoted to Prabhupada at that time. I felt he is giving me, like a son, very very personal instructions about the war and the importance of book distribution. He is confiding some of his inner thoughts to me. It was such an intimate relationship. I was feeling like that. What he wouldn't confide earlier he was confiding now. I took it as something very very special in my life.

So on the 19th we were arriving in Bhubaneswar. Prabhupada was talking about Mayapur how we have to fix domes on top of the new building. I don't think we've ever done that, did we? He said fix domes on top of the new building. He said he wants all the BBT managers from around the world to send the 1976 sales reports as soon as possible. This was '77 and Prabhupada wanted to see the full sales reports from all the BBT's so he could start taking that 10% for the international projects. In Bengal he was talking about printing 45,000 Gitargans and 45,000 Bengali BTGs. Bengali, Hindi, Gujarati, India, English, Hyderabad, the Hare Krsna explosion.

Then he had me list off all the different languages. Orissan, Telagu, Tamil, Kanada, Japanese, German, Chinese, Swedish, Russian Polish, Italian, French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch. Prabhupada had me list off all the languages. He wanted to hear all the different languages his books are in. Then we began discussing the Calcutta book fair. This was a discussion which was precipitated by running into Gargamuni.

## **The scientists, Darwin, Freud, all are in darkness**

Let me go through the diary. It may come up later. Otherwise I'll go back to it. On the 20th I have, "All the world is in darkness, the scientists, Darwin, Freud, all are in darkness. This is the only institute that is giving some light. You must be convinced of this

in order to preach effectively.” Now at this point these kinds of statements were being made during his massage. In Bhubaneswar we just lived in a hut. To use the bathroom just meant going out in the field with a lota. We were just getting started in Orissa. Prabhupada had gone there for his health, Gargamuni had gone for his health also.

Gargamuni had driven up in a big van and the van was converted into a traveling grocery store and kitchen. In one part was a stove and all the rest of the van was just shelves with spices and different stock of food. And Gargamuni’s traveling assistant was this Shantilal, the cook. So when Prabhupada saw Gargamuni and saw this set up he was just laughing. Prabhupada said, “But I thought you were sick.” And Gargamuni said, “Yes, but still I have to eat.” Gargamuni was talking to Prabhupada, “But you are eating very simply? You are not eating spices?”

And Prabhupada made some comment to the effect that “I also have to have the spices, otherwise there is no taste. And without that taste what is the use of life?” Something to that effect, and they were kind of jokingly talking about eating tasty prasadam, but being sick. ”But we’re not going to stop eating tasty prasadam. We’d rather die Prabhupada was joking with Gargamuni like that. Anyway we were having these intimate conversations. Every day now Prabhupada was looking forward to talking about the material world and what is going to happen to the Krsna consciousness movement. It became a thing that Prabhupada was looking forward to every day and the time that was set up for this was the morning massage, outside.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** About 11 o’clock?

**Ramesvara:** Yes. So Prabhupada Krpa would do the massage and I would sit there with my pad and we would ask all of our questions and have these conversations. Then Prabhupada made this comment, “The whole world is in darkness. All these scientists are in darkness and you have to be convinced that our movement is the only movement giving any light in order to preach effectively.

Our men are being falsely accused in the court trials in America, just like Sita was blasphemed and Rama put her in fire and she came out untouched.”

“Small temple to be developed gradually, as Bhubaneswar develops along the lines of Mayapur. Large temple, Bombay scale, for Puri.”

“One of the symptoms of punishing this Godless civilization, there will be no rainfall, there will be scarcity of food and government will tax excessively.” He kept repeating that.

“Four to five days after Gaura Purnima, Prabhupada would lay the corner stone of the Haridaspur Mandir, which is one mile from Haridas Thakur’s birthplace, his bhajan kutir, and start a headquarters in West Bengal there, two hours drive from Mayapur.”

Oh, I know one of the things that happened during that Calcutta visit. We drove up to Panihati. Isn’t that on the tapes? Isn’t there a Panihati thing on this tape? I went with Prabhupada to Panihati. We went to see Raghava Pandit’s house, Avirama was there and some man was donating a temple to us. That’s when we had to go to offer obeisances at the Durga temple. I didn’t know what to do when you go into a demigod temple, but we just follow Prabhupada and he paid prostrated dandavats in front of the Durga deity so we all did the same thing and we spent the day in Panihati He wanted to get that temple, he wanted to buy it.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** It was a Durga temple that was being donated?

