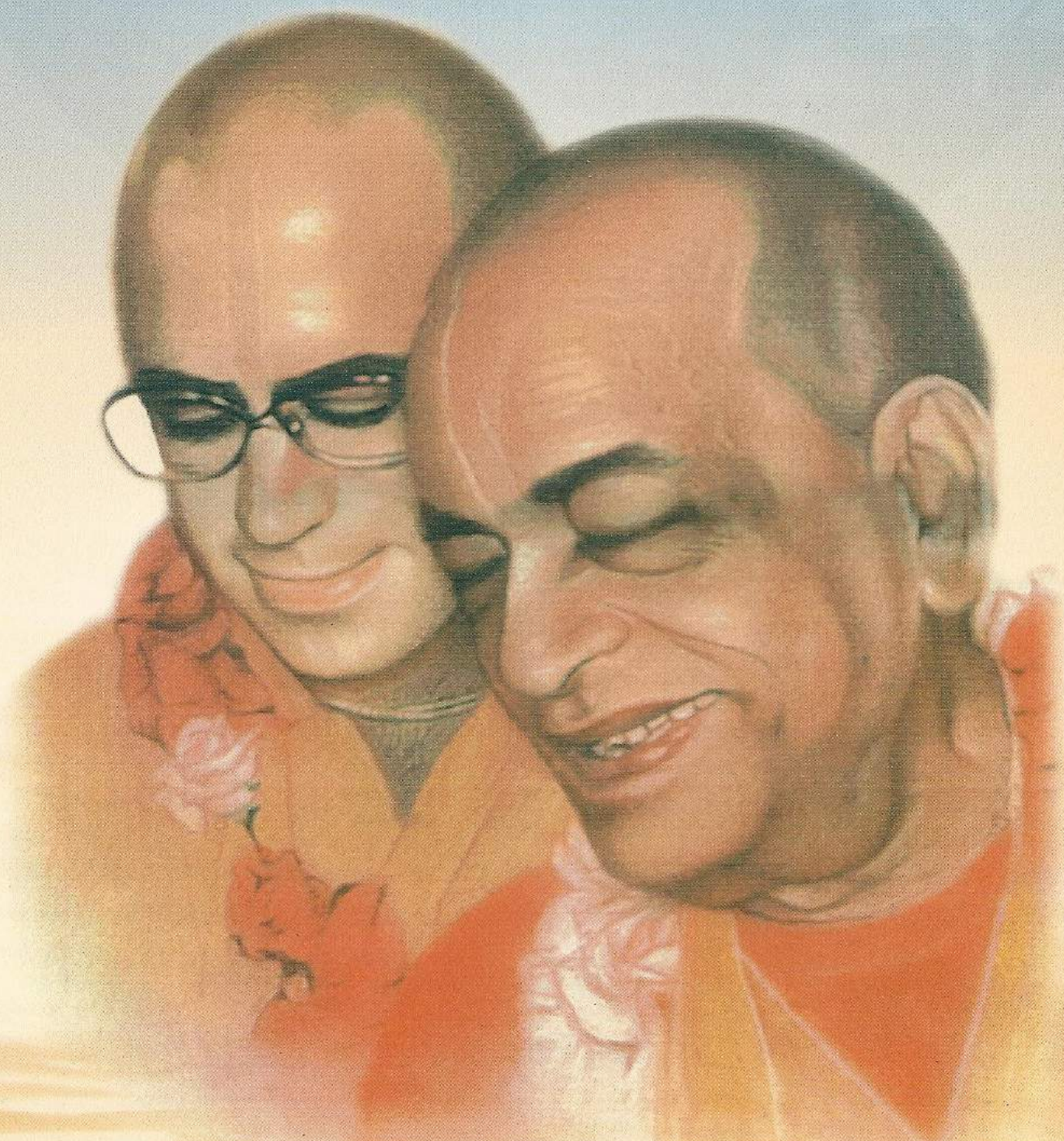
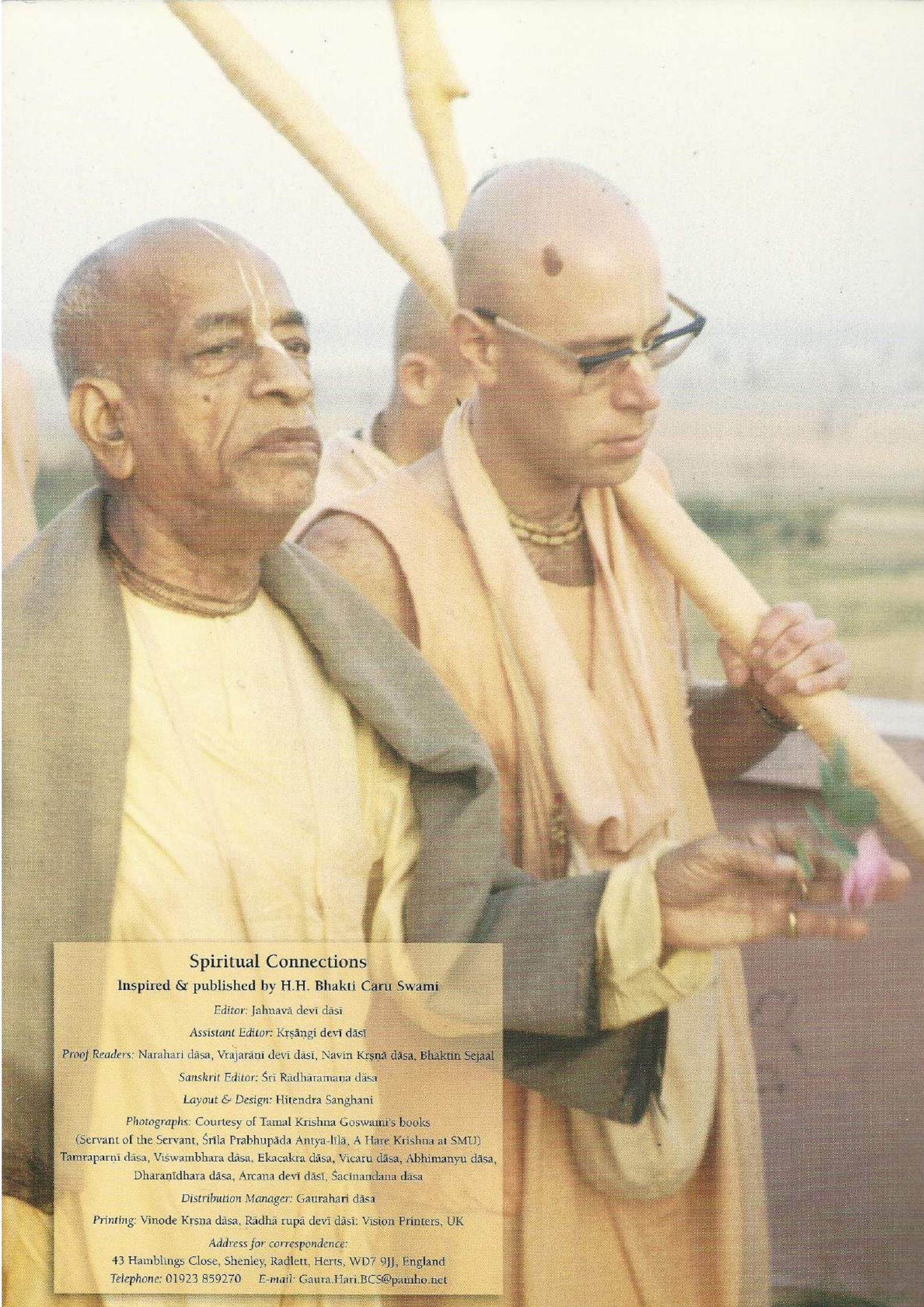


# Spiritual Connections

*Special Memorial Issue in Honour of*  
**His Holiness Tamal Krishna Goswami**







## Spiritual Connections

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*Special Memorial Issue*

*In Honour of*

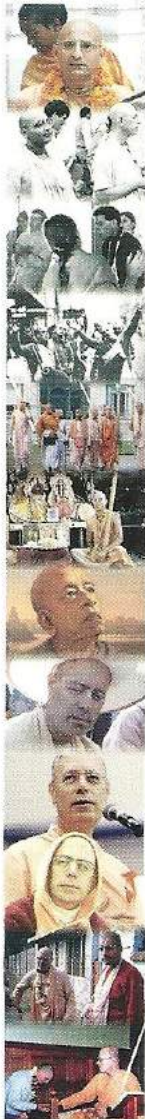
**His Holiness Tamal Krishna Goswami**

**June 2002**

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# A Personal Message

From H.H. Bhakti Charu Swāmī

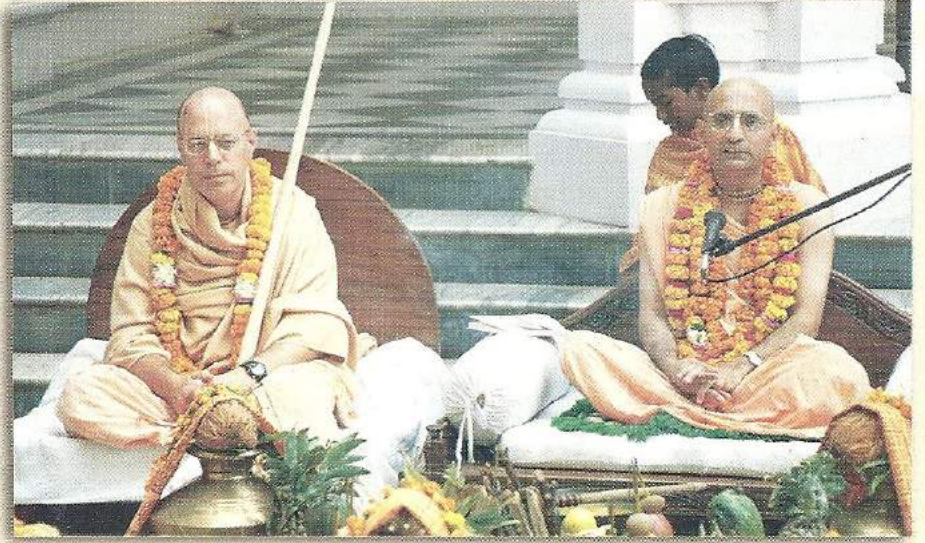
Tamal Krishna Mahārāja was one of my most prominent spiritual connections to Śrīla Prabhupāda. Under his guidance I served His Divine Grace during his final pastimes. He taught me not only how to serve His Divine Grace, but also his ISKCON and the entire Vaiṣṇava community. From him I learnt how to become Śrīla Prabhupāda's watchdog. Therefore, after his disappearance, I felt it was my duty to broadcast his glory in whichever way I could. Since "Spiritual Connections" is the forum to communicate with my disciples and friends, I decided to use this medium as my first attempt in that endeavour.

During his memorial ceremony in Māyāpura, the day after his disappearance, prominent devotees from all over the world & the leading disciples of Tamal Krishna Mahārāja spoke most eloquently about his unique achievements and glorious personality. Everyone present drank that nectar with rapt attention, and silent tears came spontaneously streaming from their eyes. It was undoubtedly one of my most memorable spiritual experiences. Therefore, I felt that I must share this experience with others, especially my disciples and friends.

Not only in Māyāpura did this nectar flow; devotees from all over the world began contributing to this flow of nectar, expressing their admiration and appreciation for Tamal Krishna Mahārāja. I wish I could print all the offerings that I came across on the Internet and various other media. However, that was not possible, and so we had to select homages mainly according to the devotees' seniority and their intimacy with Tamal Krishna Mahārāja.

One of Tamal Krishna Mahārāja's most intimate associates is Sivarāma Mahārāja; however, since he was the master of ceremony for the memorial celebration he did not speak to offer his homage to Mahārāja. Therefore, since we did not have a contribution from him, I personally requested him to write a special piece as his offering to Tamal Krishna Mahārāja for this magazine.

Tamal Krishna Mahārāja's *vyāsa puṣā* will be celebrated in a grand way this year in Dallas on 28 June. During my last visit there in May, I told the devotees that I would come back to participate in the ceremony. When we were preparing to print this special memorial issue, it occurred to me that if we could print it before *vyāsa puṣā* then I could present it as my humble offering to him for his *vyāsa puṣā*.

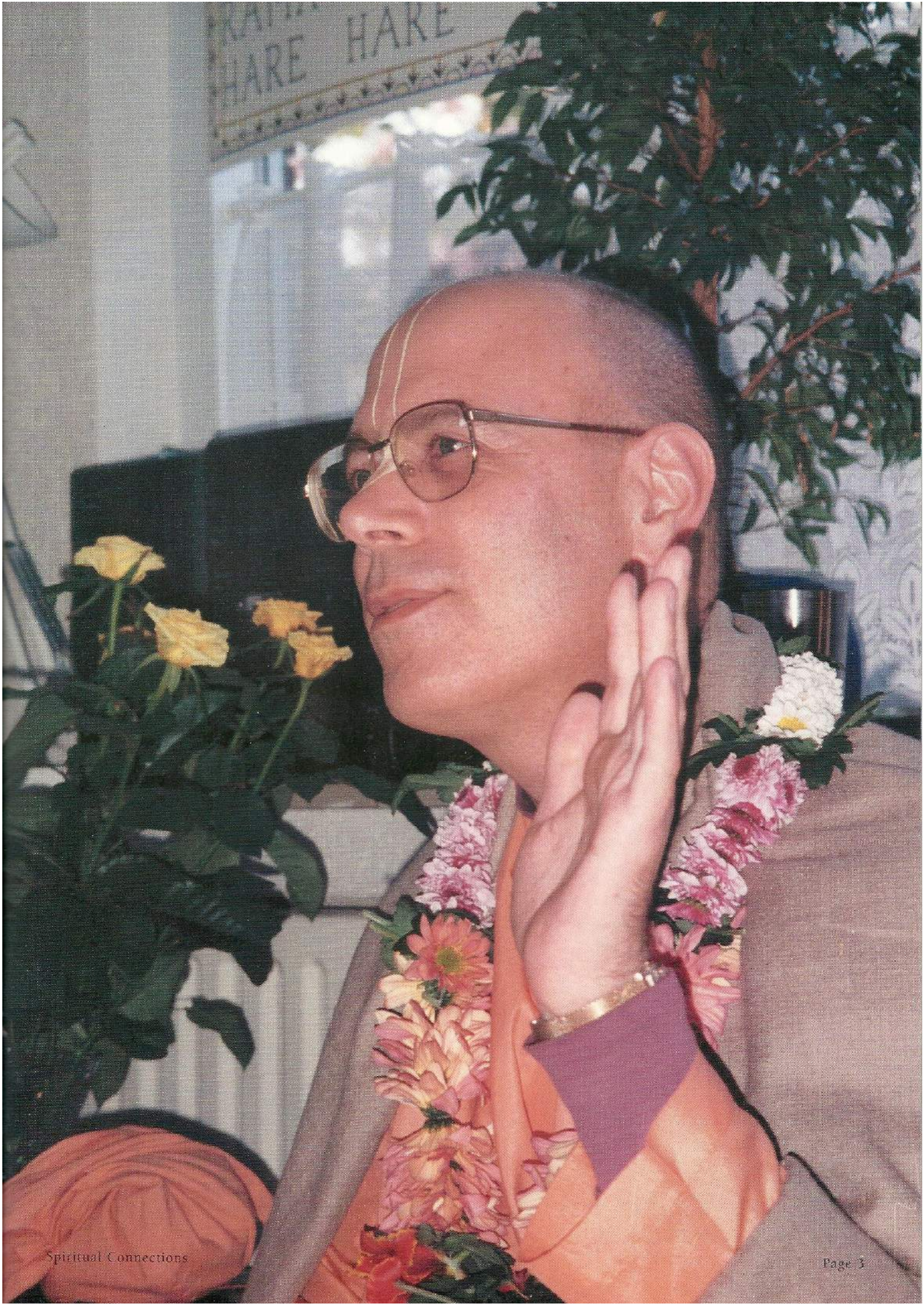


It was a big challenge because we only had about a month to meet the target and we had hardly any material in hand. However, that challenge has been met and the goal has been achieved. It became possible due to the wonderful efforts of Jāhnavā, Hitendra and Vinod Kṛṣṇa. Jāhnavā contacted the devotees around the world to collect the tapes, stayed up at night transcribing and editing them. Hitendra worked round the clock for a week to do the artwork and layout. Then Vinod Kṛṣṇa had to work his printing press overtime to get it out in time. It was a wonderful example of an inconceivable achievement due to the cooperation of the devotees.

This magazine was started as a means to communicate with my disciples and friends. Initially, I had some reservations about how and to whom it was distributed. However, I do not have any such hesitations about this edition. As a matter of fact, the print run for this issue has been doubled. Those desirous of obtaining a copy may write to Gaurahari dāsa, the "Distribution Manager" (his address and telephone number is on the previous page.) The disciples of Tamal Krishna Mahārāja may contact their local temple authorities in Texas, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Philippines and Fiji for their free copy.

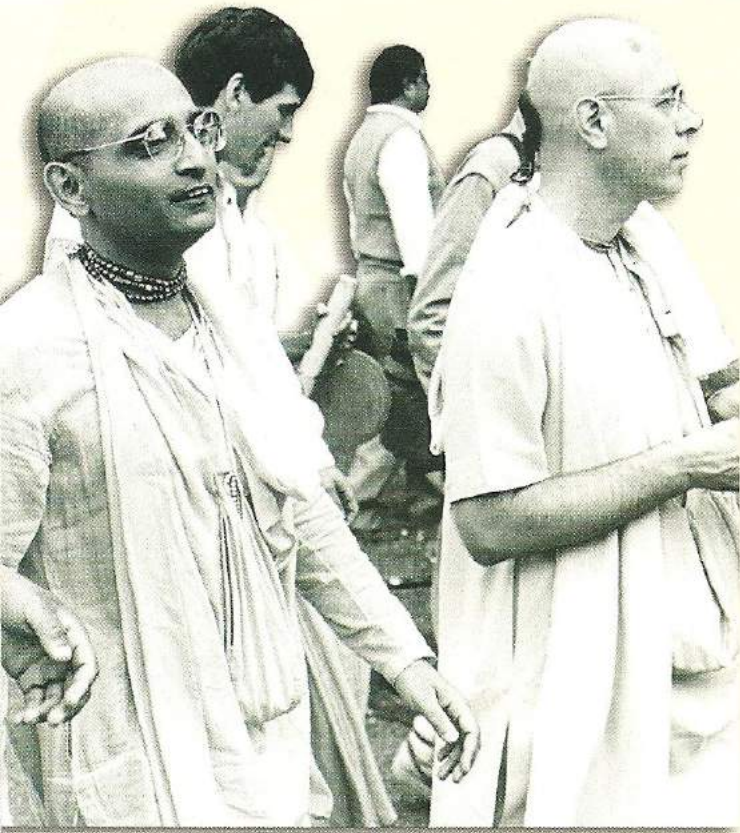
I mentioned earlier that the printing of this edition has been possible due to the sincere endeavour of Jāhnavā, Hitendra and Vinod Kṛṣṇa. Besides them many other devotees like Śrī Rādhāramaṇa, Kṛṣṅāṅgi, Sejal and Gaurahari in London. Yudhiṣṭhira prabhu, his wife, mother Renuka and Tamraparṇī prabhu in Texas, and Ekacakra prabhu from Taiwan have extended their most valuable and timely help. I feel extremely indebted to all of them and do not really have the words to express my gratitude. I hope this humble effort will please the Vaiṣṇavas and succeed in spreading the glories of Tamal Krishna Mahārāja.







# The Foremost Grand-disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura



By H.H. Bhakti Caru Swami

Death never disturbed me. Perhaps, seeing my mother pass away at an early age created some sort of immunity in me. Though I was too young to fully comprehend what had actually happened, I was aware that she would not be there for me anymore. Since that time death never disturbed me at all. Whenever someone died, no matter how close the person was to me, I felt that the inevitable had happened, and I naturally remained unaffected.

After joining ISKCON, receiving the profound philosophical understanding of the material nature made me even more indifferent towards this natural phenomenon. The way devotees reacted towards death reinforced my attitude.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda left this planet, although my world became completely vacant, and an intense feeling of separation burned in my heart, I was not totally devastated. In a way, Śrīla Prabhupāda had prepared us for this predicament.

But Tamal Krishna Mahārāja's sudden departure shattered my composure. The awareness that he would not be there to lead us broke my heart. I had so many plans to do so many things with him. But now that opportunity is gone forever. I was patiently waiting for him to return to the field, to once again start spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness with even greater dexterity. But when he was all set to become involved, Kṛṣṇa took him away. Kṛṣṇa is indeed inconceivable.

To me he was the best. He was what I always wanted to be but could not. Yet, I did not feel any envy towards him. He conquered my heart with his natural warmth and affection, and I was completely convinced that he was my genuine well-wisher. I had the good fortune of coming very close to him. He treated me as his close friend, and like an elder brother he showered his affection upon me. This made me feel proud about my privilege, just as a younger brother feels for his exceptionally brilliant elder brother. So often I was blessed with his warm embrace. So many times I walked together with him, his arm around my shoulder, silently reassuring, "Don't worry, everything is all right. I am here." Where shall I go now to open my heart and get that most precious association? I realize why Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura felt like banging his head against a rock, and wanted to enter into fire due to his separation from Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya.

Different thoughts flash across my mind as tears come streaming down my eyes:

"Why did Kṛṣṇa have to take him away at a time like this?"

"Why did he have to leave his body in this way?"

The thought that caused me the greatest concern and pain was, "What will happen to Śrīla Prabhupāda's ISKCON now?"

He was undoubtedly the most qualified leader in our movement. At such a critical time, when there was an acute need of guidance, when he was ready, after extensive preparation, to come back and get involved, why did Kṛṣṇa take him away? Is the *saṅkīrtana* movement on this planet not important any more?



Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme controller, and He certainly knows what He wants. But a feeling of futility prevails in me. Since Kṛṣṇa has His own plan, and will implement it in due course of time, why should I worry?

Let me just start wandering aimlessly. Why struggle when Kṛṣṇa will make everything happen by His inconceivable potency? After all, Kṛṣṇa will take care of everything. So why should I bother? My heart is aching and my head is getting unbearably hot. Let me run to the Ganges and just float down stream. Now I don't care whether I remain dead or alive. Death will probably soothe my pain.

Devotees start to sing, "*sṛī guru caraṇa padma...*" as they offer *guru pūjā* to Śrīla Prabhupāda. I watch from a distance. I don't even make the endeavor to offer flowers to His Divine Grace. I just watch from afar as the devotees express their love and devotion to him. I feel so fortunate to have such a glorious spiritual master. He saved me and gave me everything. He dispelled all my doubts. Imparting transcendental knowledge to me, he enlightened my heart. Now that I am in such a pathetic state, I feel like asking him so many questions, but I decide to wait until I can be alone with him.

Did His Divine Grace call Tamal Krishna Mahārāja back to the spiritual sky? Śrīla Prabhupāda loved him so much, and he reciprocated with that love with such submission and loyalty. In Vṛndāvana, almost every morning when he woke up, he would ask, "Where is Tamal?" Tamal Krishna Mahārāja would immediately come and they would speak very intimately about many things. He would ask Śrīla Prabhupāda many penetrating questions; questions that only he could ask. These questions clearly revealed his perception and profound intelligence. Once, Damodar Prasād Śāstri, the Āyurvedic doctor who was treating Śrīla Prabhupāda at that time, told us that the mole on the right side of his head indicated his exceptional intelligence. Everyone knows how true this observation was. But how many got a glimpse of his golden heart which was full of love and affection? Śrīla Prabhupāda did. That is why he treated him so specially. And Tamal Krishna Mahārāja reciprocated with Śrīla Prabhupāda in the most wonderful way.

Unable to prevent Śrīla Prabhupāda from going out on Vṛndāvana *parikrama* in a bullock cart, just a few days before His Divine Grace leaves this planet, he runs into Śrīla Prabhupāda's room and pours out his anxiety. Śrīla Prabhupāda looks at his god-brother, Śrīla Krishnadas

Bābāji Mahārāja, who is sitting next to his bed, and tells him with a voice ringing with affection and pride, "See, how much they love me?"

He was undoubtedly the best. Śrīla Prabhupāda himself acknowledged, "He is the foremost grand-disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Thākura."

What could have been a more clear indication that he was the best.

Describing his agony a poet wrote,

"My heart aches

And a drowsy numbness pains my senses,

As though hemlock I had drunk."

Is this how it feels when one drinks poison? Tears flow to drain the pain. Devotees dance in front of Rādhā Mādhava. I have never seen them dance like this before. So many of them, whirling and spinning, with the vibrant beat of the *mahāmantra*. Are they dancing in this way to relieve themselves of their unbearable pain? My heart is too heavy and legs too weak to dance. I just watch until my eyes become blurred with tears.





Every evening he held *kīrtana* in his room. The entire atmosphere throbbed with ecstasy. The room was packed with devotees. He sat in one corner, totally absorbed in relishing the holy name. I never saw him like that before. He was a natural leader and always preferred to be in the front. He was second to none. But now he had decided to take a back seat.

I ask him, "Why don't you lead?"

He replies with a smile, "They are better at it than me."

I know that was not true. Even if he was not the best, still everyone would want him to lead and they would be more than delighted to follow him. But now he had decided to take a back seat.

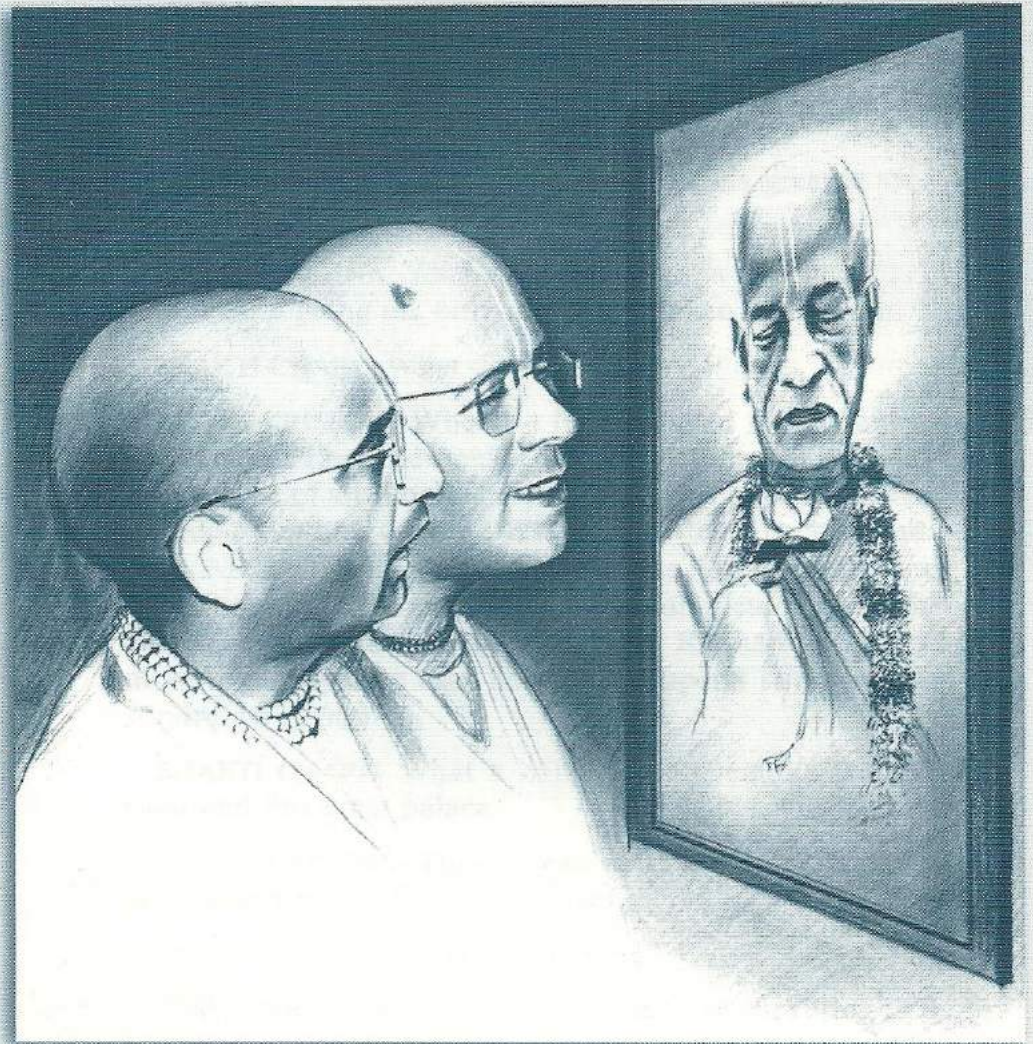
This must be the mode of goodness. In the mode of passion he helped Śrīla Prabhupāda build ISKCON. Now, transcending that mode he became situated in the mode of goodness. The serenity surrounding him clearly indicated this. He went far ahead all of us. However, when he reached the mode of goodness, he did not want to remain there. He decided to move onto the platform of pure goodness: back home, back to Godhead.

Still I wonder, why did he have to meet such a tragic end? Does Kṛṣṇa not take care of His devotees? Didn't He give the assurance that His devotee will never vanquish? Then why did he have to leave in this way?

A realization dawns in me—our existence in this material world is like a dream, therefore how one comes or departs does not really matter at all. Only those who want to remain in ignorance are concerned about how one is born and how one dies. But for a devotee, situated in the absolute truth, it does not really matter at all.

How one leaves his body is not important. What really matters is how one leads his life. For one who has lived such an intense life of devotion, always expressing his

love for Kṛṣṇa through dedicated service, how can Kṛṣṇa ever fail him? For one who has always been seeing Kṛṣṇa in the core of his heart, with eyes anointed with the mascara of love, at the final moment Kṛṣṇa comes to him. He sees Kṛṣṇa face to face. Will he not naturally become submerged in an ocean of bliss?



During the battle of Kurukṣetra, Kṛṣṇa's own nephew, Abhimanyu, was trapped inside an impenetrable phalanx arranged by Dronācārya. He was just a sixteen-year-old boy fighting alone. He was surrounded by his enemies, but he kept fighting valiantly. Being unable to defeat him, seven *mahārathīs* cut his weapons. He picked up the wheel of a broken chariot and started to fight with it. But they cut that also. Bereft of his weapons, defenceless and surrounded by his enemies, he stood hopelessly. And then Duryodhana's son smashed his head with a mace. Why did Kṛṣṇa allow that to happen? The scriptures reveal, that although his body died in this way, his soul went back to the spiritual sky where it came from. He had appeared just to participate in Kṛṣṇa's pastimes on this planet.



Vṛtrasura is another great devotee of the Lord. He fought with Indra knowing very well that he was destined to die by the *vajra* made from the bones of the great sage Dadhichi. Indra cut his right hand with the *vajra*. Vṛtra continued to fight with his left hand. Indra cut his left hand, but Vṛtra continued to fight with his legs. Indra cut them also. Vṛtra opened his mouth wide and swallowed Indra. Content that he had now accomplished his mission; he left his body and went back to the abode of Śrī Sankarṣaṇa.

Therefore, how one leaves his body is not important. What really matters is how one develops his love for Kṛṣṇa.

Searching for solace I open the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. I am amazed to see the verse:

*tri-bhuvana-kamaṇāṁ tamāla-varṇāṁ  
ravi-kara-gaura-varāmbaraṁ dadhāne  
vapur alaka-kulāvrtānanābjam  
vijaya-sakhe ratir astu me 'navadyā*

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the intimate friend of Arjuna. He has appeared on this earth in His transcendental body, which resembles the bluish color of the *tamāla* tree. His body attracts everyone in the three planetary systems. May His glittering yellow dress and His lotus face, covered with paintings of sandalwood pulp, be the object of my attraction, and may I not desire fruitive results.” (SB 1.9.33)

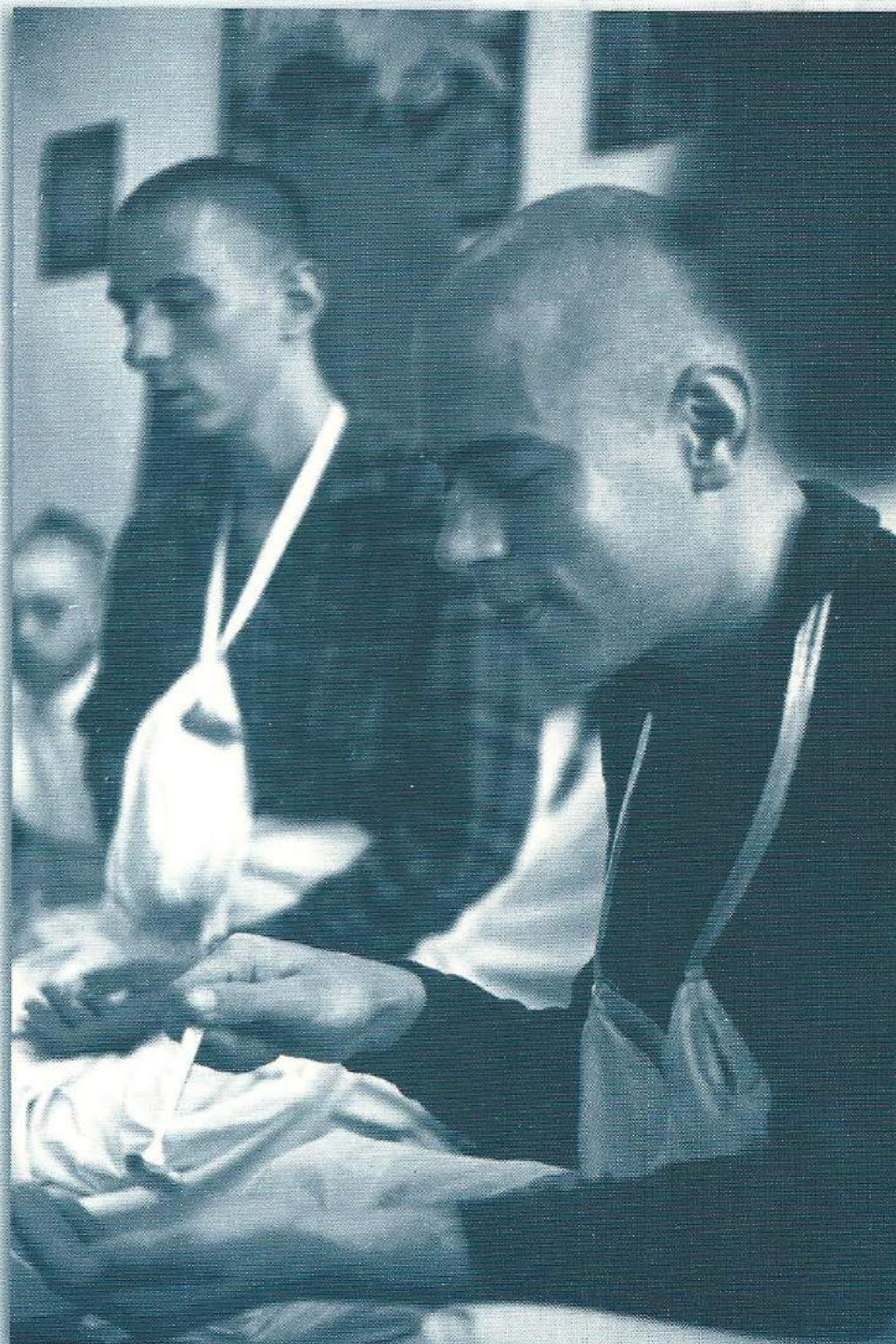
Bhīṣmadeva is about to leave his body. Out of causeless mercy for His devotee, Kṛṣṇa comes to him and Bhīṣmadeva offers his heartfelt prayers to the Lord. The mention of the word “*tamala*” amazes me. My reading this chapter, describing the passing of Bhīṣmadeva, is not a coincidence. The subject matter of this verse is so appropriate for the occasion. So many things become clear in my mind.

Kṛṣṇa comes to His devotee at the most crucial time in his life: when he is about to leave his body. To confirm this fact Bhisma addresses Kṛṣṇa as ‘*vijaya sakhe*’—the friend of Arjuna—the friend of His devotee. A friend in need, is a friend indeed. The devotees’ final surrender takes

place when he sees Kṛṣṇa’s all-attractive form before him. Here is his Lord, whom he has always been waiting for.

Why he had to leave, so suddenly, in this manner, will always remain a mystery to me. But I am convinced, without a shadow of doubt, that Kṛṣṇa came to him. He allowed him to see His all-attractive, transcendental form. And drowning him in an ocean of ecstasy, He took him back to the spiritual sky.

He was the foremost grand-disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura. As his reward, he was blessed with the great fortune of receiving the ultimate perfection in life.





# The Early Years



Once, perhaps after a month after the park *kirtana*, a sincere friend showed me a picture of Swāmī who was leading the programs at the temple. I looked upon the beautiful, compassionate face of Śrīla Prabhupāda, his eyes beckoning, seeming to say, “There is no need to suffer any longer. Give up your stubborn pride and surrender. Just follow me; I will lead you.”

— Tamal Krishna Goswami (Servant of the Servant)

When I first joined the temple, apart from the daily lunch program there was very little preaching activity. Then Prabhupāda had given the idea to perform street *saṅkīrtana*. This potent instruction was heard by all of the devotees at that time, and somehow this instruction found reception within me, and with faith I began to serve it. It was not that I had some special qualification; it was Kṛṣṇa who gave me intelligence to expand upon this seed idea. But what I did have was firm faith in this order given by my spiritual master.

— Tamal Krishna Goswami (Servant of the Servant)

## A Homage given by H.G. Gārgamuni dāsa

In Vṛndāvana, 16 March 2002

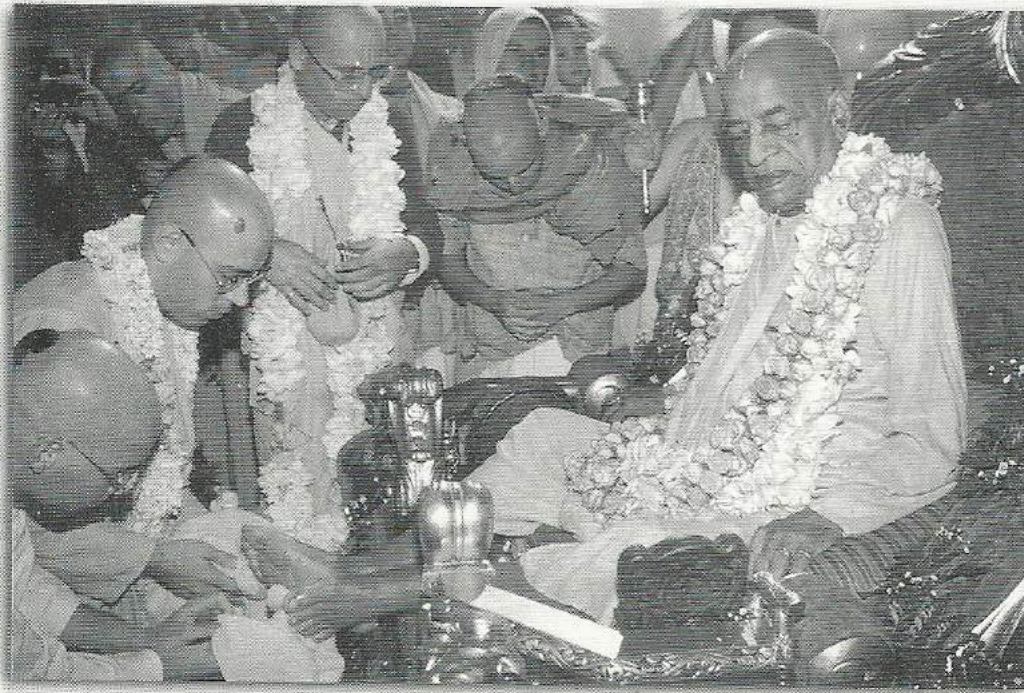
I was one of the first devotees to meet Śrīla Tamal Krishna Mahārāja. We were close especially in the early days—almost like brothers. The devotees in Los Angeles affectionately called us the “*dāsa*” brothers because we did everything together. He was in charge of the temple and I was in charge of the economics. As preaching and *laxmī* go hand in hand, we were always together.

I would describe Tamal Krishna Goswami’s relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda as Prabhupāda’s personal confidante advisor. When we sat in the room with Śrīla Prabhupāda, giving reports from different places around the world, Prabhupāda would lean back on his pillows and his eyes would go towards Tamal Krishna Goswami and he would say, “So what is your opinion?” As we all know Tamal Krishna Mahārāja was always ready to give his opinion. He was very outspoken. In fact I envied him because whenever I was with Prabhupāda I would be speechless. But he would always speak very nicely and give good opinions that Prabhupāda wanted regarding the maintenance of the society. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja



was very eloquent in providing this facility which very few devotees could offer because of Śrīla Prabhupāda's exalted position. He was the most confidential advisor to Śrīla Prabhupāda in all aspects. I believe that Tamal Krishna Goswami was sent to Śrīla Prabhupāda by Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

It all began in 1966. Prabhupāda would take us to Tompkins Square Park. We would unroll our oriental rug, sit down and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Kīrtānanda would bring his harmonium. We didn't have *kartālas* at that time so we brought finger bells. Prabhupāda would ask certain devotees like Stradhisa prabhu and Brahmānanda prabhu to get up and dance. In a different area of that park was another great soul: Tamal Krishna Goswami. At that time he was a musician—a flute player. He showed me his silver flute which he played very nicely. For most struggling artists Sunday was a day to be in Tompkins Square park. On one side there were Congo players. On another, saxophone players. Then there was Tamal Krishna Mahārāja, playing his flute with a little bowl in which people could throw money. He told me he would hear the *kīrtana* but his flute playing was a livelihood to him. Whenever Swāmīji came it destroyed his whole business because everyone would go towards the *kīrtana*. That was the first time he heard the chanting.



But the chanting had effect. A year and a half later he again met Śrīla Prabhupāda at Morning Star Farm. This was the largest hippie commune in Northern California and Prabhupāda was invited there by his disciples to speak and have *kīrtanas*. Morning Star was not a typical community because the residents there didn't wear clothes. Prabhupāda would sit and talk to naked boys and girls. He was completely unaffected. He did not care.

Tamal Krishna Mahārāja was also there. He became awestruck seeing Śrīla Prabhupāda. When Prabhupāda left Tamal Krishna Mahārāja followed him to San Francisco. Many devotees came from that Ranch. They followed Prabhupāda as if he were the pied piper, leading them back to Kṛṣṇa. He arrived in San Francisco where drugs, sex and rock and roll were plentiful. In New York Prabhupāda had lectured to intellectuals, sometimes for up to two hours. But in San Francisco this was too much. As people didn't have the aptitude for hearing transcendental literature he introduced them to *kīrtana* and *prasāda*. He held two-hour *kīrtanas* and then spoke for ten minutes. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja came with Viṣṇujana. They rented a house nearby. They came to the Frederick St. temple and heard Śrīla Prabhupāda speak. Within a short time Tamal Krishna Mahārāja and Viṣṇujana joined. One day I preached to them for eight hours and the next day they both immediately shaved up and joined. Viṣṇujana was a flute player too. He played a bamboo flute.

Next to the temple I had a store selling Indian clothing, beads and sitars. In 1967 many devotees were joining the movement but there was no organised activity. They would hear Śrīla Prabhupāda speak, take Kṛṣṇa *prasādam* and go home. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja asked

me if there was anything he could do. All I could tell him was to sweep the floor in my store. I paid him one dollar twenty-five cents per hour. But he was so willing to do any service that he agreed. Later Jayānanda and I met; we thought something should be done to engage all the devotees. He said, "We'll send everyone out to get jobs to help the temple." Tamal Krishna Mahārāja got a job at a photography shop, mixing chemicals and making photos. He hated that job. I called Prabhupāda in Montreal and asked him what we should do. Prabhupāda said, "You start *saṅkīrtana* party." I said,

"What's that? How will that maintain the temple?" He said, "No you go on *saṅkīrtana*, distribute magazines, and ask for donations." Hamsadutta had started this in New York, and it was very successful. Previously I had done this on my own at 26 Second Avenue, but there was no *saṅkīrtana* party. I told Tamal Krishna Mahārāja about this. He immediately left his job and grabbed the service. We bought new *dhotis* for everyone, and he



started the *sankirtana* party with Viṣṇujana in San Francisco. In the old days we would go out on *sankirtana* and bring people back to the temple, not to see the deities or the temple, but to see Śrīla Prabhupāda as he would make them devotees within a few hours.

Then I went to Seattle. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja came there with his *sankirtana* party and helped me establish the temple. Prabhupāda also came to Seattle. Everyday Tamal Krishna Mahārāja and Viṣṇujana went out on *sankirtana* and brought people back who became devotees by meeting Śrīla Prabhupāda. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja saw this *sankirtana* party as the real beginning of worldwide preaching. Later he started the Rādhā-Damodara party, one of the most successful preaching programs where twenty-five grey hound buses were converted into temples. They went all over the country distributing books and as a result many devotees joined.

After Seattle, I went back to New York to start the Spiritual Sky incense business. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja went to Los Angeles where they had bought a big Mexican church in La Cienega. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja took his *sankirtana* party of fifty devotees, along with Viṣṇujana. We were separated for a while. But then I called and told him I had no facility to start the business because our cellar was full of rats and cockroaches. He said, “Come to Los Angeles, I have fifty devotees and plenty of space. You can make the incense outside, because it hardly rains here.” So we started the incense factory. We would give out a packet of incense and a Back to Godhead magazine for a dollar. It was very successful. Spiritual Sky grew and the *sankirtana* party also expanded going all over the city.

One incident that stays in my mind is when Prabhupāda came. We rented a house for him near the temple. Kārtikeya was his servant, and sometimes Tamal Krishna Mahārāja and I would go over to help cook Prabhupāda’s lunch. We would cook the *chapattis* and Kārtikeya would cook the *subjis*. Once an amazing thing happened. The arrangement was that we would put one *chapatti* along with the *subji* on Prabhupāda’s plate and if he wanted more he would ring a bell and we would bring another. On that day Prabhupāda rang the bell twenty two times! He ate twenty two *chapattis*. We couldn’t believe it. We were in ecstasy. Occasionally Prabhupāda would exhibit these super human activities which would bring bliss into the hearts of the devotees. In this way we served Prabhupāda together.

“Your name is Tamal Krishna. *Tamāla* is the name of a tree that grows in Vṛndāvana. Because it is the same color as Kṛṣṇa, the *gopis*, out of separation, sometimes mistake the tree to be Kṛṣṇa Himself. Especially, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī would embrace the *tamāla* tree and always take rest underneath it whenever She was feeling separation from Kṛṣṇa.”

— Tamal Krishna Goswami (Servant of the Servant)



Then one day we got a letter from Prabhupāda. It was 1968. London temple had just opened and Prabhupāda wanted Tamal Krishna Mahārāja to go there. As Tamal Krishna Mahārāja left he said, “Now you have to do both things—be the temple president, run Spiritual Sky, plus lead a good example.” He was perfect in following the rules and regulations. He never faltered at any time in chanting his rounds and following the regulative principles. He was very strict and did everything perfectly. Whilst Tamal Krishna Mahārāja was organising Europe, Los Angeles expanded—from fifty devotees to a hundred and fifty devotees. In this way Prabhupāda set up three attacking fronts against *māyā*—

London, New York and Los Angeles. So from being the “*dāsa*” brothers the devotees affectionately called us “BTG,” Brahmānanda, Tamal Krishna and Gargamuni.

Later, I met Tamal Krishna Mahārāja in India where he was the personal advisor and secretary to Śrīla Prabhupāda.

I watched him serve Prabhupāda so faithfully. He gave Prabhupāda different opinions, which Prabhupāda wanted. He took *sannyāsa* in Jaipura. I would say that Tamal Krishna Mahārāja was also Prabhupāda’s personal and private business manager. It took someone of an extremely different personality to have that type of relationship with Prabhupāda, which he fulfilled perfectly. He struggled with Śrīla Prabhupāda to acquire



the Bombay land, and helped secure Hyderabad and Māyāpura. In Māyāpura he was in charge of the negotiations to begin construction. It was very difficult. The government thought we were CIA agents, and the Muslims were overcharging us. Under such difficulties Prabhupāda sent Tamal Krishna Mahārāja to negotiate because only he could do it. He had the ambition, the aggressiveness, and the power to do it. He had the qualities necessary to preach in the modern world. There is no doubt in my mind that he was sent by Kṛṣṇa to assist Śrīla Prabhupāda in this way.

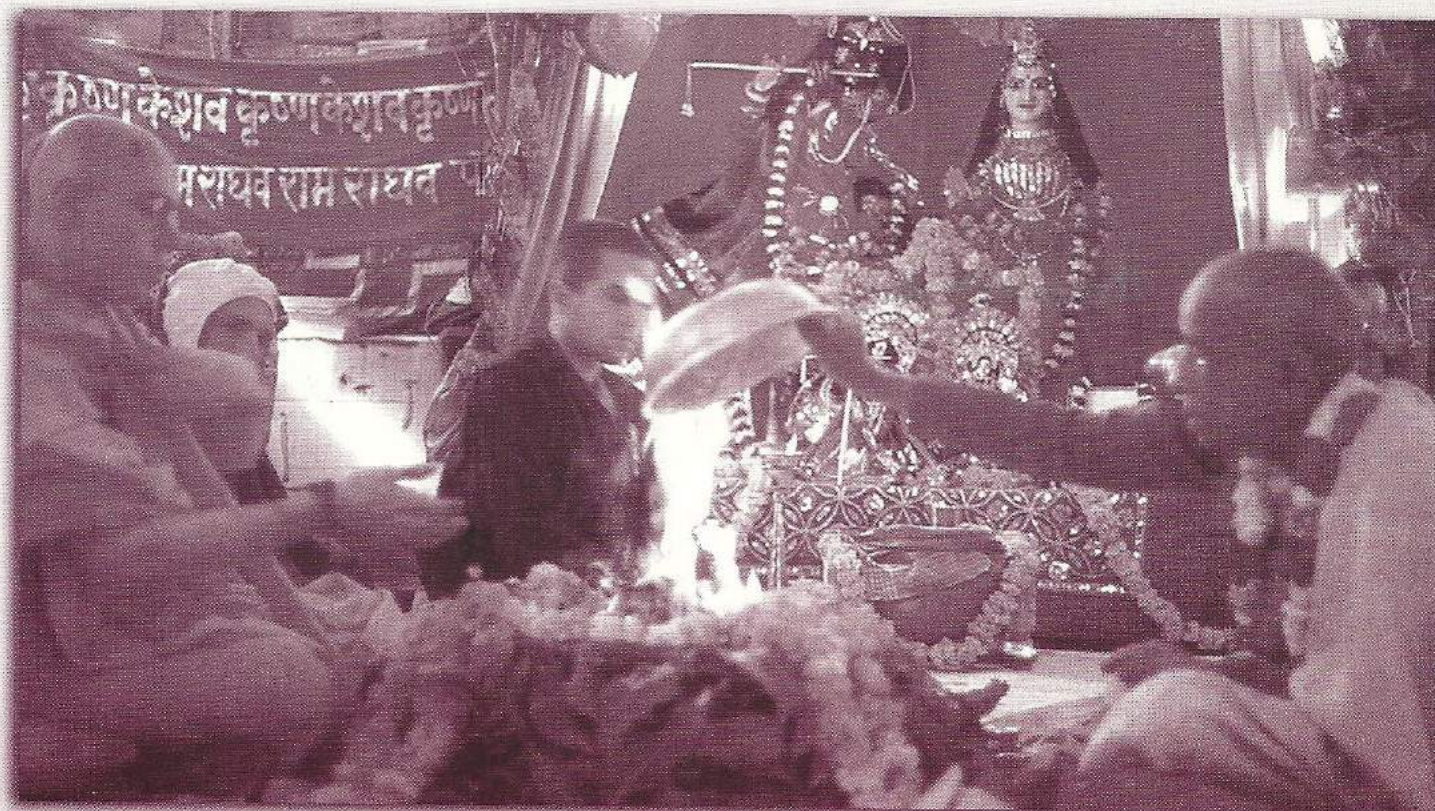
He was not only the advisor and confidante to Śrīla Prabhupāda but he even cleaned Prabhupāda's stool. When Prabhupāda was ill we had to carry him to the bathroom. Sometimes there was stool on his *dhōti* but Tamal Krishna Mahārāja did not mind. He was very humble. In his book *TKG's Diary*, he describes Prabhupāda's last months in Vṛndāvana. That book touches the heart and inspires devotional service.