**Ramesvara:** No. That was the village temple, the main temple in the village of Panihati. There was another piece of land right next to Raghava Pandit’s house, a great piece of land, and they were donating it on the condition that we build a temple. Prabhupada wanted to snatch it up.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** How far away is that?

**Ramesvara:** Just about an hour or two out of Calcutta.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** So we have that land?

## **Kindly see the value of the Hare Krsna movement**

**Ramesvara:** I don't know what happened. If you want the description of the Panihati visit, just talk to Avirama in Miami. He will give you the whole story of Prabhupada going to Panihati. It's interesting every time Prabhupada would keep getting invitations to get donations of land. He would go to all these different places and people would always be donating land to him because they knew that Prabhupada could build something. Prabhupada was getting this reputation that he could do something.

Then on the 21st Prabhupada was talking about a new BBT review book. A new book with all of the reviews of the scholars updated to include all the reviews Gargamuni was now getting from India from his library party. Gargamuni had gotten so many reviews from scholars that were never printed in Krsna Consciousness Movement is Authorized. So Prabhupada wanted a new book and a new mass mailing. Then he said the cover letter should say "There is much agitation about the Hare Krsna movement. Kindly read this pamphlet to see the value of the Hare Krsna movement." There should be a mass mailing, media editors, life members, home ministers, etc., Indira Gandhi.

This appears to be a mass mailing that he wanted all over India and we told Gopal Krsna to do it and I think Gopal did it. Then also on the 21st Prabhupada said, "Brainwashing? Brainwashing is needed. Every civilized man washes cloth to become more refreshed. So why are you protesting? It is brainwashing for this goal, for the good. It is brainwashing for the good. Just see the result. After our brainwashing he becomes a gentleman, so nice, clean, no bad habits. Your culture is not civilized. Drunkard. Thou shalt not kill, but you.

are killing.” Then he said, “In a Krsna conscious government there will be a censorship board for all the media.”

## **We will discourage city living. Everyone will go to the farms**

This day, the 21st, appears to be the day that we were really asking Prabhupada questions about what it’s going to be like in a Krsna conscious government, in a Krsna conscious society after the war. We asked him what are we going to do about the media? He said there would be a censorship board. Then he said, “We will discourage city living. Everyone will go to the farms. No artificial engagements, ugrakarma. No big machinery. All discouraged. Just a little technology. We will come into government power when the masses of people have been transformed.

## **The Hare Krsna mantra is creating an auspicious atmosphere all over the world**

By sankirtan the Hare Krsna mantra is creating an auspicious atmosphere all over the world which is creating a more religious sentiment directly and indirectly world wide. We don’t care for any credit. Just that their misconception is cleared. Our credit is how we are serving Krsna.” So this was a very significant conversation and you will find that in that newsletter. We were talking with Prabhupada about all the far out things that were taking place in the world and I listed some of those things in that newsletter. Then we said, “Are any of these things related to our sankirtan?” And Prabhupada said, “Oh yes. It’s all happening because the chanting of the Hare Krsna mantra and the book distribution is changing the entire atmosphere of the earth subtly.

So either directly or indirectly, our movement is causing these things to take place.” That is how he explained what is the effect in the atmosphere due to the sankirtan movement. It was almost a mystical explanation of sankirtan. Prabhupada explained things like that before, how there is so much lying and cheating in the way people speak to each other and that impure sound vibration is carried by the ether. Therefore the ether becomes contaminated and this is the reason why disease is increasing all over the world. So now he was saying we are vibrating the Hare Krsna mantra, the glories of Krsna, we are distributing books. That vibration is being carried by the ether and that is creating auspiciousness all over the world.

## **As the people become jobless they will join our farms**

Then we asked if there are going to be any big cities. He said, “Oh yes. Just like in Krsna’s time there were big cities, but not these hellish cities with slaughterhouses, brothel houses, and sense gratification. That will be stopped.” Then he said, “As the people become more and more jobless, they will join our farms.” I remember in 1975 Prabhupada told me when were flying to New York, “Unemployment will destroy your country.”