His next great achievement was entering China! I was sent to Pakistan but I didn't make any devotees. But he went to China and made devotees. It was not easy to go to this communist country where you could be shot, imprisoned or killed for preaching any kind of religion. Prabhupāda gave him this order in 1975 and he went in 1981. Prabhupāda prepared himself for twenty years before coming to America. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja prepared himself for five years to go to the most atheistic country in the world—China. Who could do such a thing? He didn't have a ticket or an invitation. He went

and created the field. Prabhupāda had the potency to do this and he gave that potency to his devotees. To me this is the culmination of his preaching.

But Tamal Krishna Mahārāja did not stop there. He continued on to a very important step. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja was also an intellectual; he was a very good writer. He had so many attributes that you cannot describe them and they all come from being empowered by Śrīla Prabhupāda. After many years he went back to Oxford University to write his PhD paper, which would establish Prabhupāda as the great authority on Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavism. Scholars don't accept Prabhupāda as an authority because Prabhupāda is a practitioner. But Tamal Krishna Mahārāja established Prabhupāda as a scholar whom other scholars would have to refer to. His whole paper was to glorify Prabhupāda. Through this wonderful service and achievement he established Prabhupāda in the academic world.

Who knows what more service he would have gone on to do to glorify Śrīla Prabhupāda. Now he has been taken from us. It is a great loss to our society and to the young devotees. Wherever he went, America, India, Europe, China, he made devotees. He could do this because he was empowered. We only are the losers. Therefore we should take guidance from these great devotees who served Śrīla Prabhupāda and can give Śrīla Prabhupāda to us. We know that Tamal Krishna Mahārāja is again with Śrīla Prabhupāda. We should always remember these great pastimes of Tamal Krishna Mahārāja, read his books, and then we will feel his separation.





# Pioneering in Europe



What a change of events! Prabhupāda was proposing that I could put aside all of my responsibilities in favour of coming to London. There was need of help for organizing *saṅkīrtana*, and he was turning to me for assistance... I was elated at the prospect of joining Prabhupāda in London. For months Prabhupāda had eagerly talked of going to London. Now that he was there, Kṛṣṇa was fulfilling his highest expectations. With the help of the Beatles, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* record had already made us famous throughout England as well as many of the European countries... It was an opportunity not to be missed. Prabhupāda's advice was clearly stated: he wanted my presence with him; my willingness was all that was needed.

—Tamal Krishna Goswami (Servant of the Servant)

## Memories of Goswami Mahārāja London

H.G. Dhananjaya dāsa

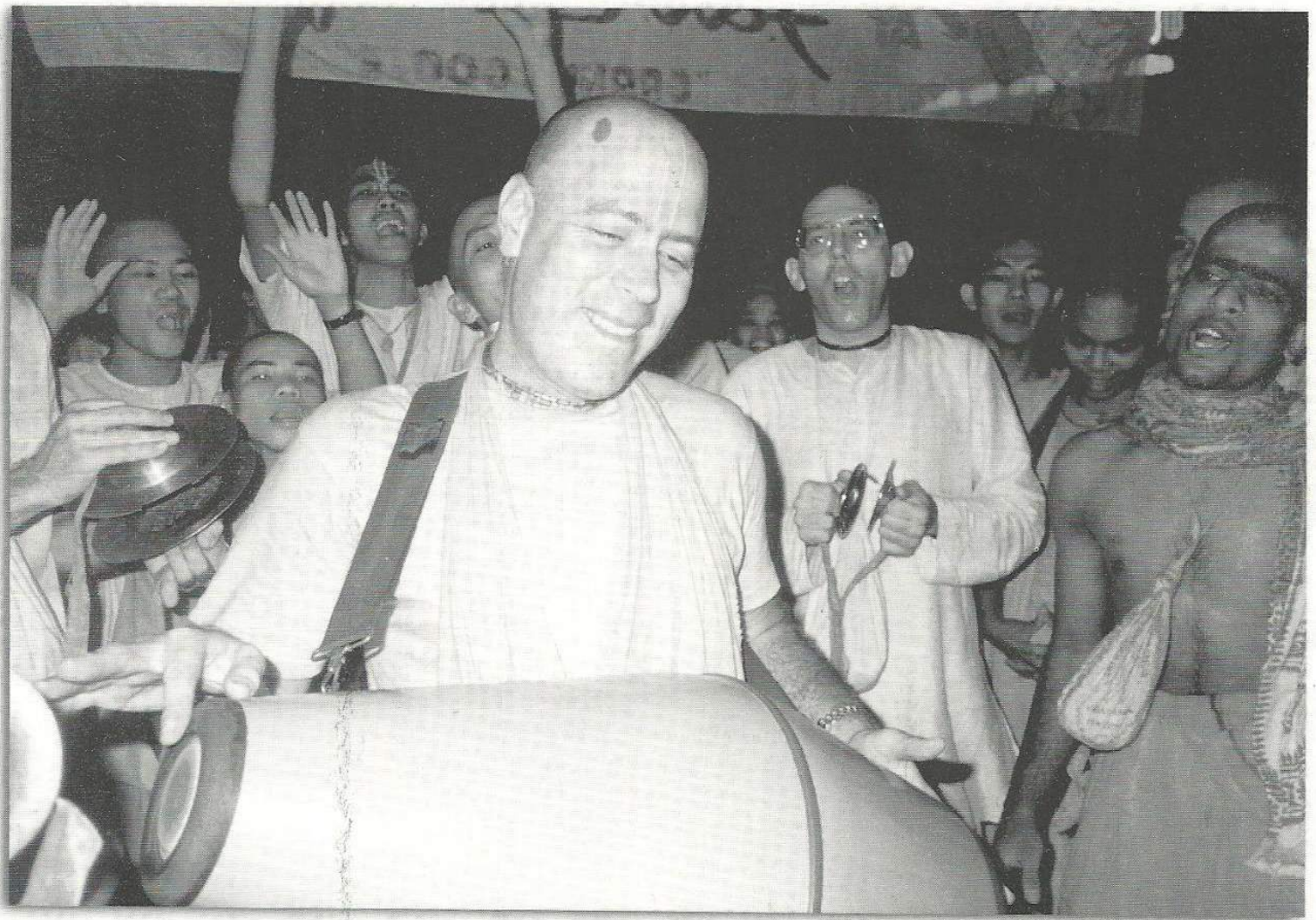
(spoken in Vrndāvana, 16 March 2001)

I met Tamal Krishna Mahārāja when he came to London. He came to establish *saṅkīrtana* in London. By nature he was an organiser, and he liked everyone around him to be the same. So there was no room for anything else except Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Under Tamal Krishna Mahārāja the temple was very organised. We did nine hours of street *saṅkīrtana* every day in three shifts, nine am till twelve pm, two pm till five pm, and seven pm till ten pm for six days a week, in military style. He had his watch set; we had to be ready with fresh *tilaka* and nice clothing ready to go out. We all had the same *dhotis*, *saris*, sweaters, and socks. He really set the standard in how to dress and appear in public. As Prabhupāda said, "First dress, then address."

On Sunday we cooked a wonderful feast for the guests. I had the great opportunity to make *samosās* with Tamal Krishna Mahārāja. He loved making *samosās* and eating them too. On a daily basis he would keep eighty *samosās* for himself. On Sunday we would make four hundred *samosās*. He taught me how to make the filling that was Prabhupāda's recipe of peas and cauliflower, cooked down to a thick paste. We would also make sweet rice and carrot *halvā* that took all night to make.

Tamal Krishna Mahārāja had the great fortune of being with Śrīla Prabhupāda when he visited a Hindu temple in East London where Rādhā Londonīśvara came from. Prabhupāda had the amazing ability to attract Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead at the right time. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja was present with Gurudas, Śyāmasundara and Mukunda. Prabhupāda and the devotees had been invited to visit the temple. In the room where the meeting was taking place, Prabhupāda noticed two boxes and he enquired what was in them. The Indian gentleman replied, "We just acquired these Rādhā Kṛṣṇa deities but our priest says there is a flaw. They have arrived damaged and so we cannot install Them as they are imperfect." Prabhupāda said, "That





means They are useless?" "Yes, we have no use for Them at all," said the man. Hearing this Prabhupāda turned to Tamal Krishna Mahārāja and the devotees and said, "Can you carry these boxes between you to the van." They said, "Yes Prabhupāda." "Alright take Them immediately". So they went over, picked up the boxes, and before the man could reply or stop them they had gone down the stairs and taken the deities. I was in Bury Place when Prabhupāda arrived with the deities. He told the devotees to take the deities up to his room, on the first floor and place Them by the fireplace. His face was beaming. He said, "Just see, Kṛṣṇa has tricked these people into thinking that He is imperfect but actually Kṛṣṇa is always perfect and complete."

Tamal Krishna Mahārāja recommended me to Prabhupāda for second initiation, and the ceremony was performed on the same day that Rādhā Londonīśvara were installed. I owe my *brāhmaṇa* initiation to Tamal Krishna Mahārāja, that took place on December 14 1969. He took me under his wing and trained me how to do everything—from the accounts, organising *sāṅkīrtana* and managing the temple. We slept in the same room and I got to know him in a very personal way. He was very loving and tolerant, always teaching me whatever he had learnt from Prabhupāda.

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu engaged Svarūpa Damodar as his personal secretary. Anyone wanting to see Caitanya Mahāprabhu had to see Svarūpa Damodar first. In the same way Tamal Krishna Mahārāja was Prabhupāda's Svarūpa Damodar. He was Prabhupāda's personal secretary and Prabhupāda had every faith in him. Just as Svarūpa Damodar was able to understand the mind of Lord Caitanya because he was an intimate associate of the Lord, similarly Tamal Krishna Mahārāja really understood Śrīla Prabhupāda's mind better than anyone else.

Over the thirty-three years that I knew him, I saw him grow into a Vaiṣṇava of exceptional intellect. He had the gift of transmitting the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness and making a change in peoples hearts. He could interact with people from many different walks of life in a very special and unique way making a huge difference in their understanding of Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission. He was just like Śrīla Prabhupāda. In many ways he was emulating Śrīla Prabhupāda who could touch the heart of the street sweeper, the prime minister, a famous rock musician, or the grandson of Henry Ford. I have lost a dear friend, a great teacher who is an inspiration to my own Kṛṣṇa consciousness. We have to see Kṛṣṇa's hand in his departure. For him the pain is over, but we have to endure that pain of separation.



## Paris

### H.G. Harivilāsa dāsa

(spoken in Vrndāvana, 16 March 2002)

H.H. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja is my *vartma-pradarśaka guru*. The first time I met him was in London when I was a new devotee. As soon as I met him I knew that this was a formidable person. He had the uncanny power to look into your heart and understand how to bring you to Śrīla Prabhupāda. I was a little frightened by that because I was there as a tourist. The first thing he did was to very methodically take all my money. I realised he was trained by someone and was very good. The next thing he did was to give me a service to clean the *prasādam* room at three thirty in the morning before *maṅgala aratika*. My second service was to clean Śrīla Prabhupāda's *vyāsāsana*. When I did this I would feel an incredible energy that was also in the devotees which made them do amazing things. After one month I decided to leave but I was afraid to say anything because I knew Tamal Krishna Mahārāja would confront me. Somehow he got the news. Immediately he came to the *brahmacāri* room and for an hour he tried to convince me not to leave. Although I left, I can say that this was the turning point in my Kṛṣṇa consciousness. When you see a devotee so convinced to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda you become convinced also.

When I suggested we try to introduce street *saṅkīrtana*, the Paris devotees were hesitant. "But who will hear us chanting behind closed doors?" I argued. "Lord Caitanya advised that the holy name be chanted publicly, wherever the largest number of people could take advantage. We should have faith that His desire can never be checked."...I convinced them that if we took precautions, we could easily escape the watchful eye of the police. And so, late in the afternoon, with the sun nearly setting, I led the small group of apprehensive devotees to a less frequented street of the city. The only ones to remain undaunted were Hanumān and Harivilāsa, an enthusiastic, intelligent Armenian-born devotee who had been with the devotees in London and had joined us now in Paris...After an hour passed without incident, the devotees became more confident and, feeling relaxed, chanted with more enthusiasm...Like Himalayan sages who emerge in the public after a long winter's seclusion, the Paris devotees happily performed *saṅkīrtana* after months of silence.

—Tamal Krishna Goswami (Servant of the Servant)

I left and went to Paris. And lo and behold a week later Tamal Krishna Mahārāja came to Paris. The first thing he did was to invite me to associate with the devotees. I

couldn't say no and so I went to see him. He told me, "We're going to start *saṅkīrtana* in Paris." The next day we went out on the street for the first time in the history of Paris. He taught us the *swāmī* two step right on the street. He had us line up in military fashion in a straight line and said, "You all have to dance in exactly the same way." We started in a very humble way, Tamal Krishna Mahārāja was with us everyday.

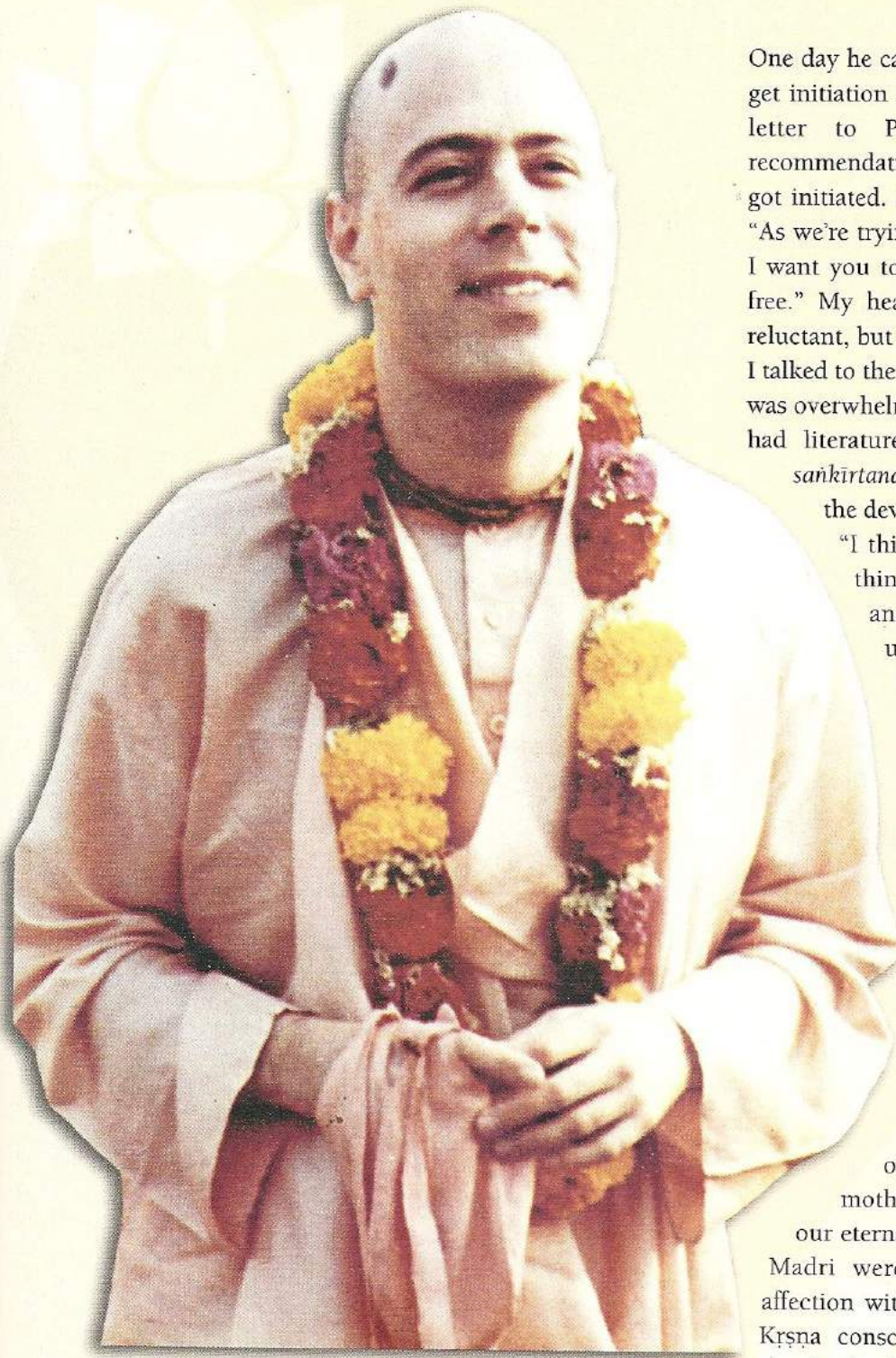
One day he said, "This is not working out. We're not making any money for a temple." He instructed me, "You go out and find these baskets with a handle." So I did that. He put a few coins in it and told me, "When we are

out chanting you stand near the *kīrtana* party and when anyone walks by you, shake the basket with the coins in." This was a stroke of genius, and it worked. People understood and they gave donations.

But we didn't have a temple. He had an apartment. Some devotees were sleeping on the bridge. We had no home. Our home was his apartment. Every day we went there for *prasāda* and then we'd go out on *saṅkīrtana*. We were also doing a Sunday program in a rented place. One day an American boy came, who is now Locanānanda prabhu. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja told me to convince him to give his apartment to us for a temple. He was very sharp. He always gave me orders which meant, "Don't come back until it's done." So I went to visit this boy. I took *prasādam* for him. We talked and he told me he was miserable. Finally I said, "Let us move into your apartment." He was shocked. But I begged and told him we'd take care of him and cook nice *prasādam* for him. And he said yes. Next day our ragged army of the Paris Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement moved into his one room flat.







At that time Tamal Krishna Mahārāja had just got married to Mādri devī dāsi. He and his wife became our mother and father and we were their sons. They treated us with such affection. That affection was a trademark of Kṛṣṇa consciousness then. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja was very strict. We had a very structured day, with structured *prasādam*. Every morning we had nine chickpeas that were soaked overnight with a little ginger, hot cereal, a piece of fruit and some milk. Then we would come back at lunch for *dahl*, *subji* and rice with a little yogurt. And at night we had milk and some bananas. We were always together and he was always preaching to us about Śrīla Prabhupāda and from *Bhagavad-gītā*.

One day he called me to one side and said, “You should get initiation from Prabhupāda.” He told me to write a letter to Prabhupāda. He wrote a letter of recommendation for myself and Locanānanda, and we got initiated. Another day he called me and explained, “As we’re trying to print this literature of Prabhupāda’s, I want you to go the printer and tell him to do it for free.” My heart almost sank. I went but I was very reluctant, but because he had ordered me I had to do it. I talked to the man for three hours and I begged him. He was overwhelmed and finally agreed to do it. So now we had literature to give out. He then made me the *saṅkīrtana* leader. I would play the drum and lead the devotees. One day he said to me on the street, “I think we should go this way.” I said, “No I think we should go this way.” He looked at me and smiled and said, “Okay, I think you have understood, so now I can go as Prabhupāda has other things for me to do.” He said it so affectionately. I realised I had been trained up by him—just like a little bird practices to fly under the protection of its mother, so he had trained us and we were ready. Then one day he called me and said, “Prabhupāda is calling me to Los Angeles and I have to go right away. So you’re the temple president now. You take care of the devotees, go out on *saṅkīrtana*, and just do everything as I have taught you.”

He left and we were devastated. Every one of us cried like babies, because our mother and father were leaving. Prabhupāda is our eternal father but Tamal Krishna Mahārāja and Madri were our proxy mother and father. The affection with which they treated us sustained us in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. What goes into the heart is mostly the devotees’ love for Śrīla Prabhupāda. I saw that in Tamal Krishna Mahārāja. Once I witnessed him chanting his *gāyatri* mantra. It was one of the most profound experiences of my life. He took a picture of Śrīla Prabhupāda and put it in front of him. He chanted his whole *gāyatri* mantra without taking his eyes off Śrīla Prabhupāda. When I saw that, in my heart I prayed, “Please Kṛṣṇa let me also one day develop that kind of love for a pure devotee.” Tamal Krishna Mahārāja had that love. The unselfish sacrifice, the amazing concentration of the mind in satisfying the order of the spiritual master, Prabhupāda says that is the secret of success in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja demonstrated this to me by his service. He was Prabhupāda’s most intimate servant, the servant of the servant.



## Germany

### H.H. Śacīnandana Mahārāja

(a letter written on 16 March 2002)

Dear Tamal Krishna Mahārāja, dear brother, friend and helper. Feeling your separation we remember Lord Kṛṣṇa's words, "Please understand: When somehow made mindful of those one loves, one is given back one's life. Forgetting those more dear than one's own breath is more painful than dying. Those dear as life one can never forget, but when reminded of them in a special way one feels happy, like one who has lived a life of good fortune."

(*Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, Part 1, Chapter 7 Text 129-130)

I'm standing on a bridge over a cold river somewhere here in the town of death, Sarajevo. We just completed a five-hour-long *nāma-yajña* that was dedicated to you. Your blissful smiling face greeted us from a picture on the altar. It had a wonderful blue garland around it made from hyacinths. Devotees from this troubled town as well as the public offered you an *aratik*. The *bhajana* became more and more ecstatic till it finally reached a height, which is difficult to describe—everyone was dancing with serious but ecstatic expressions on their faces. In the devotees' hearts were feelings of bliss mixed with separation.

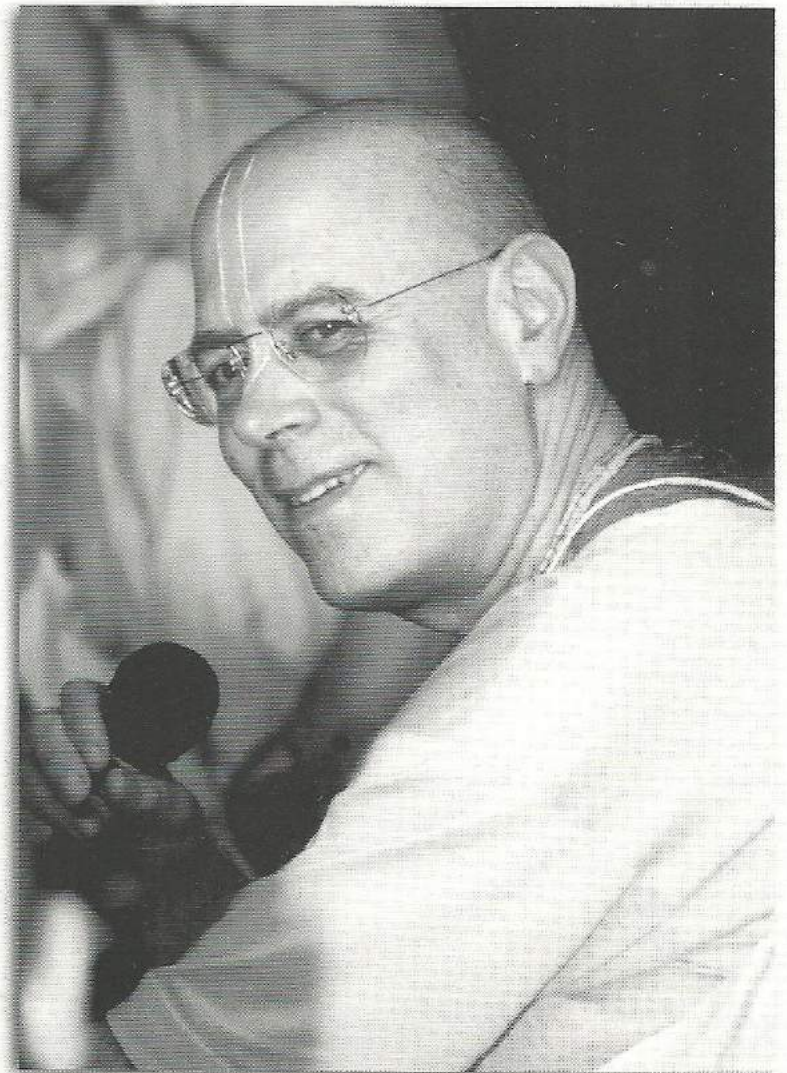
Now I'm on this bridge. It is twelve o'clock at night and I'm throwing the garland that was around you into the river below. The cold water grabs the garland and quickly carries it out of view. As another wave of pain suddenly overwhelms me, I remember the words Caitanya Mahāprabhu spoke to His mother Śacī when He left her to take *sannyāsa*, "I cannot repay the mercy you gave me. Birth after birth I am in debt to you. Listen, the whole world is dependent on the Supreme Personality of Godhead. No one is independent of Him. The Supreme Personality of Godhead brings people together, and then He also pushes them apart. Who has the power to understand what He wills?" (*Caitanya Bhāgavata Ādi-līlā Ch. 28*).

But then, when the garland is almost gone out of view, I see how it is carried by the liquid hands of

the swift river to the moon. The moon... the Kṛṣṇacandra moon... And suddenly I feel an incredible feeling of security; The rising moon of Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy has taken you. And I am remembering how you came into my life, like the moon that dispels darkness. It was sometime in 1969 or 1970. The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra* had just hit the pop charts in Europe. The first devotees were now on a preaching campaign throughout the mainland and had reached Germany where

they gave many concerts, enthusiastically chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.

My mother had invited me (at that time I was fourteen or fifteen years old) to accompany her for some shopping in Hamburg city—I believe it was for the birthday of my older brother. We had purchased all the presents and only needed to go into the Karstadt Department Store for a few last items. In front of that department store my life changed. For the first time in





my life I met devotees—I met you. It was very cold and a little snow was falling. But you were blissfully chanting with a few devotees gracefully dancing the *swāmī* step. Transfixed, I stood and watched the *kīrtana* party. Suddenly I felt my mother's tap on the arm, "Come now, we have to do our shopping and catch the train home." Reluctantly I followed her, but the attraction to the *kīrtana* party still remained in my heart and grew stronger. After some time, I had to excuse myself. Because I sensed that my mother would not be so happy if I stood "for too long" near these unusual monks, I pretended I had to go to the toilet. I quickly went down and looked again at the *kīrtana* party, this time from a safe distance.

Totally absorbed by the music, my attention was drawn to you, Tamal Krishna Goswami. Somehow, with your keen preaching instinct, you must have seen it. The next thing I remember is that you stood next to me and in a friendly way asked me if I lived in Hamburg... and soon we were discussing.

So many questions, posed by a very young person, but you politely and expertly answered them all. I think that you spoke in broken German. How happy and enthusiastic I became, and how convinced: "One day I will follow the example of this person."

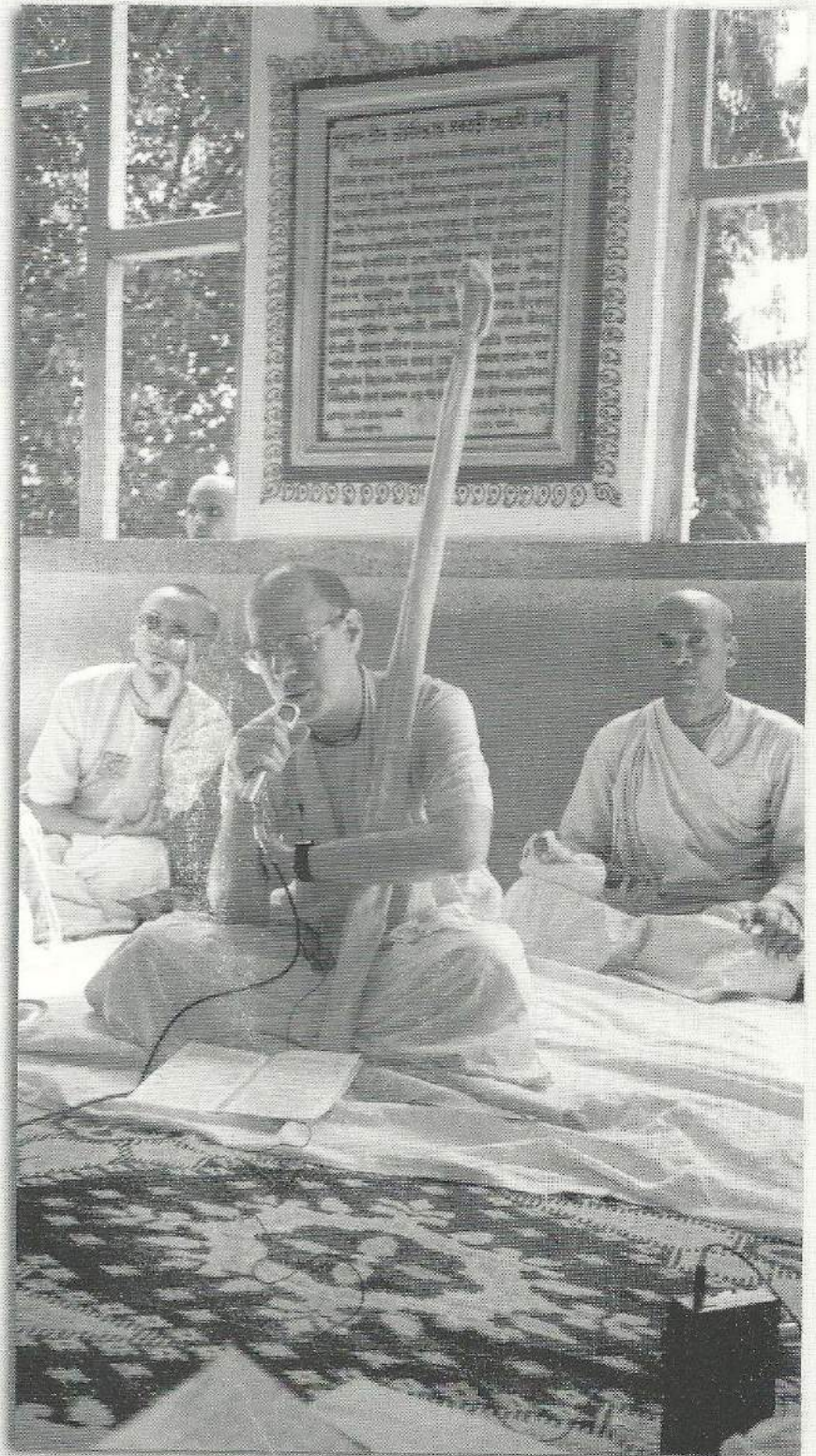
The last thing you told me before my mother found me was, "Please try the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. It is wonderful. By chanting you will meet the most wonderful person." You gave me the *mantra* on a piece of paper.

For a long time this memory used to come back to me. Before falling asleep I would always see your kind face coming like the smiling moon into my life, comforting me and giving me hope. The rays of this moon worked on me until I finally decided to join the devotees. As I am standing on the bridge in Sarajevo and see how your garland is flowing towards the Kṛṣṇa moon, I become very grateful. Thank you very, very much.

We had many discussions that were always very open. They were always very personal, deep and loving. What struck me was your very determined desire to go back to Kṛṣṇa,

at all costs. We danced, dined, laughed and disagreed like brothers do. No half-hearted relationship! Now you have left us and I am sure you are in the exalted state of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, serving the dear Lord. Thank you so much for kindly coming into my life as my *vartma-pradarśaka guru*. And please be so kind to forgive all my improper behaviour and stubbornness.

Always your humble servant, Śacīnandana Swāmī





# Against all Odds

Prabhupāda revealed his desire to go immediately to India. It was an adventure I had been dreaming of for months, one I did not want to miss. Though we had no ISKCON centers there as yet, without hesitation I volunteered to be the G.B.C. zonal secretary for India, knowing that Prabhupāda would also be there.

—Tamal Krishna Goswami (Servant of the Servant)

## Remembering Tamal Krishna Goswami in India

Homages given in Mayapura, 16 March 2002

H.H. Jayapāṭaka Mahārāja

I first met H.H. Tamal Krishna Goswami in 1968. He was an inspiration for me to take up Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I met him again in 1970 or 1971 when Tamal Krishna Mahārāja was the G.B.C. for India.

Śrīla Prabhupāda made me the temple president of the Calcutta temple and as my G.B.C. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja would guide me and see I did my service properly. He was a perfectionist and I was a very imperfect person. I was placed as temple president in Calcutta eleven times, and ten times I was removed by Tamal Krishna Mahārāja. But then he would either put me back when the alternative was worse than I was, or sometimes Prabhupāda put me back. But the eleventh time Prabhupāda removed me.

He was always very kind to me as a friend. I saw him with great awe and respect. Once I moved to Māyāpura, we started working together. We developed a very strong team dedicated to developing the Māyāpura project. In 1987 we became co-G.B.C.s of Māyāpura temple.

In 1989 when I was in hospital in intensive care, after almost dying, he came to see me with Sivarama Mahārāja who brought his Gaura Nitāi deities. At that time I didn't have a *brāhmaṇa* thread because it had been taken off in intensive care. I asked him to chant on my thread because I wanted a thread chanted in Prabhupāda's *paramparā*, so he was kind enough to chant on the *brāhmaṇa* thread and give it to me. After his departure I saw that he didn't have a *brāhmaṇa* thread. Although I am not qualified, I knew he would want a *brāhmaṇa* thread so I chanted on one and gave it to him.

After receiving his PhD, he was going to come to Māyāpura to help develop the university. He attended the Māyāpura development meetings, giving many valuable contributions. For the Māyāpura project now it is inconceivable how things will go on. The Lord has inconceivable plans. Since Tamal Krishna Mahārāja is certainly with Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am sure both of them will make the plans and arrangements for this uncompleted service to be done by his followers.





The place where he left in the *dhāma* is called Puliya where Haridāsa Thākura used to chant 300 000 names of Kṛṣṇa. It is the place of the *nāmācārya*; the place most associated with Haridāsa Thākura in all of Gaura maṇḍala *dhāma*. It seems very significant that he was doing so much *harināma kīrtana* and then he passed away at Haridāsa Thākura's *bhājana kutir*.

This is an incalculable loss to ISKCON. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja touched many people. His wisdom, his loyalty and dedication to Prabhupāda, his Prabhupāda consciousness and his aristocracy, left a deep impression on everyone. I always felt myself totally unqualified to be associating with such an exalted person as Tamal Krishna Mahārāja. He was a most dear friend and god-brother. I want to thank him for all his association.

### H.H. Rādhānāth Mahārāja

The first time I met Tamal Krishna Goswami Mahārāja was in March 1971 in Bombay. It was Śrīla Prabhupāda's first major large scale preaching program in India, where tens of thousands of people attended. By Prabhupāda's mercy I was asked to sit close to him on the stage. After Śrīla Prabhupāda led *kīrtana* and spoke from *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, he was walking off the stage. He walked right in front of me and I went to touch his feet to take dust. Just when I put my hand towards Prabhupāda's lotus feet Śrīla Tamal Krishna Mahārāja, his voice like thunder roared, "No one touches Prabhupāda's feet." So being very fearful I pulled my hand back and thought I had made an offence. Prabhupāda looked at me and said, "You can touch my feet."

The next encounter I had with Tamal Krishna Mahārāja was in Vṛndāvana in November 1971. Prabhupāda was giving *darśana* every afternoon in his rooms and all the devotees were going out on *harināma saṅkīrtana*. At that time I had come from the Himalayas and so I had long matted hair. I wasn't a devotee yet. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja saw me sitting with Prabhupāda, and he said, "All devotees are ordered to go out on *saṅkīrtana*, no one can sit with Prabhupāda." So I took one of the strands of my matted hair and showed it to him and said, "I'm not a devotee." And Prabhupāda again looked at me, smiled, turned to Tamal Krishna Mahārāja and said, "He's not a devotee, let him stay."

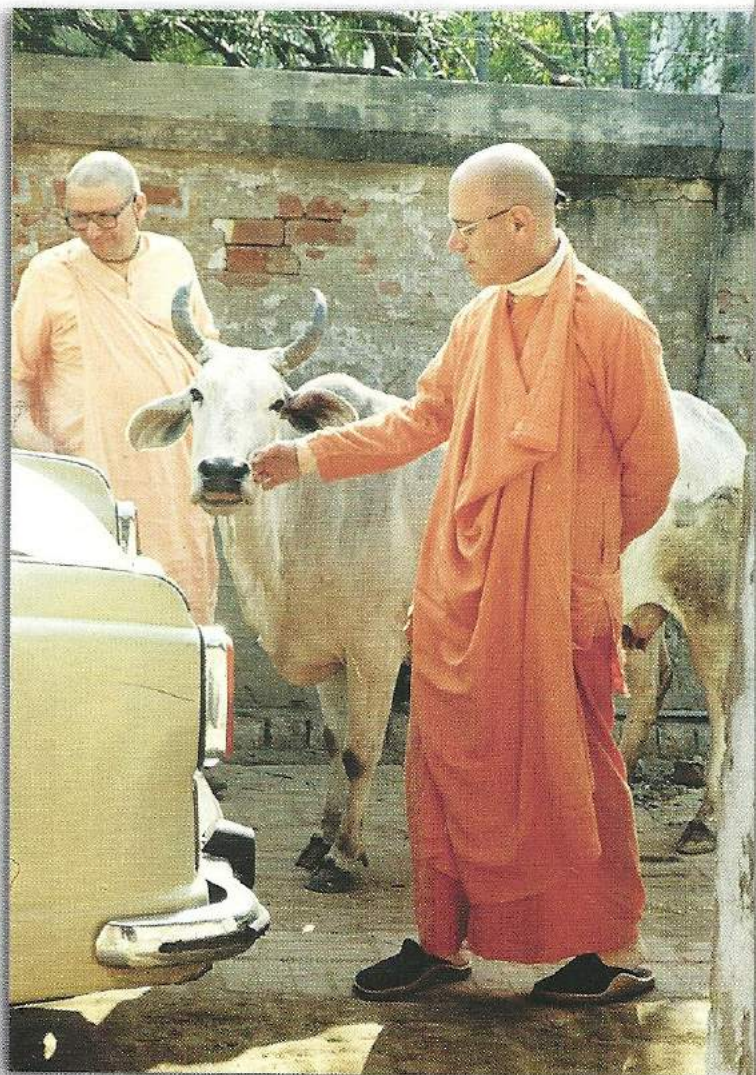
It was March 1971. Accompanied by a god-brother, I listened as our lawyer friend Dibendra dasa haggled with the land's two Muslim owners, Jabad Ali Sek and Niboron Sek. They argued back and forth about the value of the *portal* crop...Years earlier, Śrīla Prabhupāda, having just returned from America, had begun negotiating with them. Of all the disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura, he alone had gone to the West to spread the teachings of Lord Caitanya. Now two of his disciples were trying to complete the transaction he had begun... I tried to appear as if I were interested in the *portals*, but in my mind I was simply thinking of Prabhupāda's vision for a transcendental city... Now there was a place to begin, a place to invite Prabhupāda so that he would begin to unfold his transcendental blueprint of future development.

—Tamal Krishna Goswami (Servant of the Servant)

So it took me some time to understand his mood. But actually this was Śrīla Tamal Krishna Goswami Mahārāja: He did not concern himself with his own popularity. His exclusive desire in life was to serve the order of his spiritual master.

Śrīla Prabhupāda saw in Tamal Krishna Mahārāja a disciple who would do anything and everything for him, risking his life, popularity, everything. Therefore he entrusted Goswami Mahārāja with

services that no one else in our movement or even in the world could do. Prabhupāda wanted to get this land in Māyāpura. He sent some of his top disciples who were experienced in India but they utterly failed. Then he sent Tamal Krishna Mahārāja. Brahmānanda prabhu told me, Prabhupāda sent Goswami Mahārāja because he knew no one else could do it. He spent weeks struggling and





striving to make the arrangement, against all odds. It was actually impossible. And finally with great effort he purchased the land. He came to Calcutta in the middle of the night. All the lights were closed except in Śrīla Prabhupāda's room. Goswami Mahārāja came into the room and Prabhupāda said, "I have been waiting for you." Goswami Mahārāja gave him the deed and said, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, the land in Māyāpura is yours." Prabhupāda said, "Thank you very much. Now you can take rest."

He told me about one of the most difficult services Prabhupāda gave him to do: the publishing of the original *Kṛṣṇa* book from Japan. The books came to India and Prabhupāda wanted them immediately for the *paṇḍāl* program in Bombay and other places, but there was a strike in the docks all over India. A strike in India means the most terrible, violent criminals make blockades and if anyone tries to penetrate these lines they are either beaten or killed. There was no way to get to the books. But Prabhupāda said, "I want the books now." Tamal Krishna Mahārāja went to every possible government agent and minister in Calcutta. They said, "It is impossible, no one can get through those lines to get to the books. You will be killed." He went all the way to Delhi to the federal government, going from office to office. He just would not accept the impossible. Prabhupāda said, "Impossible is a word in a fools dictionary." And he demonstrated it through this one disciple—Goswami Mahārāja. Finally he found some very high-stationed ministers who signed the papers. Then he had to go from office to office all over Calcutta. In the end he had all of Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Kṛṣṇa* books ready to be distributed all over India.

All those who truly love Śrīla Prabhupāda must be eternally indebted to this most confidential associate. I believe from all the leaders of ISKCON, Prabhupāda called Śrīla Tamal Krishna Goswami Mahārāja to be by his side more than anyone else. He had complete faith and trust in his surrender. If we follow in his footsteps and keep his life's example always within our hearts, we too can become very dear to Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrī Śrī Rādhā Mādhava.

## H.H. Bhakti Bhrṅga Govinda Mahārāja

Although I met Tamal Krishna Goswami in the seventies whilst serving in India, my relationship with him didn't start to blossom until the mid-eighties. I met him after one of my god-brothers had left Kṛṣṇa consciousness. At that time there was a feeling of frustration and despair in my life and Tamal Krishna Mahārāja came onto the horizon. He was very strict, demanding and sharp. But he was also a man who was simply looking for sweet loving relations amongst his friends and this really touched my heart.

Once when I was with him in 1987 in Vṛndāvana, one winter morning we were standing in his garden. I said, "Goswami Mahārāja you are so fortunate to have had so much association with Śrīla Prabhupāda. Could you tell me some pastimes with Prabhupāda that you cherish and relish the most." Goswami Mahārāja smiled and said, "Yes... One time back in the very early days of ISKCON in Los Angeles people had been complaining about my tendency to control things to Śrīla Prabhupāda. Prabhupāda called me to his room." Then he explained the famous story; "Prabhupāda asked me to get the *Bhāgavatam*. He had his original *Bhāgavatam* with the spiritual sky on the cover. He said, 'Do you see

this spiritual sky? It's very big. You cannot fathom how big this is. Three-quarters of Kṛṣṇa's creation is the spiritual sky and one-quarter is the material creation. That material creation has *i n n u m e r a b l e* universes. One universe is so big the scientists can't measure it. We're on one planet in one of those universes out of *i n n u m e r a b l e*



universes, which constitute one-quarter of the creation. This one planet, earth is one of the smaller planets in this universe. On this planet there are seven continents, and on one of the continents, North America, there is a great city called Los Angeles. In that Los Angeles city, there's a long boulevard called La Cienega. On that La Cienega Boulevard, there is one church building that is now a Hare Kṛṣṇa Temple. In that one Hare Kṛṣṇa Temple, there is one Tamal Krishna, and he thinks that he is very important.' I felt so small." After he told me he smiled and said, "Prabhupāda actually understood me."



Then I said, "Can you tell me another story that is very dear to your heart that you remember with Śrīla Prabhupāda?" He said, "Oh yes. We were fighting like anything to get the property in Bombay. It was such a struggle. Śrīla Prabhupāda was fighting against Mr Nair, the municipality and so many different forces. We were in South India when we received a phone call that the deed for the property had been signed by Mr Nair. So Prabhupāda said, 'You go to Bombay, take the deed and then we have won the fight.' By the time I reached Bombay Mr Nair had already paid our trusted lawyer some amount of money. When I went to the lawyer, who was a respectable person, he convinced me the deed was not valid and he should cancel it. Then I phoned Prabhupāda and told him the news. The only thing Prabhupāda said was, 'The deed has not been cancelled,' and then he hung up the telephone. After a few days Prabhupāda came to Bombay. At that time Prabhupāda was always dealing with the cream of Bombay society who were aristocratic cultured gentlemen. Day after day, when these gentlemen came for *darśana*, Prabhupāda would always call for me. And then before them he would say, "This is H.H. Tamal Krishna Goswami, my American disciple. He is a great fool." When Tamāl Kṛishṇa Mahārāja told me this he had such a pleasing smile on his face. He said, "My spiritual master knew how to deal with me. Over the years many people wanted to deal with me, but Prabhupāda could understand how to deal with me and Prabhupāda always loved me."

Another instance I had with him was in 1989 in Vṛndāvana. At two o' clock in the morning someone came to my room in the Gurukula building and tapped on the window. I got up to see it was Mahārāja's secretary. He said, "Gurudeva wants to see you immediately." I said, "It's two o' clock in the morning!" But he said, "No, no, Gurudeva has to see you right now." So obediently I rose, took a quick shower, put on fresh clothes and went to

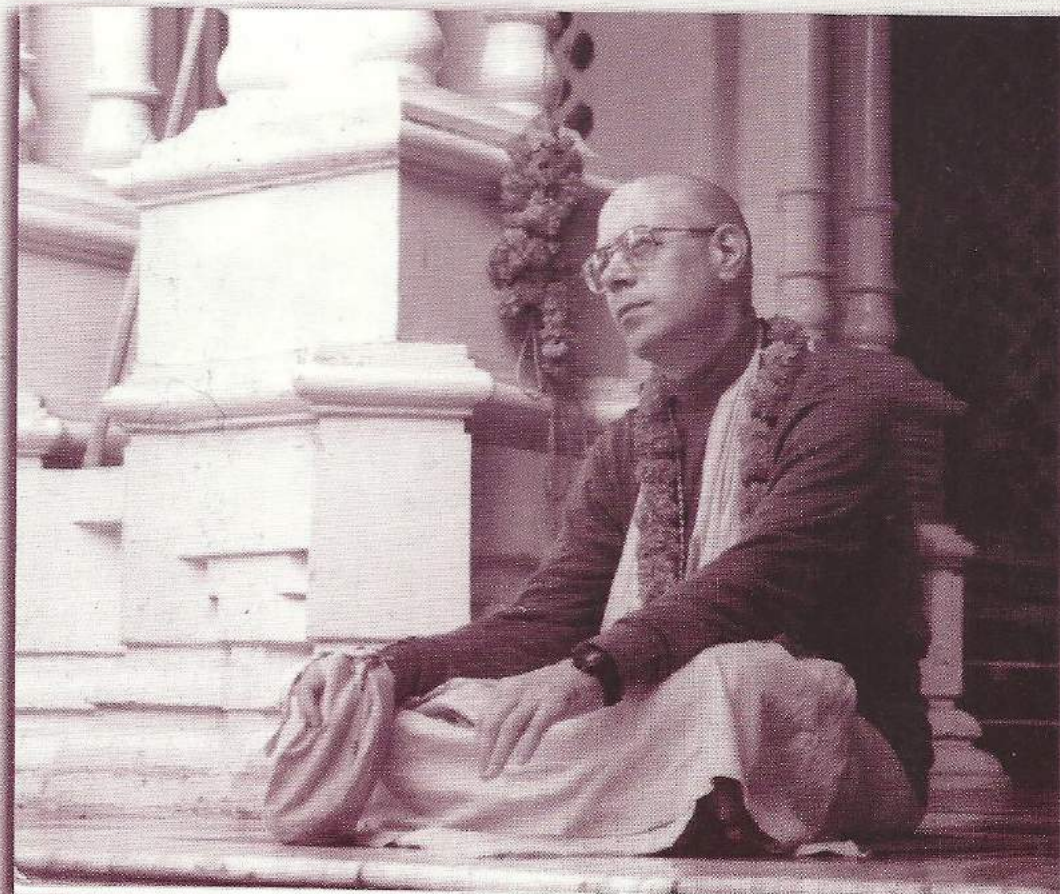
Gurudeva's house. When I went in he was in an intense state. He looked at me and said, "Prabhu, I need association. I want the association of my god-brothers so badly. Jayapaṭaka, he is such a pious man, if you just look at him you can see his piety, you can see how he had Prabhupāda's association, see the service he is rendering. If I could just have his association." Then he said, "Bhakti Cāru Mahārāja is so pious and wonderful. If I could just have his association but he is so busy. And Sivarāma Mahārāja he is such a wonderful Vaiṣṇava. He is so pious, if I could just have his association. Therefore please come with me and give me your association."

Naturally I was overwhelmed. I looked at him and said, "But Jayapaṭaka Mahārāja, Sivarāma Mahārāja, Bhakti Cāru Mahārāja, they are all so pious, I'm not like them." He said, "No, no, I understand that you're not a pious person, but still I want your association."

As so many people have been saying, he was like blazing hot chutney and like irresistible sugar candy. He was so sweet. For me it is a great loss that Mahārāja has gone. He was like my brother. I have many fond memories of Tamal Krishna Mahārāja. I pray that all the members of ISKCON will simply remember him with love.