## **There will be a one world government established**

Now here on the 21st is when Prabhupada talked about the one world government. This tape is very astonishing to listen to. He said there will be a one world government established and we will force the US. to fight Russia. In this government there will be a

Parliament, a Congress, and elections will continue, but the candidates must have brahminical qualifications. World food problem: “Science all rascal. Real science is by chanting Hare Krsna. Rains will fall and there will be food for all. No artificial nationalism and national boundaries.”

I went through that explanation earlier about the scientists. I was asking Prabhupada what about science for food production and he said, “That is no science. This is the science.”

## **Chanting and prasadam distribution, that will be the vital force**

Again talking about one world government he said, “There will be no artificial nationalism and national boundaries.” Then he said, “Chanting and prasadam distribution, that will be the vital force.” Then I wrote down another comment. I don’t know in what reference this came up, whether it was just sankirtan or something in general. But Prabhupada said, “Woman can conquer any rascal.”

## **BTG must very strongly protest against the scientific nonsense**

Then Prabhupada said, “BTG must very strongly protest against the scientific nonsense. They must be exposed.”

Then again talking about that Krsna conscious society, “Coin and real gold should be introduced gradually to do away with paper standard and artificial inflation. Vedic culture means bartering system.”



## Banking will collapse

Then he said, “Banking will collapse.” So here you have Prabhupada predicting complete economic collapse of the society and World War III and a one world government. This is Prabhupada the visionary, this is Prabhupada the prophet, this is Prabhupada the mystical seer. This aspect of Prabhupada came out very much in this period. It’s part of his personality which Prabhupada didn’t like to reveal too much about, but going back to that morning walk in 1975 when he predicted, he prophesied the war and the symptoms of war, when you would see it coming between Russia and America through India and Pakistan. So there is this aspect to Prabhupada’s personality which the people should know about. He was a prophet, a mystical seer. He could look into the future and tell you things that were going to happen.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** In regard to that India-Pakistan, did he ever talk to you about Haridaspur, the importance of that center?

**Ramesvara:** No.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** There is something to that.

**Ramesvara:** There is something to it. He mentioned that he was going there to lay the groundstone, the cornerstone.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Yes. But it’s a whole thing on his plan for uniting India and Pakistan.

## If you just distribute massive prasadam in India you will conquer India

We haven’t done it... **Ramesvara:** Oh yes. Because of Bangladesh. Right. I remember that. I don’t remember the details other than what you just said. But yes, that was part of his plan. Prabhupada had a lot of plans. This is the point. The whole plan was with

Prabhupada and bit by bit he was revealing it. Because what is the use of revealing the whole thing? He told us for example if you just have cultural preaching in America you will make America Krsna conscious. We haven't done it. If you just distribute massive prasadam in India you will conquer India. We haven't done it.

So Prabhupada wasn't about to reveal every single plan because even the parts that he was revealing we weren't able to do yet. So I take it like that. The whole plan was already there. Prabhupada knew exactly how to unite the whole world and make a one world government. He knew how to do it all the way down to the final step. But we couldn't even get step one off the ground. I shouldn't say step one, but the later steps that he was giving us we still haven't done.

## **He was a spiritual genius and he was capable of doing everything all at once**

When Prabhupada announced that we should have a chain of prasadam restaurants all over the world, it's taking us years to just get that together. So Prabhupada was launching so many schemes which were all integral aspects of the central plan that he had. That is my understanding of Prabhupada. That is how I remember Prabhupada. I remember Prabhupada as a personality who had a master plan and was masterminding the entire world becoming Krsna conscious through writing and publishing, through financial management, through real estate acquisition, building schools, farm communities, organizing cultural presentations, art, theater, all of these things, dioramas, all at the same time simultaneously.

Prabhupada was organizing things in a mass organizing fund raising, building huge, gorgeous architectural Vedic temples. One after another. Prabhupada was doing all of these things simultaneously because they all fit into his master plan and he was masterminding the whole thing. He was a spiritual genius and he was capable of

doing everything all at once. And just as we take up more and more of his plan then he will be ready to reveal the next part. Working with television, with media. He gave so many instructions about that. We haven't taken that up yet either. If you read through these tapes you will see there is a number of instructions about the media. So also on the 21st Prabhupada started talking about some local Indian government affairs, politics.

## **How did Krsna die?**

Now on the 22nd, another conversation about the deprogrammers and how they challenge us, all of our critics. "How did Krsna die?" This is one of the challenges. Because I kept telling Prabhupada about this Christian who had done all this research on our movement and our theology and was using all of these arguments. Krsna was dancing with women, Krsna died. How can He be God? So now Prabhupada was saying, "How did Krsna die? We living entities are part and parcel of Krsna. We never die. So if we are eternal, how Krsna cannot be eternal?"