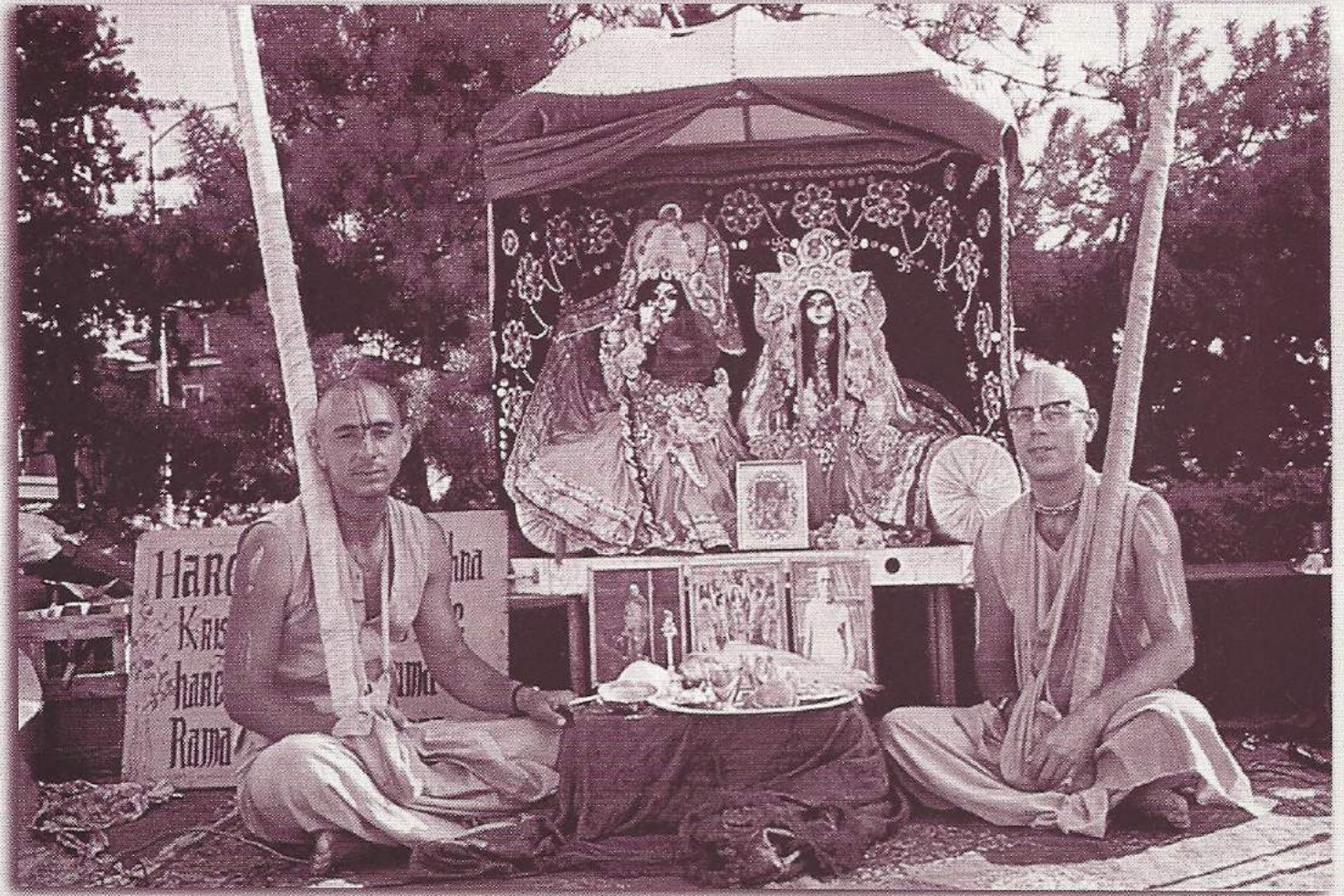
Prabhupāda turned around to me and said to me, "America is now the mightiest nation in the world. They want everything big. So you are Americans; now you must do everything on a grand scale. If you can arrange a twenty-five-story temple in Māyāpura, Bhaktivinoda Thākura will personally come and take you back to Godhead."

—Tamal Krishna Goswami (Servant of the Servant)





# The Rādhā Damodara Party



After I offered my obeisances, His Divine Grace stood up and, moving around his desk, came over and embraced me affectionately in his arms. Pressing his head against mine, first on one side, then on the other, Prabhupāda whispered, “Kṛṣṇa is in your heart. Go and preach!”

—Tamal Krishna Goswami (Servant of the Servant)

There was no mistaking the direction that Prabhupāda was chalking out for me... “Introduce literature from village to village. Lord Caitanya wants this, so carry out His order. Kṛṣṇa will be pleased and Caitanya Mahāprabhu will be kind. He is already kind. You simply have to go village to village and your life will be perfect.” I felt inexplicably gripped by Prabhupāda’s words, as if strapped to a seat and propelled by the most powerful force to engage all of my energy and that of the men under me in the distribution of books.

—Tamal Krishna Goswami (Servant of the Servant)

I was extremely pleased to hear your report from your travelling buses. It sounds as if your program is very very wonderful and I am encouraged to hear that such a program is coming along so nicely... Overflood the whole country by this preaching work. Let the whole United States become Vaiṣṇavas, then everyone else in the world will follow. That is my ambition. Therefore your program is very glorious. This is really preaching. Your intelligence is being properly utilized. In the beginning you took up the distribution of BTGs and you sold the most. Now you have taken up this van program and you will be successful in the same way. This preaching spirit will make you recognized by Kṛṣṇa.”

—Letter from Śrīla Prabhupāda, December 28, 1974



## Memories from H.G. Ravindra Svarūpa dāsa

(Spoken in Māyāpura, 16 March 2002)

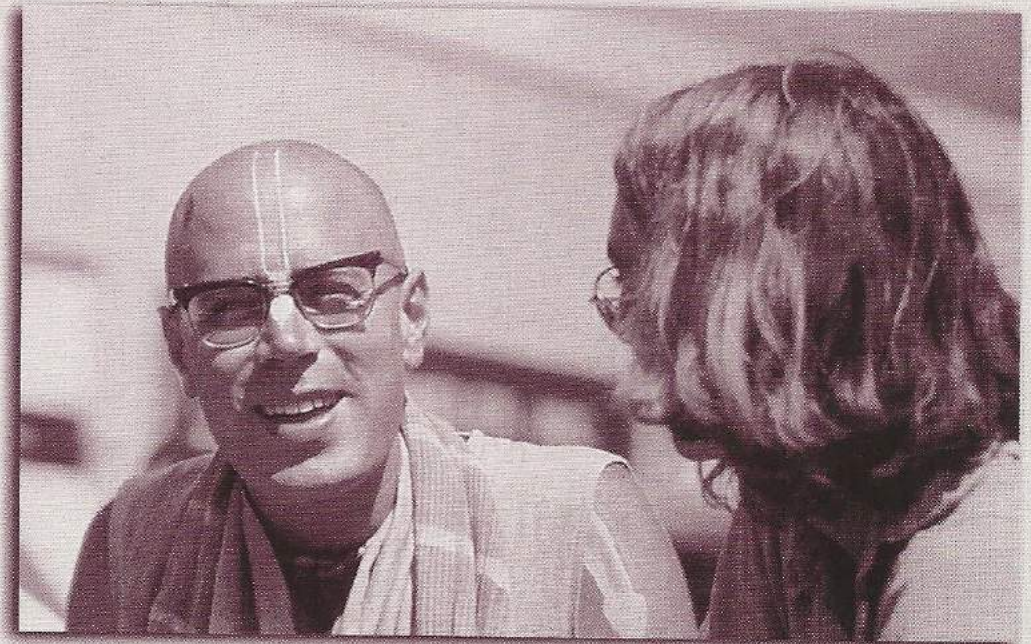
Tamal Krishna Mahārāja told me the story of how he wanted to go out and preach but, Prabhupāda wanted him to stay in India to manage because he was such a competent manager. Finally Tamal Krishna Mahārāja persuaded Prabhupāda to let him go. But Prabhupāda said, "There must be some result." So they started the Rādhā-Damodara program in Berkeley. When Prabhupāda came he said, "What have you done?" Tamal Krishna Mahārāja had a whole line of *brahmacāris*, newly shaved up, who came in one by one and offered *dandavats* and a flower to Prabhupāda's feet. Prabhupāda was in tears. He said, "Okay, you can stay and preach in America."

I first met Tamal Krishna Mahārāja in the early seventies when he had just started the Rādhā-Damodara party in North America. There was just one bus then with himself and Viṣṇujana Swāmī and a few devotees. They had travelled across America. When the bus came to Philadelphia temple to my great good fortune the bus broke down. They couldn't get a replacement part because it was an old greyhound bus. And so they were there for a month and couldn't leave. I was president of Philadelphia temple and during that time I had some close association with Tamal Krishna Mahārāja and Viṣṇujana Swāmī. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja especially made the greatest impression on me because I learnt things from him that are the foundation of my spiritual life. These are things you cannot learn unless you see them. What I learnt from Tamal Krishna Mahārāja was: *tivrena bhakti yogena*, intense devotional service. I saw how intense and focused he was in his devotional service. And I also began to understand that this intensity of focus was the intensity of his service to Śrīla Prabhupāda. That is how I learnt what it meant to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda. I am forever grateful to him for teaching me this. He also taught me many other things. He was very intelligent.

I would go out with him every day. I arranged for them to come to the university where I was still registered as a student to do programs. Here's one story: The band would set up and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Then there was a table where you could get *prasādam*. It was the same menu every day—potatoe and pea *subji* in cream sauce, *halva*, orange strawberry nectar drink and *puris*. Students would come, get a plate, sit down, listen to the music and eat. Tamal Krishna Goswami took me around with him. We stopped at each student and he said, "How do you like the music? How do you like the food?" And he said, "If they say, 'great! I love it,' sit down and talk to them, but if they say, 'oh its alright,' go onto someone else, don't waste your time." In this way you can sort out who's worth talking to. I learnt this valuable lesson in intelligence and efficiency in preaching.

I also saw how intensely focused Tamal Krishna Goswami was on all the details of his service. He tried to make sure that everything was perfect. It was interesting because the person he was with, Viṣṇujana Swāmī, was totally wild. He was the opposite in every way.

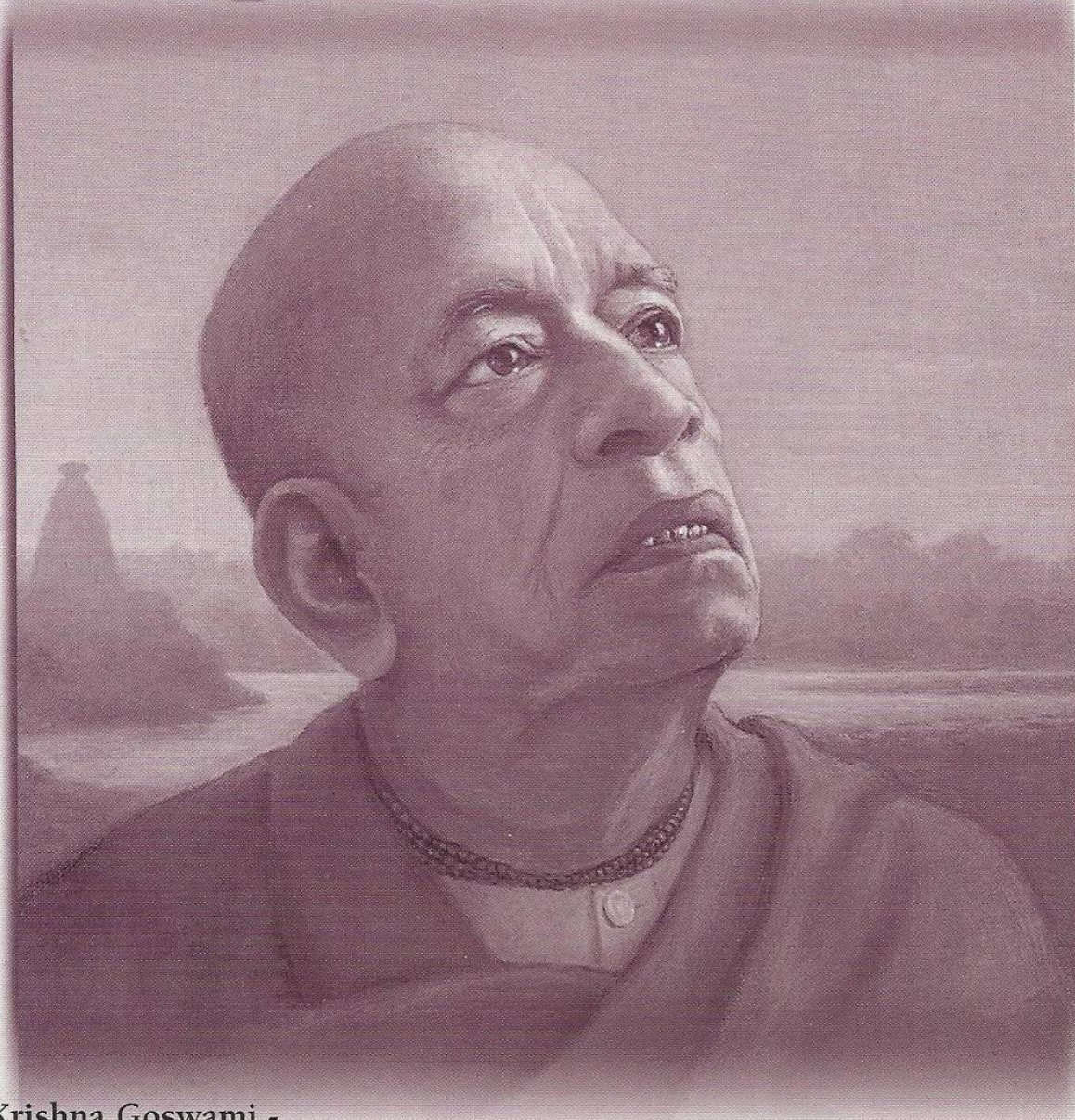
He taught me a lot, things I could never have learnt anywhere else. And I have always been his disciple. I will always be indebted to him. His departure is a wound to



our society. We can only heal it by coming together, re-dedicating ourselves to the same mission Tamal Krishna Goswami dedicated his life to. I think all his disciples have a special benediction that they were taught by him, very carefully. Although he is not now visible to us, still he is working visibly through his disciples, and we will see more and more of all his wonderful qualities manifest in them as time goes by. This is my conviction.



# Prabhupāda Antya-līlā



## Tamal Krishna Goswami - Playwright and Dramatist

H.G. Parvatī devī dāsī

(spoken in Vr̥ndāvana, 16 March 2002)

Tamal Krishna Mahārāja was very affectionate towards his god-brothers and god-sisters. We always appreciated this and were always in awe of his relationship with his disciples.

He had a great love of the culture of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He developed some beautiful dramas about Kṛṣṇa and Śrīla Prabhupāda. I saw them performed for the first time in Māyāpura before Prabhupāda's *puṣpa samādhi* opened. When the drama began it felt like something from the spiritual world. In Dallas once, I had the opportunity to go to his room and on the shelves I saw rows and rows of books, which he used for researching Vedic drama. He always thoroughly researched whatever he did. He had books from Indian

drama and music, books about meter and techniques, and books on English literature like Shakespeare. He felt it was very important for every detail in the drama to come out in a perfect way because the details lead to the correct presentation. He appreciated all aspects of Vedic culture, from writing, drama, music and dance. When the play about Prabhupāda's final pastimes was published he first read it to the devotees in Dallas. During the hours he read no one could move, and by the end there wasn't a dry eye in the temple room. He really captured the spirit of that *līlā* and shared it with us. He presented it in such a way that you could share it with him. He had an appreciation of how the audience would receive the information presented. He wanted the culture of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to be developed. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is a full and complete life style and the test of any culture is the art that is produced. This was very important to him and this is how I remember Śrīla Tamal Krishna Mahārāja.



## Graham M. Schweig

(H. G. Garuda dāsa adhikari)

Director at the Institute for Vaiṣṇava Studies,  
American University, Washington, DC

(Excerpt from Foreword to *Prabhupāda Antya-līlā*;  
*The Final Pastimes of Śrīla Prabhupāda*)

The author of the present work, Tamal Krishna Goswami, who is the voice of the Vaiṣṇava tradition to which he belongs, is the first to write dramas in the English language that conform, in every detail, to the conventions of Sanskrit dramaturgy. In his first drama, *Jagannātha-priya Nāṭakam; The Drama of Lord Jagannātha*, Tamal Krishna Goswami supplements his text with a thorough analysis of the application of Sanskrit dramatic theory. *Prabhupāda Antya-līlā; The Final Pastimes of Śrīla Prabhupāda* represents the author's second work which adheres to the laws and conventions of Sanskrit drama. By aligning himself with the Sanskrit tradition, Tamal Krishna Goswami has made the contribution of bringing this ancient art form to the West.

*The Final Pastimes of Śrīla Prabhupāda* is the story of one great, elderly Vaiṣṇava guru known as Prabhupāda, just prior to his departure from this world, and the intense devotion and love of the disciples in relationship to him. The author is himself an intimate disciple of Prabhupāda who was closely serving him during his last days, and thus he is one of the key figures in the drama. The present work, which grew out of experiences recorded in the author's diary of Prabhupāda's final activities and words, captures the feelings and thoughts that went through the hearts and minds of many disciples as they struggled to take care of their spiritual master during the moments that led up to his departure. Through the colourful medium of drama, written to be staged upon the mind of the reader, a sense of the love and devotion the Vaiṣṇava disciples have for their guru is powerfully conveyed even to one for whom the Vaiṣṇava tradition is foreign.

The author introduces  
"supernatural personalities" in the

fifth and tenth acts of the drama. These "mythic" figures are a common feature of the Sanskrit dramatic tradition and personify aspects of a world "behind the scenes," allowing the audience to enter into the fullness of meaning signified by these personalities. The two main supernatural personalities in the drama are *Yogamāyā* and *Śrāddha*... These two personalities in conversation with each other and witnessing the dealings among the disciples serving their master, allow the author to reveal to the audience the spiritual significance of the drama. The devotees' faith and spontaneous devotion (*śrāddha*) to their guru as it was confronted with the mysterious plan of the Lord (*yogamāyā*) is the underlying theme of the drama.





## The Final Pastimes of Śrīla Prabhupāda Act VI

ŚRADDHĀ (*entering*). Ah! Beautiful Yamunā! And here's that glorious *kadamba* tree Lord Kṛṣṇa graced with His lotus feet. Its body is decorated with ecstatic symptoms in the form of festive flowers.

(*Suddenly noticing*) A half-strung garland of *kadamba* flowers! (*She picks it up.*) The uneven arrangement of the buds indicates its maker was not fully concentrating. The flowers are very fragrant. (*After a moment's thought*) Prabhupāda's devotees were surely here. One of them began to string a garland for him, but due to anxiety the devotee's hands were unsteady, and ultimately he forgot the garland altogether, overwhelmed with worry. (*She puts it down.*)

Look how the dark waters of Yamunā are so still, as if waiting with anticipation for Lord Kṛṣṇa. When feeling the absence of Govinda, hot tears fill her eyes, forming the fine mist that rises from her surface in the heat of the day. But when the Lord arrives to perform His pastimes, her eyes shed jubilant tears, pleasantly cool like morning dew.

Oh! I hear someone coming. (*She looks.*) The entire atmosphere had become surcharged. Some very great personality is approaching. Ah! Look! It is Yogamāyā, Lord Hari's own potency for managing the spiritual world. Her partial expansion, Durgā, bewilders the conditioned souls. But as Yogamāyā she personally arranges the Lord's pastimes with His devotees by inducing spiritual loving sentiments.

Seeing her, one's heart is immediately satisfied, one's senses are cleansed, and one no longer cares even for liberation, much less for worldly pleasures. Her presence can fulfill all spiritual desires. (*Yogamāyā enters.*)

ŚRADDHĀ (*reverently*). O Mother, I offer my respects to you.

YOGAMĀYĀ (*blessing her*). Good fortune to you, auspicious child. You are radiant with devotion for Lord Hari.

ŚRADDHĀ (*humbly*). I am merely reflecting sacred Yamunā's love for the Lord.

YOGAMĀYĀ (*agreeing*). The lotuses that fill her waters seem to perform a constant *ārati* to the Lord. Whoever has not bathed in those purifying waters is certainly a sinner.

ŚRADDHĀ. Mother, your presence is certainly my greatest fortune, but may I ask what brings you here?

YOGAMĀYĀ. I have come on a special mission, one which concerns a devotee most dear to the Lord.

ŚRADDHĀ. If I may guess, could it be Bhaktivedanta Swāmi Prabhupāda, without whose presence this entire earth would now be useless?

YOGAMĀYĀ. Yes, precisely! He is the most illustrious ambassador of Vṛndāvana-candra's glories, the best of *paramahamsas*, Vṛndāvana's most worthy son. Though this age is dark, Prabhupāda's continuous travels have illuminated the earth like a second sun-god. But that brilliant luminary is on the verge of departing, and the entire world is crying in fear of the coming darkness.

ŚRADDHĀ. I know, I have seen his disciples. Like small jewels reflecting sunlight, they each glow with devotion to their *guru*. What is your mission?

YOGAMĀYĀ. To assist Prabhupāda in deepening his disciples' love.

ŚRADDHĀ. How will you do that?

YOGAMĀYĀ. Using his illness as a churning stick, Prabhupāda is churning the milk of their devotion until it thickens into the nectar of pure spontaneous love.

ŚRADDHĀ. O revered lady, what are the stages through which this milk will be churned?

YOGAMĀYĀ. First comes faith, for which you are in charge. In fact, your mercy is essential throughout. Through regulated service to one's *guru*, despite omissions and faults, the milk of devotion thickens and the gaps in service are sealed. Then the devotee, fully sensitive to the desire of the master, is ready to sacrifice his own well-being. If there is some threat to the master the disciple seeks to turn it back. And when the relationship seems about to be severed, the devotee, mad with anxiety, will do anything and everything to preserve it.

ŚRADDHĀ. Though such devotion seems full of pain, it is actually relishable.

YOGAMĀYĀ. There is no pleasure higher than that of the devotee in the mood of separation. Fully absorbed in meditating on his beloved master, he transcends the dualities of material existence.

ŚRADDHĀ. How can ordinary people understand this?



YOGAMĀYĀ. They cannot, for they see only the external lamentation, not realizing that the spiritual energy is at work.

ŚRADDHĀ. Mother, forgive me, but seeing the sorrow of Prabhupāda's devotees throughout the world, I'm afraid they may not be able to maintain their budding faith. They go without eating or sleeping, neglecting their timely devotions, their minds plagued with anxiety, fear, moroseness—even madness. Some are even contemplating suicide.

YOGAMĀYĀ (*sympathizing*). My child, what can I do? On Lord Kṛṣṇa's order I have induced in them these divine feelings. How can I disobey His command?

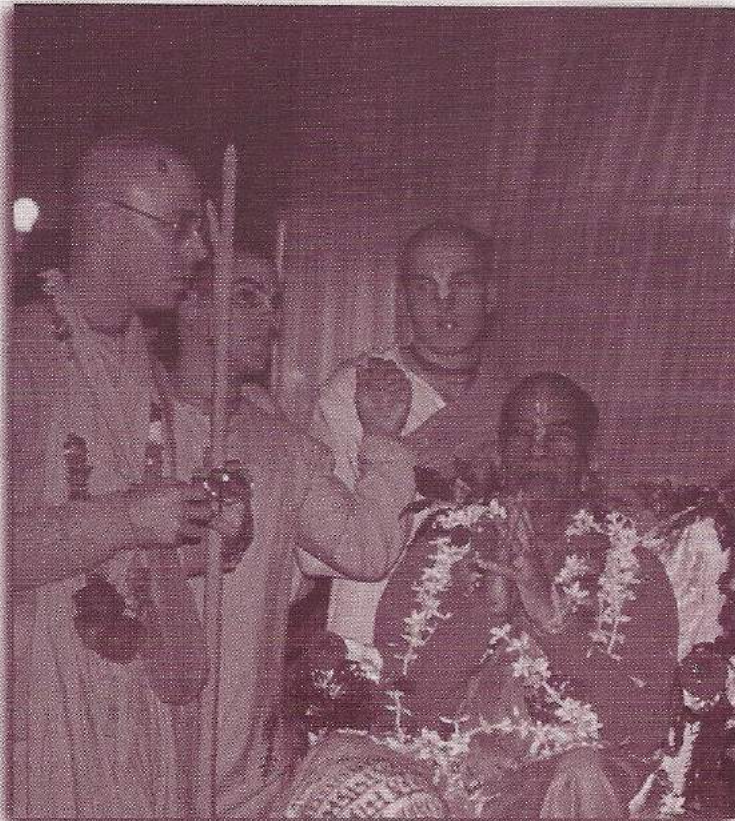
ŚRADDHĀ. Perhaps you could report to the Lord that your mission has been quite successful and that there is no need to put these devotees in further anxiety.

YOGAMĀYĀ (*thoughtfully*). Yes..... yes, that I could do.

ŚRADDHĀ. Mother I have seen the physician who is treating Prabhupāda. Judging by his anxiety, there is no time to delay. If you do not act immediately, it will certainly be too late.

YOGAMĀYĀ (*deliberating, then decisively*). All right, I shall do as you ask.

ŚRADDHĀ (*thankful*). The whole world will be indebted. I'll now do whatever I can to ease their distress until you return. (*They exit.*)



## Rites of Passage Revisited

An excerpt from "A Hare Kṛṣṇa at Southern Methodist University"

by Tamal Krishna Goswami:

Both my fathers—biological and spiritual—expired in 1977. I was in London in September of that year, having brought my spiritual master there with the hope of reversing his failing health. Only by chance through a long distance phone call did I happen to learn that my father had passed away two months earlier. Apart from a brief but touching visit he had paid me in New York the previous year, we hadn't seen each other in ten years. Absorbed as I was in helping to maintain my spiritual master's life, the news of my father's passing aroused few emotions. I'd come to regard Śrīla Prabhupāda as my real father in every sense.

Death was as foreign to me as it was to most people in today's world. Hiding death was but another of our victories, as if concealment will make us immortal. We've turned dying over to strangers rather than sharing it in the company of loved ones. The modern culture has sterilized dying of all ritual. Burials have become so commercialized, volumes of catalogs to flip through just to define every item of the coffin, the casket seller appealing to the most primitive of our instincts.