If my finger is eternal then my body must be eternal. So it is His lila just to cheat you because you: are atheist, you are such a rascal. You insist on being in darkness. So Krsna fulfills your desire to keep you in darkness lifetime after lifetime ever lastingly. What is your qualification for understanding God?" These are arguments Prabhupada wanted us to use. "The sun is never out of the sky. It is just a matter of imperfect limited vision."

## **Unless one is dishonest, he cannot be a government official**

Prabhupada said later on, "Unless one is dishonest, he cannot be a government official." At the end of this conversation we started

turning back to our favorite topic—Prabhupada’s mission and his plans. And Prabhupada revealed, “I came to America to capture your government.” This is an exact quote.

## **Now it is in your hands...**

Now also on the 22nd Prabhupada said, “The business of the acarya is to prevent the parampara, the sampradaya from falling down. Now it is in your hands. You are resourceful, intelligent. Now spread this Krsna philosophy and challenge this Mayavada philosophy.

## **The historians will note this period how the world was changed**

A new historical renaissance. The historians will note this period how the world was changed. We, the modern civilization, are making progress towards animal civilization. If we don’t reorganize human society according to classes, varnasrama, they will remain animal society. This is systematic society but there is another way apart from varnasrama. That is transcendental society. Simply by becoming devotees, everything can be adjusted.” Very significant statement.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** So that’s what his plan was.

**Ramesvara:** Then I have another quote from the 22nd. “Illusion means it is temporary.”

“With prasadam, patience, and enthusiasm, push this movement and raise this fallen society.” Then Srila Prabhupada approves festival devotees going on an excursion on the river and preaching and selling books and distributing prasadam and having kirtan.

## **In India the proper preaching has not been done yet**

Between the Mayapur-Vrindavana festival they have these pandals. So there was this idea, why not go out on the boat on the Ganges and have that kind of thing. So Prabhupada said, "It will be a nice excursion. A type of pleasure for the devotees." The organizers of our Mayapur festival should know that he approved that. Then on the 23rd I have Prabhupada saying in my diary, "In India the proper preaching has not been done yet. Otherwise why they are not joining? Overall transformation of the society is required. Simply dealing in God.

That is Indian culture. And the present generation is so degraded, they are asking what is God. Unless there is good preaching work there is no need for collecting so much bricks and stone. When I first came, I was not so interested in buildings. I was preaching in a storefront, underneath a tree. Everyone knows that. But if preaching is going nicely then we must have a first class building for housing our men. We will speak the truth. No flattery. These rascals, Mayavadis, impostors. How much harm they have done."

## **One day we can publish Bhagavad-gita in pictures**

Then one day Prabhupad called me into his hut and held up an Indian calendar and they had different pictures illustrating the Gita. He went through the calendar with me and he said, "If we can explain each verse of Bhagavad-gita in pictures, then one day we can publish Bhagavad-gita in pictures. The idea is already there. Each verse a picture." So one day we will have to do that. Then, "For the time being, if there is risk, then do not publish any more reviews."

This is because we were talking about how we are publishing these reviews and then the deprogramming organizations are getting the names and addresses of the favorable scholars, and then they are mailing their garbage anti-ISKCON literature to these scholars. We are giving them the names and addresses.

## **Do not disclose your secrets. The enemy will take advantage**

“For the time being, if there is risk, then do not publish any reviews. They may make counter propaganda and damage us. Let it go in India, but not America. The professors may then be turned against us and may become envious. We should not disclose our own confidential information or treasury. Canakya Pandit said, Do not disclose your secrets. The enemy will take advantage. Don’t disclose your plans or they may be spoiled. We should be little cunning. If other party is a cheat, then we must become a cheat. Otherwise they may take advantage.”

Then I started talking to Prabhupada about how we had organized a Sunday school for the Indian children in Los Angeles and Prabhupada immediately jumped on the idea.” Yes. Hindu Sunday school. They want Indian culture. It should be given to their children. We should open up Sunday schools for the Indian children in every one of our centers. They will be very much appreciative.” That was an instruction he gave for the entire Society.

Then fighting demons. “Krsna is now. The devotee is now. The business is the same.” What happened 5,000 years ago, Krsna is still here, the devotee is still here and the business is the same.

## **Cheating. He is imperfect and he wants to teach others**

This is on the 23rd.” This is the defect of modern civilization. Cheating. He is imperfect and he wants to teach others.” Prabhupada expressed his preference for food relief. Money for India.” America has the money. India is poor. You can take some money out from ISKCON Food Relief for.” Then he said, “You can take some of the money out from ISKCON Food Relief for the American festivals if it is required.”

“Religion means direct touch with God. They have no idea what is God. How they can know about religion?” So all of these conversations took place in these little huts outside of Bhubaneswar. It was a setting like that setting in Perfect Questions, Perfect Answers.

It was something like that. Prabhupada and a few of his disciples asking questions and getting perfect answers.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** He liked those huts?

## **Jews would sell to their own enemies if they could make money**

**Ramesvara:** Well, he was very comfortable in them. Prabhupada, for himself, could live under a tree. He was a goswami. He was a complete renounced transcendentalist, absorbed in Krsna consciousness. At every moment feeling satisfied. But definitely during that trip Prabhupada very much enjoyed these discussions. There was another very confidential discussion. I didn’t write it down in my diary but I remember it. We were talking about past world history sometimes.

And I mentioned to Prabhupada, because we kept talking about Russia so much. So I mentioned to Prabhupada how actually the

Russian revolution was financed by Americans, from money in America. Then I also mentioned it was financed by Jews. Then Prabhupada started giving us a transcendental history lesson. He started explaining why Germany had to go to war in World War II against England. Because England was completely crippling all of Germany's commerce and trade and Germany was forced. They went to war just to keep the trade going because their country was being starved to death. They never had any broader intentions than that.

Then about the Jews, when we started talking about how they financed the Russians, Prabhupada explained, "Yes. Their nature is like that. They will do business with anyone. Friends or enemies. To make money and to do business they don't discriminate. Therefore Hitler felt so strongly about them, he tried to do away with them. That is the reason. Because they have that nature." So I don't see this going, into the Lilamrta but it is a very interesting thing Prabhupada talked about. He just considered that Jews were very low class merchants. They would sell to their own enemies if they could make money. So they would always undermine their own society. Therefore Hitler wanted to get rid of them. Hare Krsna.

So now very quickly, I'm going to jump to the meeting

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** More on the Calcutta book fair?

## **Prabhupada's son vs. BBT Library Party**

**Ramesvara:** Yes. Right. There was this whole thing about Prabhupada's family. We talked about this in Bhubaneswar. There was a big argument going on between the library party in India and one of Prabhupada's sons. The book seller in Calcutta. Vrndavana De. He wanted to market Prabhupada's books because he was hearing all these fantastic sales figures and he didn't know it wasn't commercial sales. So he got into it and he wanted So Prabhupada had



given him permission. “Okay. You can have the Calcutta market.” But he wanted the whole Bengal market and actually he wanted the whole East India market.

So Gargamuni was really furious that Prabhupada had given his son the market and therefore we couldn’t sell any books in the area and this man wasn’t selling hardly anything at all. So there was a real fight going on. So Prabhupada asked me what to do. “I wanted to encourage my son. It’s the first time he’s done any devotional service. It’s not even pure devotional service, but I wanted to encourage him. What to do?” So I recommended to Prabhupada to tell Gargamuni to sell in all other parts in India first. And when he’s completely finished with all other parts of India, then he can sell in Bengal, but leave Calcutta. Then when he’s finished with that, each step we see how your son is doing. And if your son is not doing good, then let Gargamuni go into Bengal.

Then when he has finished Bengal and the only city in India left is Calcutta, if your son still is not doing good, then you can’t deprive those souls just for your son. Gargamuni is also your son, so let him do Calcutta. So Prabhupada approved of that. But he was concerned what to do about his son. He wanted to engage him. This came up because the Calcutta book fair, who was going to do the book fair? Vrndavana De or Gargamuni? Gargamuni was insisting “I’m going to do it. He’s not going to be able to do anything.”

So Prabhupada approved that Gargamuni could do the book fair and it was a big success. Gargamuni is in Hawaii if you want to get his interview. The main thing Gargamuni can tell you about in these later years is how he under Prabhupada’s direction, organized the whole India library party and these book fairs and this fight with Prabhupada’s family members was going on. Okay.