As Ron Grimes argues persuasively, the way we treat the dead can say much of how we treat the living. Funerals can bring out the worst or the best because burial rites reflect attitudes concerning not just family members but larger issues as well.

Two months after I learnt about my father's demise Prabhupāda departed from this world. Vaiṣṇavas speak not of death, but of the departure of the soul. Nor do they consider that the body itself has life; it is the soul's presence which animates the body and gives it apparent life. The soul leaves, then enters into another body appropriate to its consciousness. But Prabhupāda, a pure devotee, had no need to take another birth; his pure consciousness carried him back to Godhead.

There is an extremely protracted ritual surrounding the passing away of a Vaiṣṇava saint. Months before Prabhupāda's departure, thousands of his disciples world-wide conducted continuous *kīrtans* (prayer sessions) on his behalf. Prabhupāda refused to allow us to petition Kṛṣṇa, unconditionally; he granted only that we might pray, "Dear Kṛṣṇa, if You so desire, please allow Prabhupāda to remain with us." A pure devotee places no demands on the Lord, especially not on his own behalf.



As weeks progressed, disciples arrived in Vṛndāvana to receive their spiritual master's last instructions. He placed upon them the heavy mantel of his final words as one by one they came to his bedside. He could barely lift his arm or turn unaided in his bed, for he had not eaten for months. Yet he continued his life's work of translating Vedic literatures, dictating into a microphone held by a disciple. He served Kṛṣṇa to the end. With his final breath he formed the sound of Kṛṣṇa's name, his soul departing. A wail arose from all the assembled Vaiṣṇavas, loud enough to pierce the heavens. This was no ordinary demise we were witnessing, but the perfect achievement of a life perfectly lived. As he had taught by living, now he had taught by departing, and the lessons are still being learned.



Hindus dispose of the body by cremation to prevent the departing soul from remaining unnecessarily attached to the body it has abandoned, and thus allow it to seek its next embodiment. Because saints have no material attachments or desires, their bodies are not cremated, but rather place in *samādhi*, tombs where devotees may continue to revere them. Their bodies are considered spiritualized by their lifetimes' dedication in God's service. Before placing Prabhupāda's body in the *samādhi* we carried it in procession throughout the town of Vṛndāvana, for Prabhupāda was loved dearly by all the townspeople who appreciated that he had spread Kṛṣṇa's glories far and wide.

I was Prabhupāda's personal secretary, and the ritual observance of his physical departure continued as I catalogued, then dispersed each and every item of his to temples and individuals throughout the world. These too would be worshipped as holy relics. When the disciple can no longer serve the *guru's* form, the *guru's* instructions assume even greater importance. One Vaiṣṇava poet has written, "*He reasons ill who tells that Vaiṣṇavas die when thou art living still in sound. The Vaiṣṇava dies to live, and living tries to spread the holy name around.*"

Yet the recognition of a great soul's eternal presence in sound does not mitigate the grief one feels in separation. A year ago as I was walking in the hills of Santa Barbara,

I suddenly became overwhelmed with intense feeling of separation from Prabhupāda. I was "weeping-walking" as Grimes calls it (Grimes 1995,229), and when I returned to that very spot next day the weeping began again. A flood of hot tears poured from my eyes, the kind a child cries when it feels totally abandoned. I knew intellectually that this was not how it was, but no thought was able to console me at that time. As much as I had Prabhupāda's words—a whole library of them at my reach—they could not replace him in exactly the same way his physical presence had been for me. Crying eased the pain of separation, smoothed its

jagged edges so it did not hurt so much.

## Remembrances

### H.G. Keśava Bhāratī dāsa

(spoken in Māyāpura, 16 March 2002)

The essence of Śrīla Tamal Krishna Mahārāja's heart was ecstatic love for Śrīla Prabhupāda. Wherever he went, both before and after Prabhupāda's disappearance, he always lived with the full size *mūrti* of Śrīla Prabhupāda and served that *mūrti* every day with great attention. You are not an ordinary person. You are a great soul. Great



souls are never attracted to anything mediocre. They are driven by energies that are very difficult to understand, and therefore your personality sometimes was very difficult to understand.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda departed I had the good fortune of being with you in the room. At that moment the universe became vacant and void for us. You were the only person who held things together. Some people have criticized you for not exhibiting the emotions the rest of us were feeling. But you were actually organising us.

The next day when we took Śrīla Prabhupāda on his flower airplane around Vṛndāvana, Goswami Mahārāja was fanning Prabhupāda with a *cāmara*. I was standing nearby watching him carefully. Tears started to shoot from his eyes with such force that they knocked his glasses off. He caught them in his hand but he could not put them back on. I thought, “I am watching someone exhibit ecstatic love for Śrīla Prabhupāda because it is not possible for someone to cry like that.”

Over the years our relationship became so intense that it was hard for me to take. Sometimes I had to walk away as I could not take the heat. But then I would reconsider, and come back and reconcile. After some time, I realized I was being, trained in an inconceivable way, by a person who was trained by Śrīla Prabhupāda. I am eternally indebted for the training you have given me. I am going to miss you a lot. I pray that I may be able to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda with you again as soon as possible

## H.G. Śītala devī dāsī

(spoken in Māyāpura, 16 March 2002)

The loss that we are experiencing now is so deep and profound, so vast and all encompassing to our whole movement, that it is impossible for me to begin to understand or appreciate. ISKCON without Tamal Krishna Mahārāja is something like Laxmī without Nārāyaṇa. He was one of the main pillars and founding fathers of ISKCON. He was the main artery in the body of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s ISKCON.

The service Tamal Krishna Mahārāja rendered is far beyond what we ordinary devotees can ever conceive of doing. The level and vast expanse of service he rendered is actually inconceivable. It would take many volumes of books to talk about all the services he rendered. He was very dear to Śrīla Prabhupāda—like a right arm in Prabhupāda’s body.

My husband Hari Sauri prabhu told me of an incident that happened when he was travelling with Prabhupāda:

He had been Prabhupāda’s personal servant for a year and a half. Even though he was very attached to the service, as Prabhupāda became more and more ill, he started to feel that his tenure was over. Someone else had to come in as it was too much for him to handle. When he was thinking in this way, he opened a page in the *Bhāgavatam* where he read that at a certain stage in life the spiritual master enters in to his *nirjana bhajan*, his final pastimes. At that time, he calls his most intimate disciples to be with him. This struck my husband very profoundly, and he felt that something was about to happen. He confided this to Tamal Krishna Mahārāja who was quite amazed because he had recently had the strong realisation that whatever service he was doing was not important any more, and he should go and be with Prabhupāda, for every moment that Prabhupāda was going to remain on this planet. It was clear amongst the two of them that it was now Tamal Krishna Mahārāja’s time to be with Śrīla Prabhupāda during his final days. Anyone who was present at that time knows very clearly how attentively and lovingly Tamal Krishna Mahārāja attended to that service.

I remember those last few days before Śrīla Prabhupāda left. Once I was picking *tulasi* leaves in Prabhupāda’s garden. Tamal Krishna Mahārāja and Bhāvānanda Mahārāja were in the back yard having a very intense, heated conversation about the Govardhana līlā. It was a no-win situation of debating whether to take Prabhupāda there or not. I watched them arguing, discussing and actually crying piteously. It was obvious how profound their love for Śrīla Prabhupāda was. Although some people were surprised about how stoic Mahārāja was at Prabhupāda’s disappearance, I believe that he understood the reality that we did not want to accept, and prepared himself to do his duty perfectly as he always did.

After Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disappearance no one knew what to do. Everyone felt aimless. I myself wandered into the temple room and looked at Rādhā Śyāma, and in the madness of the moment thought, how can Kṛṣṇa still be standing there smiling. In a way I feel a similar sentiment now because Tamal Krishna Mahārāja was on the verge of doing something great in Māyāpura that I can’t imagine anyone else doing, and which Prabhupāda wanted so much.

Personally, I feel his leaving is like a huge gaping hole, which will never be filled. It is such a disappointment. It is frustrating that we cannot see what Kṛṣṇa’s plan is. I want to thank him for everything.



# A New Frontier ~ China

When I was a boy, I was fond of reading adventure stories, but nothing could compare with the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. It was the greatest adventure of all. I was always fond of reading of distant places and imagined myself going to Africa, Russia, South America. I had taken interest in studying other cultures, and in high school I had become particularly fascinated with China. But these had been only dreams. Now, when I read of Śrīla Prabhupāda's wish to go with a big *sankīrtana* party around the world, I realized that this was not a fanciful flight of youthful imagination. Whatever Prabhupāda said was meant in great earnestness. I had proposed to go as far Japan, but I never thought that Kṛṣṇa consciousness could enter China and Russia. But Prabhupāda had mentioned it, so it would be possible. I had already learnt that His Divine Grace's words were not mere wishful dreams. They were a reality, separated only by time.

—Tamal Krishna Goswami (Servant of the Servant)

## A Collection of Offerings

(Māyāpura, 16 March 2002)

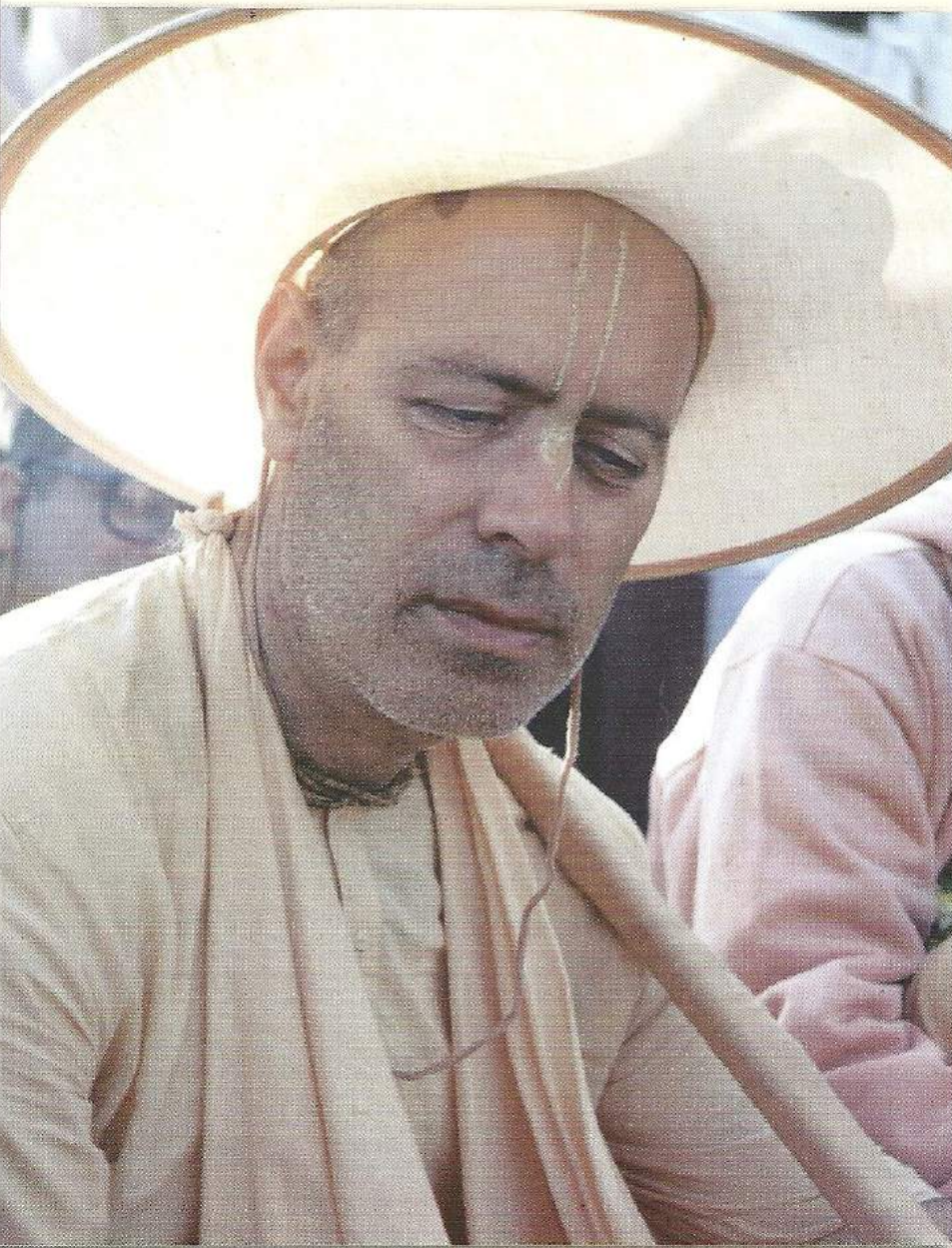
### H.H. Giridhāri Mahārāja

From the beginning of my Kṛṣṇa consciousness I had the great fortune of having the association of Śrīla Tamal Krishna Goswami Mahārāja. Many times I witnessed his unceasing determination to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda in each and every activity he did.

We went to Hong Kong in 1980. Hong Kong was still part of the British Crown then, but there were tremendous restrictions and Kṛṣṇa consciousness had not really blossomed. From the beginning Goswami Mahārāja worked very hard to establish the society. At that time we had to keep some hair, wear suits and meet

lawyers to get the Society registered, and lay the groundwork. We had no local devotees. Goswami Mahārāja conceived of a way to preach through teaching yoga and so in an undercover way we were able to attract people, a number of whom became our first devotees.

In 1987 we were inspired by Kīrtirāja prabhu to try to enter China. Until then borders were very restricted and we could only get a visa to spend a few days there. Then a golden opportunity opened up and Goswami Mahārāja said, "Now is the time we should try." He was, of course, feeling the push of Śrīla Prabhupāda's order to do something. So we went with a few devotees and did something quite bold: After we crossed the border, in devotional attire, we went to a number of cities and held *harināma sankīrtana* in parks. We chanted for many hours. Gradually this attracted the attention of hundreds of people who were inquisitive about us. In intervals Mahārāja would speak a little and we would translate. We repeated this for some time until it became clear it was impossible to continue. Then our preaching became more undercover. But this was the foundation from where we were able to have a number of devotees throughout China participate in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.





He inspired the preaching in China. He worked tirelessly, always thinking how to organise better, how to improve and get the most out of our time, how to engage others to participate and delegate affairs in the best possible way. In this way I witnessed how he was tremendously determined. When others would easily succumb to obstacles, he would go forward and overcome those obstacles. I saw this time and time again. It was extraordinary.

He was very kind to me personally although I never deserved his mercy. He went out of his way to encourage and train me, and entrust me with responsibility. He was always pushing me. I cannot remember a time when he did not try to push me forward.

I have an eternal debt to him. I pray to be able to render service to him, his disciples and followers. I pray that together we will be able to realize some of the dreams he had, to push forward his projects and to please Śrīla Prabhupāda in the way he strived to.

### H.H. Nṛsimha Mahārāja

Śrīla Gurudeva was very expert in dealing with different situations. He could handle even the most difficult situations with great ease and make everyone feel relaxed in his presence.

He took me with him to preach in the Philippines. The Philippines is not an easy country for preaching. It is a Catholic country and we did not have much influence there. Still Goswami Mahārāja was able to meet with the president of the country and the Cardinals of the Catholic church. He asked them many philosophical questions but they couldn't answer any of them.

In 1988 we went into China. When Prabhupāda came to America he could speak English, but when we went to China we couldn't speak a word of Chinese. Only Ekacakra prabhu could speak a little. Impossible was a word in a fool's dictionary, and it certainly wasn't in Tamal Krishna Goswami's dictionary. And so he took us into China. After we had made some devotees, I remember he came to me and said, "Now I can understand why Prabhupāda sent me to China. These

people understand what discipline is." He expected discipline and recognised that China was a good place for him because the people could take his discipline. Sometimes we would rent the presidential suite in hotels and smuggle in gas cylinders and stoves. Then we would invite the devotees, and there would be chanting, dancing and feasting in the presidential suite. After we had been there for a few days the hotel staff would become suspicious, but the devotees would deny everything. We had to pick different hotels each time because we couldn't visit the same hotel twice. We would do this in city after city. This was our style of preaching.

I wrote to Tamal Krishna Goswami Mahārāja after he started his college preaching. I said, "Just as when



Sarvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya surrendered to Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu all the scholars of India also surrendered to the Lord, in the same way I am looking forward to seeing all the scholars surrender to you." He was very happy and thanked me.

I will always treasure in my heart these last ten days here in Māyāpura with him because he seemed so peaceful and at ease with himself here, more than at any other time or place. He seemed very happy to be with so many god-brothers, chanting and having nice programs with the Chinese devotees. He took the Taiwanese devotees to Prabhupāda's rooms and said to Śrīla Prabhupāda, "I have brought the Chinese devotees to see you Prabhupāda."



## H.G. Ekacakra dāsa

(a French disciple of Tamal Krishna Goswami who has served him in China for the last fifteen years)

In 1988 in mainland China there were no devotees so we used to attend English Corners; gatherings of Chinese people practicing their English together. We would go and speak to them. I remember once seeing Tamal Krishna Mahārāja, in one hour, present the whole philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in a concise and comprehensive way to a group of people who had no idea of spiritual life. We would invite interested people to our hotel rooms and feed them Chinese *prasādam*. Just by meeting devotees for the first time and hearing Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy some of them would immediately surrender and ask what to do next. Then Mahārāja would instruct them about following the four regulative principles and chanting sixteen rounds. And from their first meeting with him they would start following these principles. He was very expert and a very forceful preacher.

Another aspect not known to everyone is his kind and gentle nature. He appears to be very authoritative and heavy but actually he is very kind. I remember the first time I cooked for him; he instructed all the members of the Chinese mission to buy Chinese vegetarian cookbooks so we could cook in a way Chinese people could relate to and thus become vegetarian. I did not have much experience in cooking. As anyone who has cooked for Tamal Krishna Mahārāja knows, he is a connoisseur. But I did not know very much, I was just cooking and every five minutes he was behind me watching, asking me different questions, so I started getting nervous. I managed to cook some stir-fried vegetables, rice and soup and then I served the *prasādam*. Then he told me to sit down and take *prasādam* with him. All this was happening in the hotel room; the kitchen was the desk and we used to wash vegetables and pots in the bathroom tub. After eating for some time he suddenly got up, went to the bathroom, washed his hands, took the pots and asked me what I wanted. I was just a six-month-old *bhakta* and here he was serving me. I felt very embarrassed but I accepted the offer. There was no one more kind and considerate than him. He was always concerned about other people's welfare and spiritual advancement.

I pray I can become a perfect tool in the preaching of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in China, a pure servant of Tamal Krishna Mahārāja and the previous *ācāryas*, and develop the strength and humility he had to serve the Vaiṣṇavas properly.

## H.G. Jahnava devī dāsī

(a Chinese disciple of Tamal Krishna Goswami, the temple president of Taiwan)

I do not know what urgent matter Kṛṣṇa has to suddenly take away my most dear spiritual master. To me this is like thunder striking before beautiful weather. It is a very sad experience. I am not feeling sad for him so much. I am sure he is now with Śrīla Prabhupāda and Kṛṣṇa and is very happy in Their association. Now I am feeling so guilty that I am being tortured by regret. Kṛṣṇa had been so merciful to give me the association of such a merciful spiritual father, but I haven't properly treasured his association.

I saw Śrīla Gurudeva for the first time eight years ago and took initiation from him six years ago. To accept initiation from the spiritual master is in some aspect just a formal ceremony, but to try to do exactly as his heart desires is actually not so easy.

From the first day I met him I felt such strong pressure. At that time I was distributing books in China. As soon as he saw me he said, "I always wanted one disciple in China who can distribute one hundred *Bhagavad-*

*Gita's* a day." I was distributing books for eight to nine hours a day and could give out forty books at the most. When I heard what he said, I thought "This is impossible. I am already working so hard. If I have to distribute a hundred books I will be spitting blood." Then a devotee noticed my doubtful expression and told me, "When the spiritual master gives you an instruction he also gives you the strength and power to accomplish it. As long you try your best to follow the instruction you will be successful." I did not really understand but I just tried. Then two months later a miracle happened. After six months of book distribution, one day I managed to give out sixty books. Because I was tired I went home that day. The next day I stayed out for more time and distributed ninety books. Then the third day I distributed more than a hundred books. Actually this wasn't due to my own strength. It was just Kṛṣṇa pleasing my spiritual master through me.

Then I went to meet him in Hong Kong and he gave me his own personal deity of Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He gave me his *chadar*. But because I was a neophyte

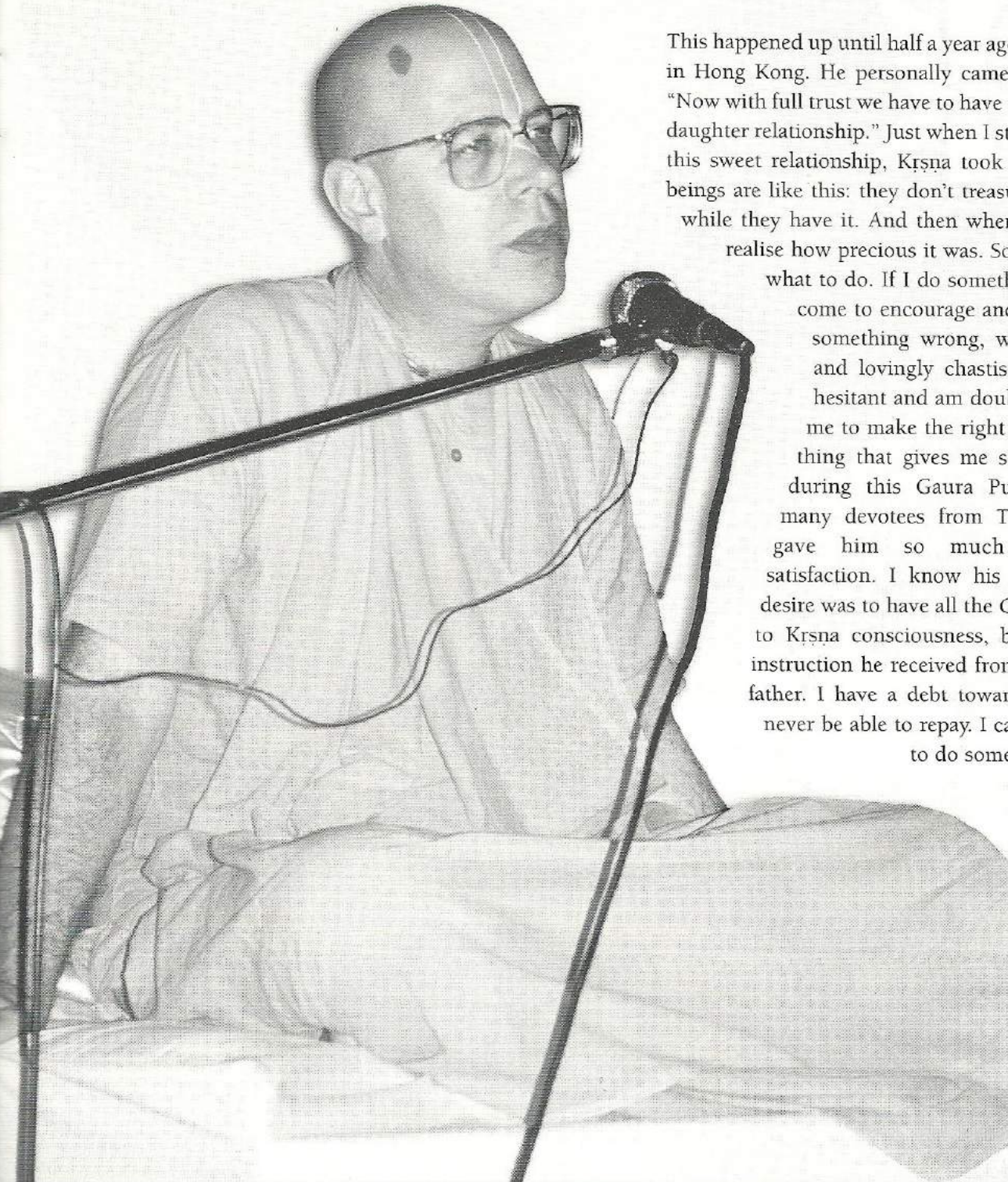


devotee and my heart was hard, I just took it for granted and didn't really appreciate the mercy he was giving me.

After giving me initiation he told me to translate Śrīla Prabhupāda's books into Chinese. Actually he wanted all of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books translated into Chinese during his lifetime. But I wasn't able to do this. While I was translating, an incident happened. Kṛṣṇa was testing me, but at the time I couldn't understand this. Śrīla Gurudeva is such a wise person and has so much experience in management that whenever he considers a particular problem, he looks at it from the widest possible angle. But I was stubbornly attached to my idea,

thinking I was right and others were wrong. And even though he spent money for people to come by air to speak to me in the Philippines, and then he spoke to me from America for an hour, I still wasn't able to follow his instructions. Because I wasn't submissive to his order my heart became harder, even to the point where I thought he didn't understand me and didn't want to help me. I didn't want to see him anymore. Later by the mercy of my husband I was able to meet with many senior Vaiṣṇavas and I realised how I was wrong from the beginning. I felt so low and contaminated that I felt I was not qualified to appear in front of him. So, even though sometimes I had the opportunity to see him, I would always hide and avoid his association.