## **Mayapur 1977 — Prabhupada is gravely ill**

Now the Mayapur '77 meeting is when Prabhupada got gravely ill. I mentioned that one scene in Prabhupada's bedroom where the GBC were actually presenting to Prabhupada all the arguments against book distribution, because of the bad publicity, the women's party getting exposed as being impure, and Prabhupada giving his definition that "Anything that sells my books is legal."

Was of those extreme "the end justifies the means," exchanges with the whole GBC. Prabhupada never let up. He just defended the book distribution. If you want any more information about that Mayapur '77 meeting I could probably give, you some. I would have to review the resolutions of that year and then review how they came about.

## **In June we got the call that Prabhupada is leaving the world**

Then in June we got the call that Prabhupada is leaving the world and the whole GBC had to assemble immediately. We dropped everything and rushed to Vrndavana. We formulated questions to ask Prabhupada about initiations and about book translating and so on. I have a little diary, undated. I was just taking notes of things Prabhupada said, so I will just read it right into the tape and Satsvarupa Maharaja can do with it as he likes.

## **We have no other business than to make people happy**

"We have no other business than to make people happy. By book distribution your country will be happy and prosperous. American

money and topmost culture combined will be successful.”

## **If one fourth of America becomes Vaisnava, the whole world will change**

“No cheating, no politics, no personal ambition. Not a tinge of personal sense gratification. This is our mission. No such thing in the Krsna consciousness movement as these cheating things. Our only ambition is to live amongst devotees and execute the mission of our predecessors, Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Krsna. Self-interest means to execute Krsna’s desires.

You are responding. You are responding means America is responding. If one fourth of America becomes Vaisnava, the whole world will change. Krsna has given all facilities. Good land, education, fabulous prestige. Take this. This is our ambition. I went to America with this ambition, that the American people would take this Krsna consciousness movement.” This is a description of America. Krsna has given Americans all facilities—good land, education, fabulous prestige. Then he said, “You take this. That is our ambition, that you Americans take Krsna consciousness. I came to America with this ambition.”

## **India’s culture is very very strong**

“India’s culture is very very strong. Despite all disadvantages, worthless government, it is still standing.” This was an important point. You know how the Jews are always, their main credit is that in spite of so much oppression, persecution and so many mishaps over the last thousands of years, they still exist. They have survived. And they think of themselves as very unique because of that. So here Prabhupada is saying Indian culture is very very old.

They have been conquered so many times, so many attempts to change India. Muslim, British, now this worthless government. Still it is standing. It is very very strong, Indian culture. So the Jews get a lot of mileage out of that and Prabhupada was making a similar point about Indian culture. Then we were talking about the book distribution doubling again. And Prabhupada said, “By your words, it will double. Yes. Be doubly blessed.”

## **I am not going to die**

Then he said, “There is no difference,” regarding his departure, whether he stays or goes. There is no difference.” My Guru Maharaja, physically is not here, but in every action he is there. So I am not going to die. There is no karma. You are my bodies.” Then Prabhupada told us to check printing Hindi books in America for the Indian people in America and see Gopal to compare prices with printing them in India.

## **That is my idea, Krsna phobia everywhere**

Then he was talking about the trouble that we’re facing, again with the deprogramming, the attacks on us. He said, “That is my idea, Krsna phobia everywhere. On every page. Even if His name was not there, we have put it there and they want to avoid.”

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** Krsna phobia.

**Ramesvara:** Yes. He said here. “That was my idea that even on the verses where it doesn’t say Krsna, it just says Bhagavan or Narayana, I put Krsna.”

## **If during kirtan you die. Oh, it is so successful**

“Every year selling 15 to 20 million literatures.” We told Prabhupada that is the report now. Prabhupada said, “It will increase more. People will be inquisitive.” Then again talking about his disappearance. “What is wrong? We are talking of Krsna and suddenly I collapse. That is the greatest profit, if during kirtan you die. Oh, it is so successful.” Then as soon as Indira tried to disturb the babajis of Vrndavana with sterilization, within one week she was finished forever.”

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** What is that?

**Ramesvara:** That sterilization program of Indira’s son Sanjaya was very unpopular. So Prabhupada said as soon as she went to the Babajis of Vrndavana and forced them to be sterilized, within one week she was finished, her government collapsed and she was kicked out of office.

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** They actually did that?

**Ramesvara:** ‘Oh yes. That’s the famous Junta party, like the revolution. That guy Narayana, whatever his name is, and Morarji Desai became the prime minister. History according to Srila Prabhupada again.

## **I want to immediately spread Krsna consciousness everywhere**

“I want to immediately spread Krsna consciousness everywhere. Our unique contribution is Deity worship and large scale distribution of Indian cultural traditions. This is Indian culture, the Krsna consciousness movement.

## **Don't leave me, stay with me, chant and read always by me**

Then Prabhupada said in June, "So if you keep like this, reading and chanting by me then I can go on like this." Then he said, "Don't leave me." And we didn't understand. Everyone thought they had to go back to their duties. Prabhupada said, "Don't leave me." This will be a big theme in those last months. Prabhupada calling to his disciples, "Don't leave me, stay with me, chant and read always by me."

## **And so many of them, including myself, left...**

And so many of them, including myself, left. It's the one thing I can never forgive myself for, that I wasn't pure enough to serve Prabhupada in that way.

## **Don't let this be another Gaudiya Math**

Then he said, "You may take me as already dead. Now, make arrangements like this. If you love me you will not fight. Stay united. Don't let this be another Gaudiya Math. Maintain the Society in my absence. Do not let it deteriorate. You should manage everything as if I am a dead man. Do not consider me as alive." This is in June. Then we showed Prabhupada photos from Los Angeles. There was a construction of a building going on and the Deities and so on. And he said, "Very nice." Then he said, "My Guru Maharaja was very keen to execute this idea. I am trying to give shape."

## **Now make this museum in Washington D.C.**

Oh no, these were the photos of the dioramas. “My Guru Maharaja was very keen to execute this idea. I am trying to give shape to his proposal. Now make this museum in Washington D. C.”

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** He said that that late?

## **Don't you see that this printing is my life**

“Do it. Otherwise you are killing me.”

**Ramesvara:** June, '77. Yes, it still hadn't been decided that We were working on Detroit but Detroit was supposed to be the interim step. So Prabhupada was still thinking of the big museum on his disappearance bed. Then there was a whole thing about a bank error that I had to take care of for Prabhupada of almost one lakh. Then he said, “Don't you see that this printing is my life? Then do it. Otherwise you are killing me. If you don't arrange this printing then you are half-killing me. Either kill me full or give me peace. How do you expect me to have any peace if you don't organize this India BBT?” Indian language printing.

We read to Srila Prabhupada the proposed property trust agreement. This was part of the last will. We had just written it. So we read to Prabhupada the proposed property trust agreement as he sat in ecstasy on his cot, making some corrections. As we were leaving he called out, “All glories to the future directors of ISKCON.” I called back, “All glories to the eternal acarya.” Prabhupada started crying. as we were walking out. Tears profusely falling from his eyes. “Now I can die in peace,” he said. “Now if I die, I will be happy.”

## **After I am dead, our movement will be attacked in India**

See, there were three things Prabhupada told us. He said, “After I am dead, our movement will be attacked in India. We have three enemies. In Bombay it is the municipality, here in Vrndavana it is the caste Gosvamis and in Mayapur it is my Godbrothers. In Bengal it is the Godbrothers. And already they are making plans, already they are conspiring how to seize the property of this movement.” Therefore he wanted this property treaty(?), he was so anxious to protect. He said, “These enemies are waiting in the wings and they’re already conspiring.” So after we made the property trust agreement, this was Prabhupada’s reaction. Very emotional, overwhelming spiritual emotion that all the devotees were feeling on the GBC.

## **Practically I am whipping you, sell books, sell books, sell books**

Then Prabhupada said, “Still in this condition I am still trying to write books. And practically I am whipping you, sell books, sell books, sell books.

## **It is not possible to live without headaches**

As long I am here you cannot relieve me of any headaches. It is not possible to live without headaches.” He’s talking about living in the material world.

Then he said, “As soon as you put two lawyers or two doctors together for consulting, they will never agree. In every doctor or



lawyer there is some defect, some cheating. There is a Bengali joke, an old woman, when her husband dies she has no one to joke with. So she picks on her grand-son-in-law. So when I see you all working hard spreading this movement, then I enjoy. So you are all very good grand-daughters.” Prabhupada was just joking.