This happened up until half a year ago when we met him in Hong Kong. He personally came forward and said, "Now with full trust we have to have a father and daughter relationship." Just when I started to experience this sweet relationship, Kṛṣṇa took him away. Human beings are like this: they don't treasure what they have while they have it. And then when they lose it, they realise how precious it was. So now I don't know what to do. If I do something right who will come to encourage and praise me. If I do something wrong, who will mercifully and lovingly chastise me. When I am hesitant and am doubtful who will help me to make the right decision. The only thing that gives me some solace is that during this Gaura Purnima festival so many devotees from Taiwan came. That gave him so much happiness and satisfaction. I know his greatest wish and desire was to have all the Chinese people take to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, because it was the instruction he received from his own spiritual father. I have a debt towards him that I will never be able to repay. I can only try my best to do some service for him so that he may be pleased and one day come before me again.





# A Vaiṣṇava Scholar

## Tamal Krishna Goswami In the Academic World

A Hare Kṛṣṇa at Southern Methodist University

An excerpt from the book by Tamal Krishna Goswami

Now I am fifty, and nearly twenty years have passed since my spiritual master departed from this world. While we were together, he trained me in every aspect of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In my course of studies with him, he engaged me in establishing his mission all over the world. I helped him to open temples in America, Europe, India and the Far East, and to publish and distribute in the millions his Vedic translations. In the course of my travels, I have met numerous heads of state, educators, clergymen, and men of wealth and distinction. I have ministered to the common people as well—from the starving Bangladeshis in the early seventies to the atheistic communists in recent times. Now, I, myself, have many disciples who look to me for the same training and inspiration. The responsibilities my spiritual master entrusted to me weigh heavily. I am weary after thirty years of continuous travel. Yet I go on travelling and never think of shirking these duties. I hope this sacrifice will somewhat absolve me from my tremendous debt to my master.

Time is running out. I have perhaps another twenty years to serve. I must seriously consider how I can best utilize this remaining time. Our movement is now firmly established. Hare Kṛṣṇa is household word around the world. Yet I think we are still largely misunderstood by others. Rooted in their own cultures and traditions, they often find our ways strange. To help them understand, we must first seek to know them better—their history, their morals, their faiths. To transmit the finer aspects of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we must first educate our own members. An intelligent, learned clergy with the broad educational backgrounds will then be able to relate our teachings and traditions to those of other persuasions. Both will be benefited. It is with this aim in mind that I now seek to enrol at SMU, confident that it will be a most rewarding experience.





## Reason and Belief

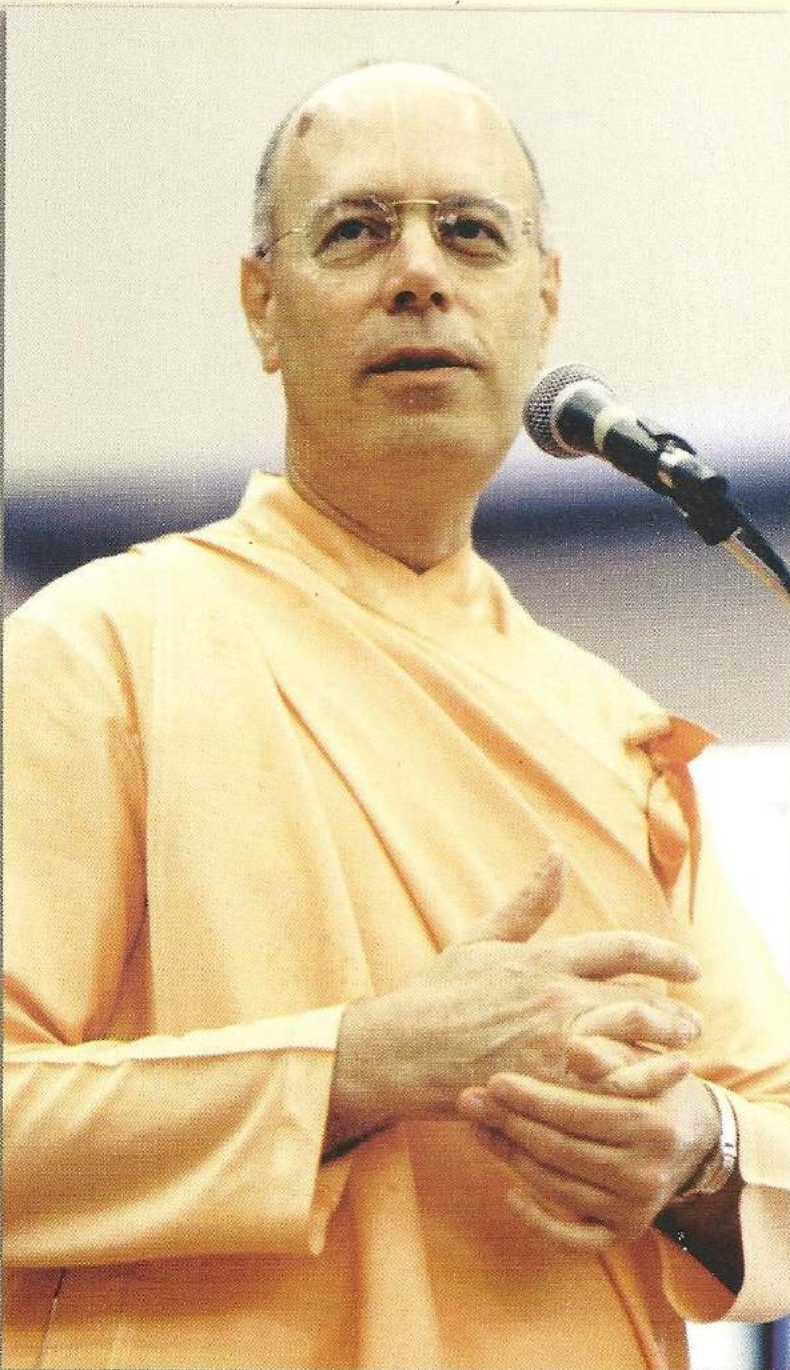
(Tamal Krishna Goswami)

An excerpt from the introduction by

Lonnie D. Kliever: Professor and Chair

Dept. of Religious Studies at Southern Methodist University

Tamal Krishna Goswami first appeared at my office at Southern Methodist University in August of 1995. He was not a total stranger because a colleague and I had been guests for lunch a year earlier. But he came with a strange request—he wanted to know what would be involved in pursuing a doctoral degree in Comparative Religions. He explained that he wanted to represent the tradition of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness more effectively in interreligious dialogue and he believed that meant learning more about the religions of the world.



Goswami was obviously not prepared for the answer I gave him. Learning that he like many other students of the sixties had dropped out of college in a quest for enlightenment, I advised him that he first would have to complete his undergraduate degree. I further explained that, unless he was prepared to complete an M.A. degree, he should major in Religious Studies. The heavens must have laughed at the irony—a fifty-year-old ISKCON spiritual master returning to college as an undergraduate major in Religious Studies at a Methodist University! But Goswami was in no joking mood and he insisted that there must be some other way. He peppered me with questions: “What about life-time learning credit? What about testing out of courses?” In reply, I insisted that it was not the *degree* that he needed but the *training*. He could not hope to enter or complete a graduate program in Comparative Religions without a solid foundation in the methods and the content of the academic study of religion.

I thought that would be the end of my association with Tamal Krishna Goswami, but it was only the beginning. A few days later, I learned that he was ready to go forward in completing his undergraduate degree and that he wanted to begin in the fall.

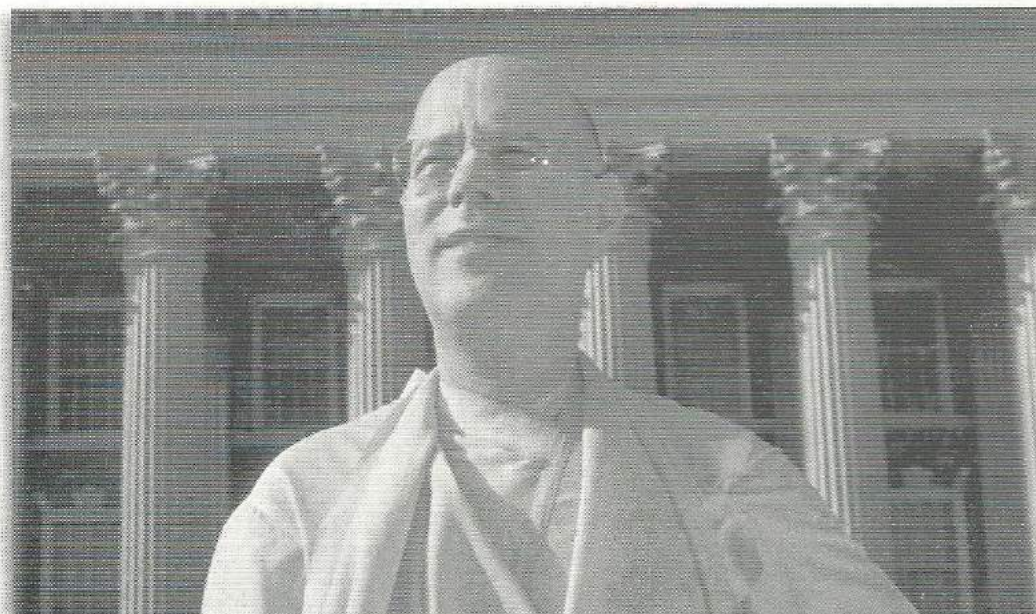
Never mind that the undergraduate admissions decisions are made in March! Never mind that none of his credentials were on hand! Doubtlessly remembering his early years as a missionary and builder of ISKCON when the word “impossible” did not exist, he was ready to get started yesterday. Fortunately, he had gained the interest of someone who knew the right people and how things work, and I was able to secure his admission to the University in the fall of 1995.

To say that he entered a strange world is an understatement. A man of recognized and deserved respect, he was suddenly one undergraduate among five thousand others. To be sure, he stood out from the crowd with his shaved head and ocher robes. But no quarter was given and none asked. As I told the group of his disciples celebrating the appearance day of their beloved spiritual master last spring, Goswami does not sit on a velvet-cushioned *vyasasana* fanned by peacock feathers and ox-tails in his classes. But, rather he is crammed into uncomfortable chairs in crowded lecture halls like his fellow undergraduates. He is tested and tried in class discussions and written



assignments like everyone else. But I also assured them that he was reaching more people through his vivid presence and stellar performance in classes at S.M.U. than he might ever reach in the sacred precincts of ISKCON temples.

Although we have talked often about the difficulties of his balancing two careers and living in two worlds, I can only guess that the energy and effort required for Goswami to maintain his spiritual calling and duties while pursuing his academic vision and studies. How does one live with integrity in such different worlds, demanding such different loyalties? What I do know is that he has given himself to the academic community with the same intensity and dedication that must characterise his service to his religious community. Some small measure of that devotion is seen in his 4.0



Grade Point Average and the academic awards he has accumulated in his two years at S.M.U. In 1996, he won the 1996 *Harvey Paul Alper Award for Outstanding Work in an Eastern Religion*, and this year (1997) he received the *Isaac Gustave Bromberg Award for Outstanding Work in the Humanities* and the *Department of Religious Studies Annual Award*. Even more impressive than these departmental awards, Goswami has made the Dean's List of Dedman College every semester and this year is inducted into S.M.U.'s prestigious Robert Stewart Hyer Society and received the Society's *University Achievement Award*. Not satisfied with local academic achievements, Goswami also presented two scholarly papers at the 1996 National Meeting of the American Academy of Religion in New Orleans, the world's largest professional society of religious scholars with a membership nearing ten thousand. All this as an undergraduate major in Religious Studies!

This present collection of essays represents the fruit of only one undergraduate course among the seventeen that Goswami has completed to date. These essays were written for my introductory course on *Problems in the Philosophy of Religion*. All of my undergraduate courses are "writing-intensive," reflecting my own commitment to train students how to *think* philosophically rather than how to *memorise* information. In this class, every student was required to prepare ten papers based on assigned readings which called for a critical analysis and comparative response to the issues under discussion. The first nine essays were prepared as weekly assignments. The last longer essay was submitted as a take-home final examination.

Needless to say that Goswami's papers for this course were outstanding by every standard of judgement. His essays were written with grace and clarity. His discussions of the issues under review were models of fairness and accuracy. Best of all, his response to these issues from his own tradition were thoughtful and germane. Given where he is with his academic career, these essays showed a remarkable talent for interreligious dialogue—a talent for engaging questions of common concern between significantly different religious traditions. Going well beyond simple

comparison or confession, these essays reflected a serious wrestle with philosophical ideas from divergent viewpoints which respects differences as well as searches out similarities.

These ten essays are compelling evidence of the importance of Goswami's academic work for his faithful followers and god-brothers. More like field notes than finished documents, they nevertheless clearly map out a rich field of interreligious dialogue to be engaged and explored in the future. They indicate that ISKCON rests on a philosophical tradition that is every bit as sophisticated as classical and contemporary philosophical thinkers in western culture. They portend that ISKCON is prepared to participate in interreligious dialogue as full partners in scholarly debate over common questions and shared themes. As such, they should lend assurance to ISKCON's faithful that their tradition deserves the devotion of insiders and the respect of outsiders.



Finally, these ten essays should be of interest to curious or critical outsiders wanting to know more about ISKCON. They present an ISKCON community taking important steps to establish itself in the wider community of modern religions by entering into critical dialogue with those diverse traditions. They also provide hard-to-get information about how the Caitanya Vaiṣṇava tradition deals with such perennial philosophical issues as the nature of religious experience, the existence of God, the problem of evil, the peculiarity of religious language, the possibilities of miracle, the prospect of an afterlife, as well as how this tradition might respond to questions concerning religion and science, religious pluralism, and religious ethics.

Perhaps I may be indulged a personal reason for wanting to see these essays published in their present form. Goswami's work in my Philosophy of Religions class, as well as the half dozen other courses he has taken with me, are the kind of gifts that every teacher treasures. A student pays his teacher no greater honour than to discover his own voice in their common quest for knowledge. I hear such a voice emerging in these essays—thoughtful but passionate, critical but irenic, searching but secure. I would like for others to share in that gift and listen for that voice.





# Remembrances

Molded by Prabhupāda's experienced hand, my life was being dovetailed with Kṛṣṇa's desire. In an early letter Prabhupāda had referred to me as a "future pillar of ISKCON." His words were kind and encouraging... If it was Prabhupāda's desire that I should serve in a greater capacity, I knew it would only be possible if he made me qualified.

—Tamal Krishna Goswami (Servant of the Servant)

## H.H. Hṛdayānanda Mahārāja

Because His Holiness Tamal Krishna Goswami was such a great servant of Śrīla Prabhupāda, his passing is a powerful teaching of Kṛṣṇa consciousness that brings us closer to Śrīla Prabhupāda and Lord Kṛṣṇa. I pray that we all honour Tamal Krishna Goswami by deeply assimilating the many valuable lessons which he has given us through his life, his teaching, his writing, and even his glorious passing at a most auspicious time and place in the presence of many exalted Vaiṣṇavas. Śrīla Prabhupāda would always call upon him to render unique and powerful services, and as we all know without a doubt Śrīla Prabhupāda has again called his right-hand man, Tamāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami, to another service, to again do what he alone can do.

One cannot help but observe throughout the entire world, the massive, spontaneous, heartfelt outpouring of love, honour, and devotion for Tamal Krishna Goswami. Indeed the intensity of grief, shock and loving admiration is second only to that shown to Śrīla Prabhupāda himself. In passing on to even more glorious devotional service, the great Vaiṣṇava Tamal Krishna Goswami has taken a giant step toward the achievement of yet another of his cherished goals: the restoration of deep, generous, and loving Vaiṣṇava culture to ISKCON. The tidal wave of appreciation and affection for him which already engulfs the ISKCON world, and which is growing daily, has already begun to sweep away years of accumulated cynicism and scepticism. Faith is replacing doubt. Generosity is replacing reluctance. Love is replacing bitterness.

Devotees are freely declaring to the world that a great Vaiṣṇava has passed, and in doing so they personally and deeply recognize and acknowledge that Śrīla Prabhupāda's dear disciple, Tamal Krishna Goswami, was indeed a great Vaiṣṇava. We all, in our grief, cry out that this was an exalted servant of Śrīla Prabhupāda, a great soul who played a mighty part in transforming the world.

Devotees everywhere are seeing that every living being that benefits from Śrīla Prabhupāda's movement, owes an eternal debt to His Holiness Tamal Krishna Goswami, who did more than words can tell to serve the mission of his eternal spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda. Let us rejoice in our certain knowledge that Tamal Krishna Goswami will now speedily return to the personal service of his eternal spiritual master, a service which he valued above all things.

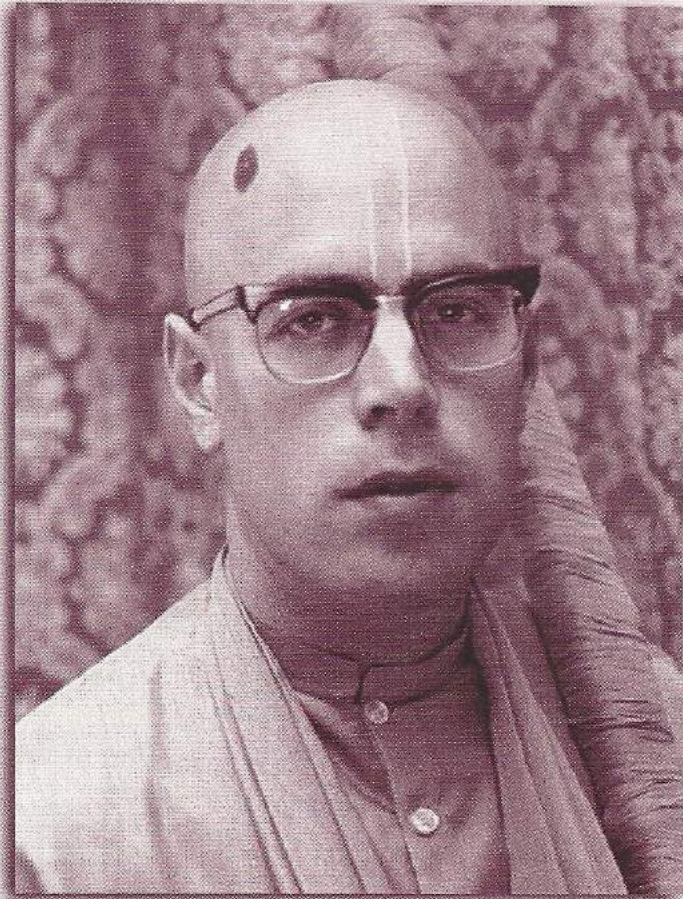




## H.H. Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja

Prabhupāda appeared to realise Lord Caitanya's prediction that the holy name would travel to every town and village of the world. And I believe that Tamal Krishna Mahārāja also appeared to help Prabhupāda fulfill the order of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswati Thakura. Śrīla Prabhupāda came to the west alone and then sincere devotees came forward to assist him.

Tamal Krishna Mahārāja was a very determined person and a perfectionist. His *sadhana* was exemplary. His only goal was to please Prabhupāda and do what was best for ISKCON. He was very dedicated to Prabhupāda. In *Prabhupāda līlāmṛta*, amongst the devotees, you will find the most reference is made to Tamal Krishna Mahārāja because he was Prabhupāda's right hand. Prabhupāda would consult him and take his advice. He was always ready to serve Prabhupāda in any activity that was needed to push on Kṛṣṇa consciousness.



We are sure that Tamal Krishna Mahārāja is now engaged in serving Śrīla Prabhupāda's mission wherever Prabhupāda desires. We can all learn from his wonderful example and draw strength from him so that we can make spiritual advancement. If we take advantage of his instructions we will all benefit. I personally had the opportunity to associate with him and was very inspired and encouraged by his wonderful Vaiṣṇava qualities and by his determination to serve Prabhupāda's movement.

## H.H. Sridhara Mahārāja

I first met Goswami Mahārāja in 1969. When I was in India in the early days I always heard stories about how Prabhupāda said Tamal Krishna Mahārāja was Bhaktisiddhānta Mahārāja's favorite grandson. So I always had great reverence for him. When I met him I felt like a fly meeting an elephant. In 1972 we had a party travelling across India of five *sannyāsi*'s and fifteen devotees. Goswami Mahārāja was our leader. In Bombay we had many wonderful *līlās* with Rādhā Rasabihāri. There were very few devotees then so association with Prabhupāda was very intimate, and our association together was very intimate and poignant too.

In 1974 Goswami Mahārāja went back to America to lead out the Rādhā Damodara party, the most famous book distribution party in the world. They would come to India every year and line up thirty to forty new devotees for Śrīla Prabhupāda's pleasure. I began hearing stories from my god-brothers about how there are different mangoes but the ripened mango is very sweet: they were referring to Tamal Krishna Mahārāja as the ripened mango.

Our relationship grew slowly, intimately. I had a little trouble with his spicy side at first so I couldn't dip into the sweet. Over the years as we all grew older, I changed and Goswami Mahārāja became more compassionate to me on a personal level. From the early days I had always wanted him to be my mentor but I had a passionate nature, which didn't allow that. I wanted to enter in to his closer circle of friends. But as time went by he became more and more kinder to me.

Then I got hit by a brick wall and ended up in hospital for a few months; I came out of a coma and understood I was going to die. Dying is easy, living is hard. I realised I didn't want to die without the association of my god-brothers. I was very emotional at that time. Goswami Mahārāja came to see me at the hospital and I was so happy that he came.

I was told that I had six months to live. Someone told me half jokingly that I had outlived Goswami Mahārāja but I told them I will never outlive him because his fame will go on forever. I am insignificant but he is my wonderful older brother.

As we glorify Goswami Mahārāja, he is teaching us to glorify all Prabhupādanugas, to glorify devotional service and those who follow this mission. Let us look as one Vaiṣṇava to another Vaiṣṇava, searching for the good qualities. Goswami Mahārāja wants this. I don't think his message is hard to understand. We can glorify him by catching his message, which is to glorify the Vaiṣṇavas.



## H.H. Jayadvaita Mahārāja

Regarding Tamal Krishna Mahārāja we can say with confidence, there is no other devotee in our society who is so admired and so loved, by so many devotees who so often disagreed with him. I personally committed many *aparādha's* against him. Still he kept very sweet affection for me and I am also keeping great affection for him.

## H.H. Romapāda Mahārāja

Like many of Tamal Krishna Mahārāja's accomplishments, his successes really required exceptionally focused dedication and empowerment. Tamal Krishna Goswami had those qualifications, and more, much more.

There are so many examples of very challenging services he took up, one after another, and managed very intelligently and expertly to "do the needful" to fulfill these most difficult services.

What happens to this world when such a person is present on this planet? Immediately, even without coming into his direct contact, auspiciousness is created—what to speak of the intensified benefit received by those who were trained by him, and cared for by him!

When I spoke with him briefly in Māyāpura, I specifically complimented him for two things. First I told him that my experience is that his disciples love him very uniquely, incredibly deeply, which tells me that he has given so much of himself to them...and he had so much to give. The other compliment I offered was that, wherever his disciples are in this world, they are universally known to be quite mature and have very highly trained manners and Vaiṣṇava etiquette. This is no accident; it is because they learned these things from him.

For me the most remarkable contribution of Tamal Krishna Mahārāja was his auspicious presence. We in ISKCON and the rest of the world are now without his auspiciousness. We are rendered less fortunate, as is the rest of the world, by his absence.

Now that we are missing his association, let us all dedicate ourselves to respecting and gaining from the personal association of those great souls who remain among us. And let us dedicate ourselves to maximizing our present opportunity to become as attached to Kṛṣṇa and to Śrīla Prabhupāda as we can.

## H.H. Indradyumna Mahārāja

We are still in a state of shock as to how we have become bereft of one of ISKCON's great *saṅkīrtana* generals. Each of us feels the loss in a different way: your god-brothers miss your sweet Kṛṣṇa conscious association, your disciples miss your loving care, the congregation miss your awe-inspiring leadership, and even newcomers will miss the chance of ever meeting you, who could charm the hearts of so many conditioned souls by your preaching and bestow upon them the priceless gift of devotional service to Śrīla Prabhupāda and Lord Kṛṣṇa.

As for myself, Goswami Mahārāja, with your departure I have lost a dear most friend who had my real interest at heart and who extended himself to me on numerous occasions. Our association goes back to the mid-1970s, when each year, you, Bhagavān dāsa, and I would go on a spiritual retreat to the sacred abode of Hṛṣīkeṣa in the Himalayas. There we would read and chant, swim in the Gaṅgā, and have *kīrtanas*, just the three of us, in the spiritual atmosphere of that sacred abode. It was during those retreats that I imbibed from you (and you alone) a great zeal for the missionary activities of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, for you would always preach to me the glories of the holy names, book distribution, and the making of devotees.

"I am very glad to see how nicely you have managed the preaching work. I want you to go on managing for our Society. Kṛṣṇa has given you this ability to organize, so please organize it for ISKCON."

—Tamal Krishna Goswami (Servant of the Servant)

As a new devotee, when I first met you I was in awe and reverence—perhaps fear is a better word. Like a commander leading the troops in Lord Caitanya's army, you instilled such sentiments in

your followers in order to push forward the *saṅkīrtana* movement, as if in military fashion. Unfortunately, some devotees saw you only in that light. They didn't have the good fortune to know your soft heart, your love for the devotees, your thirst for associating with your god-brothers, and your eagerness to attain Vṛndāvana and the loving mood of the Vrajavāsīs.

You once showed your kinder face to me, when I approached you with the desire to take *sannyāsa* in 1978 at the Gaura-purnima festival in India. Being an itinerant preacher since the day I joined the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, I had a strong desire to leave householder life and enter the renounced order. When I revealed my desire to my GBC representative, he replied, "Go and ask Tamal Krishna Mahārāja. If he agrees, then I'll accept your request to take *sannyāsa*."