## **Gaudiya Math are a bunch of crippled, low minded people who are first class cheats**

Here is some heavy stuff. “Regarding the Gaudiya Math, they are a bunch of crippled, low minded people, they are first class cheats. So if you cheat them it is all right. Tit for tat. There is a saying in Bengal about the Gaudiya Math that if you would be helped by a fart they won’t even fart for you.” This is an exact quote from Srila Prabhupada, he was talking about the enemies of our movement. And then he started talking about the Gaudiya Math. Other quotes, “This doll museum, very nice. They will appreciate this.”

Then, “Jadurani has improved. She has given up this beard in her paint-ings.” She used to put beards on the Vaisnavas. “Her pictures are better.”

## **Sometimes it gives me pain that I am in prison because I am a freedom lover**

“Sometimes it gives me pain that I am in prison,” he’s referring to his body in this material situation, “because I am a freedom lover. Out of sentiment for my Guru Maharaja’s order I started in U.S.A. with 40 rupees whole ambition is, whatever income is there should be spent 50% literature and 50% constructing temples. My whole ambition is this.” Then that’s when he said, “Still in this condition I

am still trying to write books and practically I am whipping them, sell books, sell books, sell books.”“

## **Even from this bed I am beating the mrdunga**

And this is also when Prabhupada said, “They cannot understand how this old man is going on, still beating the brhat mrdunga. The enemies of our movement, they cannot understand how I am still going on. Even from this deathbed I am.”

“This bed,” he said, we took it as disappearance bed but “even from this bed I am beating the mrdunga.”

**Baladeva Vidyabhusana:** How was he beating the mrdunga?

**Ramesvara:** By translating. He was referring to his dictating. This understanding of how Prabhupada was dictating In the introduction to the Tenth Canto, Volume 3 we gave a description of this. That, plus Tamal Krsna Maharaja’s diary gives a perfect explanation of how impossible it was in terms of the pain, the disease, the weakness, the starvation. And for Prabhupada to go on writing the 10.3 with lucid purports is a miracle. It’s unbelievable, that type of discipline and self control and transcendence. To be able to go on undisturbed in that condition of life. It’s one of the most important sections of the Lilamrta, Prabhupada’s disappearance like Bhismadeva.

He said, “Lately I am becoming morose because I am becoming lazy. So if you all work vigorously to spread Krsna consciousness then my moroseness will go.” Then on the last will he canceled calling the GBC ‘trustees’ and instead he called them the ultimate managers. This is what he said: He said, “Cancel calling the GBC ‘trustees’.” That the GBC body will be the trustees for the Society. He said, “Call them ultimate managers, supreme managers, or executors.” So we settled on the phrase, “ultimate managers.” He gave us this choice.

“Properties outside of India in principle should never be sold but if the need arises they may be sold or mortgaged with the consent of the GBC committee members. The properties and their GBC committee members are listed as follows. And then he named them and then the executors of the will and then he named 7 GBC men to be executors of his will. And then finally the last notes I have from that June meeting, “We have received a report of the doubling of book sales.” That must be the annual report. Anyway, so then he said, “That is our real mission. Yare dekha, yare takha krsna upadesa.” He quoted that verse. Yare dekha yare takha, you know that verse in the Caitanya-caritamṛta.

“This is the opportunity of spreading the words of Kṛṣṇa.” That’s the last of my diary. And then the final thing that I can give you when we meet again will be the final GBC meeting in October. I have some things about that that would be interesting for the book. Also, actually at that time I can go over the final letters, the 1977 letters. I don’t know if I ever put my letters from Tamal that I received into the Archives. Someone should tell me.

**Baladeva Vidyābhusana:** There’s very few letters from ’77.

**Ramesvara:** Well, I have some letters I have a letter about Bhaktivedanta Institute in 1977 which is very important, April 2nd from Bombay. A whole thing about Bhaktivedanta Institute which will form an important part. You can just refer to that one. And then there’s the first L. A. Rathayatra. The last letter I got from Prabhupada which was signed by him was dated May 11th, 1977. Prabhupada was in Hṛṣīkeśa.

This was the letter about Jayananda’s disappearance. And also about the doll exhibit. and about just the new building that we were constructing in Los Angeles. Prabhupada’s signature is very shaky. After this he wasn’t signing his own letters any more, he was just having Tamal sign them. So we can go over that the next time you come. The final letters and the final meeting. All glories to Jagat Guru Śrīla Prabhupada.