Petrified, I approached you on top of the Long Building in Māyāpura. I revealed my desire and awaited a gruelling interview regarding my plans and motivations. Instead, you sat down with me, and after a few questions about my determination to preach, you gave me much advice on how to practice the life of a *sannyāsi*. I continue to follow those guidelines to this day.

In 1980, when we were together at the Los Angeles Ratha-yātra, you pulled me to one side and said, “Indra, let’s form a team— me and you. We’ll travel all over America, all over the world, just like I did with Viṣṇujana Mahārāja. You’ll lead *kīrtana* and I’ll speak. We’ll make devotees everywhere.” Goswami Mahārāja, how much I lament now that I didn’t take up your offer. I also lament not accepting your many invitations to visit you in Dallas, in Vṛndāvana, in Cambridge, and in Oxford through the years. Of all my god-brothers, I see you most appreciated and understood the value and need for associating with devotees, especially with god-brothers.

We mourn your demise, Goswami Mahārāja. I know my life won’t be the same. *Sankīrtana*, our primary activity, is based on the principle of teamwork. When one of the primary individuals is removed from the equation, we lose a little of our endurance, a little of the wind is knocked out of us. I’ll miss you, Goswami Mahārāja. I’ll miss your presence on the battlefield of preaching, and I’ll miss our discussions in Vṛndāvana on *vraja-bhakti*.

Whether you are back home, back to Godhead, or are again the personal secretary of our beloved spiritual master, Śrīla Prabhupāda, as he continues to establish Lord Caitanya’s missionary movement in this material world, you are blessed, no doubt. So please continue to remember and think fondly of me, as always.

And Goswami Mahārāja, the next time you ask me to be your partner, to be a team, I won’t be so foolish as to refuse. I’ll be happy to lead the *kīrtanas* . . . and you can give the classes. By your mercy I’m a *sannyāsi*, and ready to follow you anywhere.

## H.G. Bhāvananda dāsa

Tamal Krishna Mahārāja is my dearest and first friend in ISKCON. I will suffer his loss for the rest of my life. First I lost my spiritual master and now I have lost my best friend.

## H.H. Sivarāma Māhārāja

Tamal Krishna Māhārāja was personally trained by Śrīla Prabhupāda. He took that training very seriously. With his extraordinary intelligence he was able to assimilate, understand and communicate the training he received.

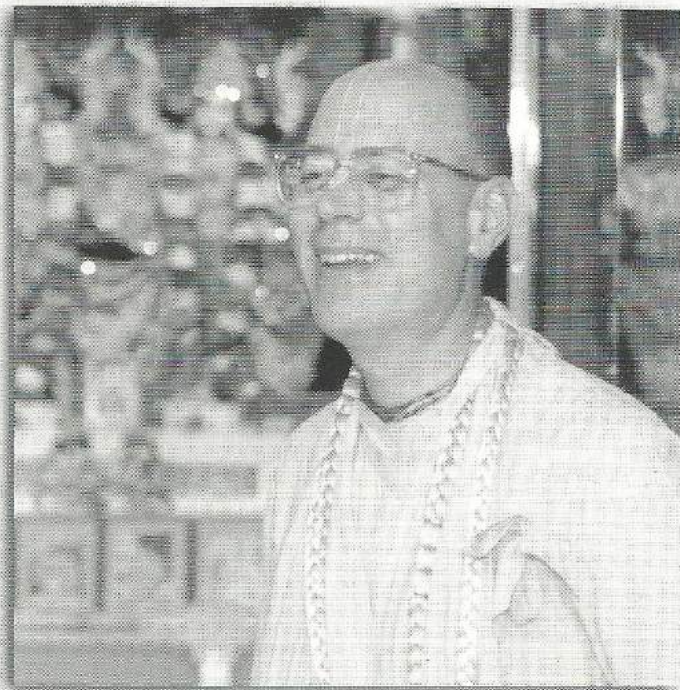
In 1979 he became the G.B.C. of the Chicago temple where I was the temple president. He had a lot of association with Śrīla Prabhupāda whereas mine had been minimal, and so he taught me whatever he had learnt from Prabhupāda. He was like my elder brother, and this has always been the essence of my relationship with him. He was older not just in terms of age, but also through his seniority as a devotee, by the dint of the trust that Śrīla Prabhupāda placed in him.

I became aware of this particularly when we travelled together in 1980 across America in a motor home. He had his hand-written diary of Prabhupāda’s last days, which are now published as *TKG’s Diary*. By reading them I could

understand his relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda, and Prabhupāda’s relationship with him. It was an invaluable experience. We often emphasise the importance of *vani* over *vapuḥ*, as *vani* is not dependent on time and physical space. There are no restrictions in association through *vani*. On the other hand although *vapuḥ* is temporary, it is as important as *vani*. By hearing his *vani*, through his diary, I got a closer idea of what it meant to serve Prabhupāda’s *vapuḥ*.

“I have got full faith in you...” I naturally felt very satisfied to note my spiritual master’s confidence in me. Such confidence in a particular disciple depends on how successfully the disciple is able to dovetail his desires with those of his *guru*. As a father cautiously entrusts the business to his sons, gradually giving them responsibility according to their submissiveness to his instructions, so the spiritual master is eager to hand the mission of Lord Caitanya to his sincere disciples.

—Tamal Krishna Goswami (Servant of the Servant)





I am thankful to Tamal Krishna Māhārāja for teaching me many things. Particularly, I learnt from him how to understand Prabhupāda's way of thinking. Devotees often ask what Prabhupāda did and said in different circumstances. Devotees like Tamal Krishna Māhārāja had extensive association with Prabhupāda and thus they remember incidents relating to particular situations. Śrīla Prabhupāda also worked on very basic Kṛṣṇa conscious principles which were characteristic of his nature and position as the founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON. Whilst associating with Tamal Krishna Māhārāja, I was able to understand Prabhupāda's *modus operandi*; the methodology by which he worked. Understanding Prabhupāda is like understanding the *siddhānta*. One may not understand every single statement of *sāstra* but if one understands the underlying principles of *sāstra*, *siddhānta baliya citte nā kara alasa*, then he can apply those principles to time and circumstance and know what to do. This is called maturity in spiritual life. Śrīla Prabhupāda had a methodology by which he worked, and I saw how Tamal Krishna Māhārāja understood that. Because he was very close to Prabhupāda's heart he could resolve not only apparently contradictory statements from Prabhupāda, but also understand who Prabhupāda was, and what he wanted. He transmitted this to me and I tried to imbibe his teachings. For me this was a great gift.

Over a period of twenty-seven years our relationship developed. In the early years I was like a disciple. Later, we became friends. The relationship wasn't always smooth, but it was always sublime. There were times when we parted and then reunited. We had many strong disagreements over different issues, but our underlying love and affection kept us together. Our relationship matured into true friendship and affection. We both wanted each other's association, and I needed his association to guide me over practical issues. For the last six years he was embedded in the academic world. Sometimes he would come to Hungary, where we would discuss many issues about our society. We always concluded that our ultimate goal is to be with Kṛṣṇa and relish His pastimes.

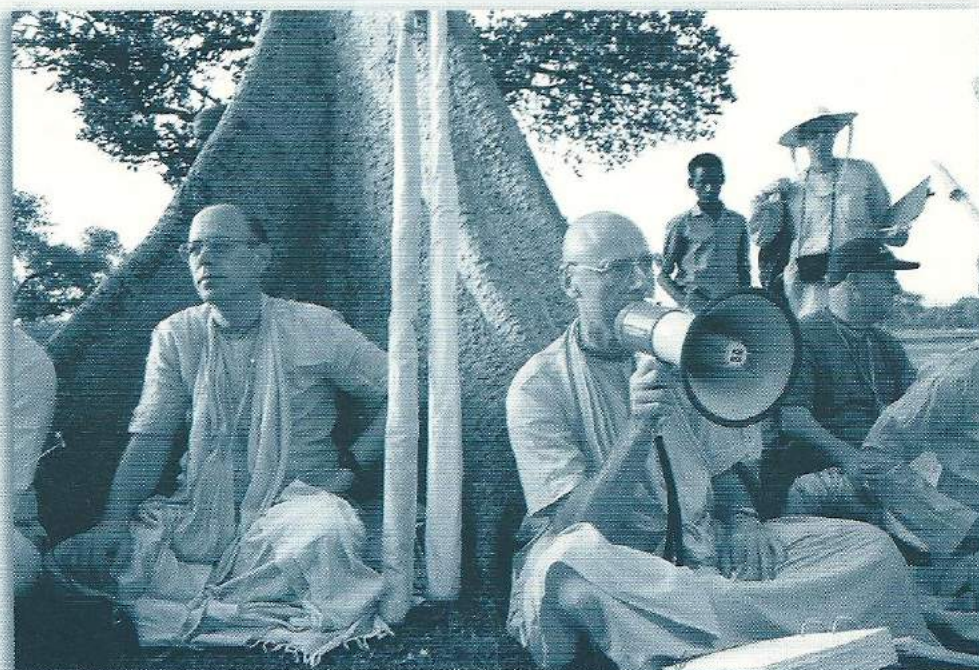
Prabhupāda was covered by many garlands given to him by the devotees... Suddenly one of the devotees nudged me with his elbow and said, "Go up. Prabhupāda is calling you." I was so surprised; I could not imagine Prabhupāda had singled me out. As Prabhupāda placed a long rose-and-gardenia garland around my neck, he smiled very mercifully and thanked me for organizing the *saṅkīrtana* party.

—Tamal Krishna Goswami (Servant of the Servant)

There are different aspects of love, which are described in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. In one of them, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswami describes how the good and bad qualifications of the beloved do not affect their loving relationship. If the beloved does something

good you don't love him more, and if he (she) does something bad you don't love him less, because their love isn't dependent on these conditions. I had the good fortune of having that type of relationship with Tamal Krishna Māhārāja. Tamal Krishna Māhārāja had a demanding and possessive nature. Even if he had any differences with the devotees, he never let them go. He taught me how Vaiṣṇavas are special and rare and so their association should not be given up.

Tamal Krishna Māhārāja represented ISKCON. He was an emblem of the institution. He also represented a part of my life. I have not experienced such an intense loss since Śrīla Prabhupāda disappearance. In January, I went to Oxford and stayed with him for a few days. He had one more chapter of his PhD to complete by autumn. We talked particularly about his astrological chart. His chart described his illness, his retiring from active service, and how after seven years he would once again take a major role in the society. There was no mention of his departure. It was Kṛṣṇa's will; ultimately He is in charge. It is my privilege to have known and loved such a great Vaiṣṇava, and to have been loved by him.





# In Service and Separation

## Appreciating Tamal Krishna Goswami

Excerpts from a talk by Girirāja Swāmī,

Dallas, Texas, March 16 2002

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that when a Vaiṣṇava departs we feel simultaneously happy and sad. We feel happy because we know the Vaiṣṇava has gone to Kṛṣṇa, but we feel sad because we will miss the Vaiṣṇava's association. I have no doubt that Goswami Mahārāja has gone not just to the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda, but also to the lotus feet of Śrī-Śrī Rādhā-Kālāchandji. By such service as Śrīla Gurudeva offered to Śrīla Prabhupāda for so many years, one is naturally promoted to their Lordships Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kālāchandji's service.

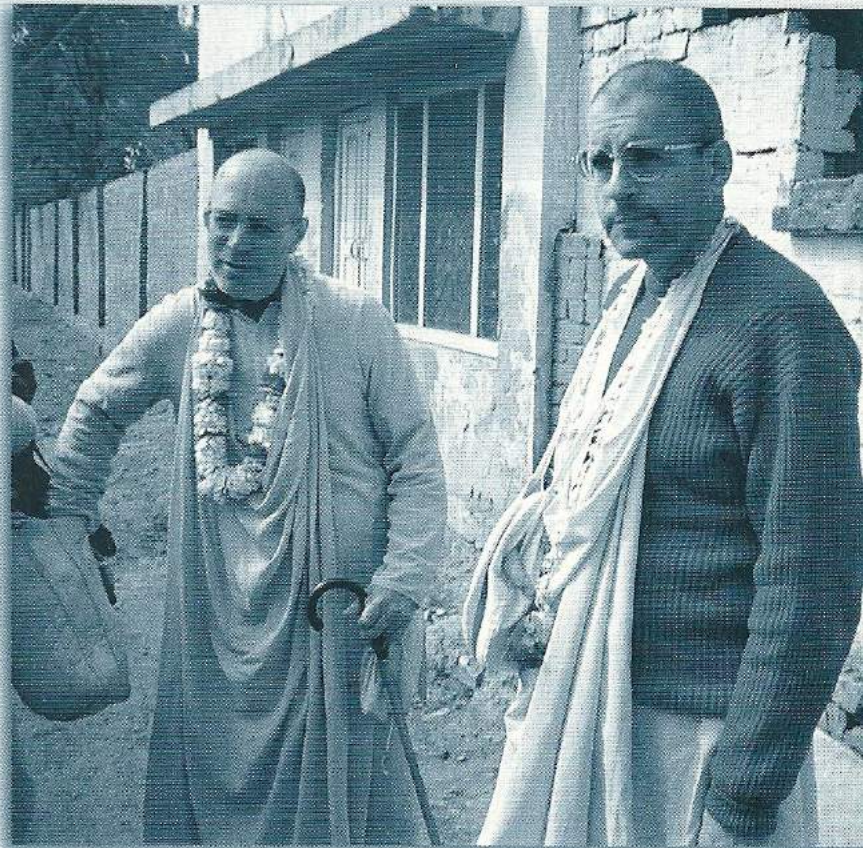
Tamal Krishna Goswami was a direct disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, and had so much association with Śrīla Prabhupāda. But he felt that in spite of his initiations from Śrīla Prabhupāda, all his association with Śrīla Prabhupāda and his practice of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, he still needed the guidance of other devotees. He considered his guides to be *śikṣā-gurus*, and he told me the names of so many god-brothers whom he considered to be his *śikṣā-gurus*.

As the years passed, I saw Goswami Mahārāja in different situations. There was a time he was living in an apartment in the lower part of New York, and he was writing one of his dramas, either *Jagannātha-priya Nāṭakam* or *Prabhupāda Antya-līlā*. He had entered a new field of service: studying Sanskrit drama and writing plays. At the same time he had even been reading some Western dramas. And he wasn't sure if what he was doing was correct, so he wanted to consult his god-brothers.

After that I saw that whenever he had to make an important decision, he would always consult his god-brothers. He had special friends that he consulted on specific points, but when he had to make a major decision, or a difficult decision, he would consult many god-brothers. He might consult them individually, but when he had the chance he would have them all come together, and he would present his thoughts and doubts to them, the different points in favour and the different points against the idea, and basically he would accept their decision. Śrīla Prabhupāda also said that when the Vaiṣṇavas consider and all agree, we should take it as Kṛṣṇa's will.

Goswami Mahārāja was always consulting his god-brothers. He had faith in the association of his god-brothers, and he loved the association of his god-brothers. And for important decisions, he had faith in the conclusions that would arise from their association. So Śrīla Gurudeva was a very honest person. He spoke according to his realization, and he acted as he spoke.

Tamal Krishna Goswami himself was an extraordinary person. His insight, his intelligence, and his association with Śrīla Prabhupāda made him uniquely qualified to answer questions and give guidance. It is extremely rare to find someone who is so spiritually attuned and at the same time so astute in worldly matters, so conscious of an individual's mentality and psychology and mood and sincerity.



One god-brother, Bharadvāja prabhu, told me how much Goswami Mahārāja had helped him over the years. Bharadvāja prabhu was an artist, and Prabhupāda had always engaged him in artwork, first in painting for the books and then in learning the art of doll making in Bengal. Later Bharadvāja prabhu came to lead the FATE project at the museum in Los Angeles. He told me of an incident where he was very sick in a Calcutta hospital;



He was so sick and the situation seemed so hopeless that he had almost given up the will to live. Then Tamal Krishna Goswami came to visit him and spent many hours with him in the hospital. Bharadvāja prabhu's real desire was to preach in Russia. At the time no one had gone to Russia. Bharadvāja prabhu was born in a part of the USSR. Goswami Mahārāja understood what was in his heart and for two hours Goswami Mahārāja encouraged him to go to Russia to preach. Just by that talk with Goswami Mahārāja, Bharadvāja prabhu developed the will to live again. He felt he had something to live for, and he got better.

Here I come to the time when Goswami Mahārāja himself needed an operation in Bombay. He had gone to Jaslok Hospital, the best hospital in Bombay at the time. But when Śrīla Prabhupāda heard about it, he wanted to stop the operation. So Śrīla Prabhupāda got into our jeep, the only vehicle we owned, and rode all the way to central Bombay to stop the operation. But when he got there it was too late. Goswami Mahārāja had just come out of the operating theatre. When he opened his eyes and saw Śrīla Prabhupāda, he told Śrīla Prabhupāda that he had just had a dream: Śrīla Prabhupāda was giving a report to the previous ācāryas about his work on the planet earth, and Śrīla Prabhupāda said that the people basically had no spiritual assets at all—no knowledge or austerity, practically no good qualities at all. But in the dream Śrīla Prabhupāda said that they did have one qualification:

“Their one qualification is that they have faith in me, and they do whatever I say.” Then Goswami Mahārāja looked up at Śrīla Prabhupāda to see his response. And Śrīla Prabhupāda agreed, “Yes, it is true.”

Actually we have no qualification except our faith in Śrīla Prabhupāda as our spiritual master. And Tamal Krishna Goswami was the epitome of such faith and devoted service; he acted like an extension of Śrīla Prabhupāda. The way he took care of Śrīla Prabhupāda at the end, the way he rendered such intimate service to Śrīla Prabhupāda—sometimes it seemed like he could read Śrīla Prabhupāda's mind, which was a great asset for a personal servant of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

After Śrīla Prabhupāda left, Goswami Mahārāja took complete charge of the ceremonies. He made the arrangements for Śrīla Prabhupāda to visit the deities of Vṛndāvana, for Śrīla Prabhupāda to be placed in *samādhi*, and for the festival, sending invitations to all the Vaiṣṇavas of Vṛndāvana. Another thing that impressed me was how Goswami Mahārāja took possession of some of Śrīla Prabhupāda's personal effects and then gave them to individual devotees as

*maha-prasāda*, so they could keep Śrīla Prabhupāda near them to sustain them in separation. He was so perceptive that he seemed empowered to give the right item to the specific individual.

Recently I was recalling the history of ISKCON and looking at pictures of the history of ISKCON. Tamal Krishna Goswami was everywhere. It is inconceivable how one person could have done so much to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness, to serve Lord Caitanya and Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Whether one is a disciple, a god-brother, a spiritual niece or nephew, a university professor who is evolved spiritually, or one who has had only a few encounters with Goswami Mahārāja, anyone can feel Śrīla Gurudeva's presence. Whatever our external relationship might have been, I believe what the scriptures tell us about the relationship of the disciple and the spiritual master will operate: “He lives forever by his divine instructions, and the follower lives with him.”

Of course, the challenge now is to keep that memory alive and to keep that relationship alive.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda left, I was just crying. It took me time before I could actually feel his presence. And even then it has been a gradual process, an incremental process of feeling Prabhupāda's presence. At the time, I was just crying, feeling separation. But, having gone through the experience with Śrīla Prabhupāda, and having some experience of it even now with Śrīla Gurudeva, I know that it is possible to have that relationship even without the physical presence. And I also know the conditions that are conducive to maintaining the relationship and developing it; one has to associate with other devotees who have similar faith, whose association will be conducive to our faith, conducive to our practice, and conducive to our service. If we can keep such association we can blossom spiritually—individually and collectively.

I feel that Goswami Mahārāja's departure has given us an opportunity to come closer together as a society. For the sincere, openhearted, pure hearted devotees, it will be a real occasion to come together, to regroup our forces and appreciate each other more. We can appreciate the value of each other's presence on the planet, and at the same time recognize the tenuousness of our existence in the body and that any one of us could go at any time. Therefore, with whatever time we have left, we should do the best we can for each other, and for Śrīla Prabhupāda and his mission.



# Union in Separation

Not only do the disciples miss their spiritual master, but the spiritual master also intensely feels the separation of his disciples. Being ever concerned with their eternal well-being, he desires always to be reunited with them.

—Tamal Krishna Goswami (Servant of the Servant)

## H.G. Viśwambhara dāsa

(spoken in Māyāpura, 16 March 2002)

I had the privilege and good fortune of being one of the first disciples of H.H. Tamal Krishna Goswami. I received initiation in 1987 at Gaura Pūrṇimā in Māyāpura.

I would like to share with you some very mystical events that happened the day before he left Māyāpura. He called me up into his room and asked me to sit down. He said, “I would like to have your association while I am packing.” He was packing very enthusiastically just like a child. I said, “You are very organised, neat and clean. It is amazing how you put everything in its proper place in the suitcase.” He said, “Yes Viśwambhara, my mother trained me; she is German and German people are very organised.” Then he looked at me and said, “Tomorrow I am going home.” Then he asked for my advice about money, because he had a lot of rupees and didn’t know

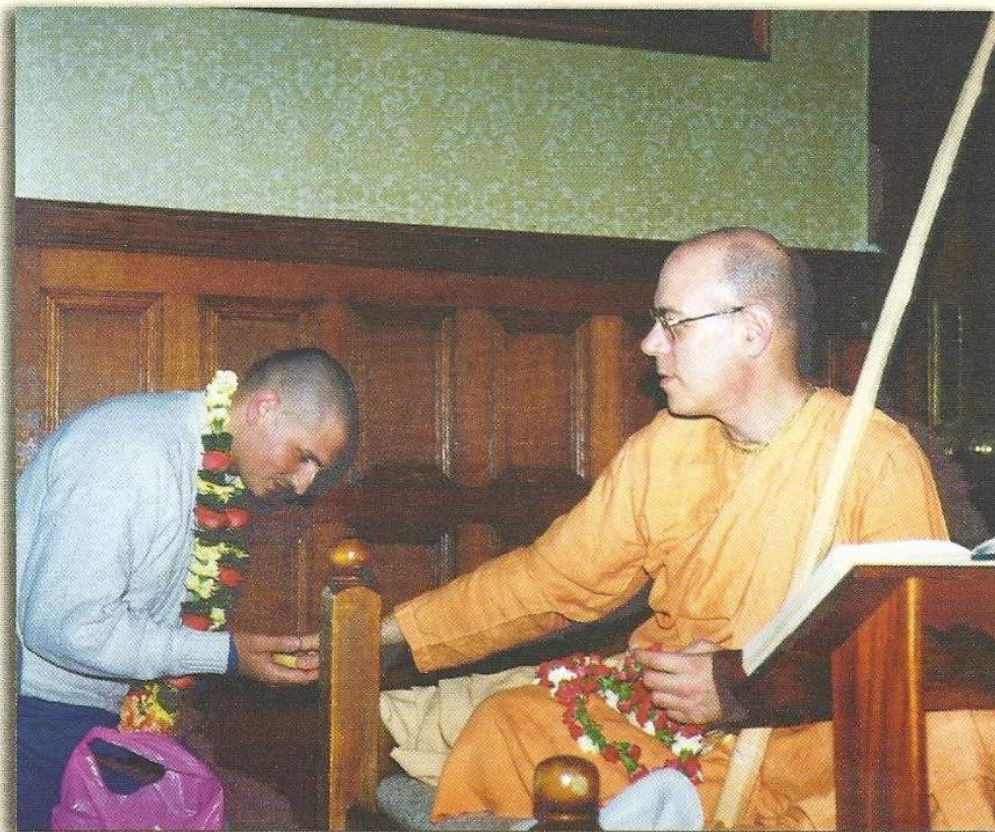
whether to change them or not. I told him to leave the rupees in India because it is illegal to take them out of the country. He said, “Yes I may not need them any more.” That was another sign. Then some of his god-brothers came up to see him. He had told me that the only wealth Śrīla Prabhupāda had left him was the association of his god-brothers and god-sisters. Therefore I wanted to respect his desire. I was just about to go when he said, “Before you go I want you to do a service for me. I want you to please go to the river Gaṅgā and pay my last respects to her. Represent me in the Ganges and take bath on my behalf.”

Afterwards, I thought about these events. He had been so excited packing his bags just like a child who has been in boarding school and is looking forward to going home to see his parents. I had never seen him packing so enthusiastically. It was like some type of preparation.

In England, last year he invited me and my family to spend Christmas with him. He said, “I don’t want you to serve, I want you to call Keśava Bhārati and bring him downstairs and I want all of us to sit around the table like a family.” He sat at the head of the table and said, “Your uncle will sit at the other end of the table and as a son you will sit by my side with your wife, and your two children will sit on the other side.” While we were taking *prasādam* he said, “This is just like a family, it is like the last supper.” Then we toasted and all of us made a wish. For his wish he said, “I hope everyone goes back home, back to Godhead soon.”

Everyone thinks that Lord Kṛṣṇa took him away from us but I personally feel he knew he was going to leave. The pure devotee has sweet free will, he knows the plan of Kṛṣṇa and the calling of his spiritual master.

It is a great loss for us and I feel very sad. I pray to all his god-brothers and god-sisters and to all the devotees, please look upon us very mercifully. We need to be kept in your mercy.





## A Song of Bereavement

By H.G.Gaurīdas dāsa

Guru Mahārāja,

I hate the ringing of the  
Vṛndāvana bell.

Mercilessly it announces the  
passing of time and the departure  
of great Vaiṣṇavas.

2.40am the phone rang. Are you  
phones the disciples of the  
Vṛndāvana bell and is it he that  
taught you to ring? I recognized  
Amekala's voice, I felt immediate  
anxiety in apprehension of what  
she was about to say. The moment  
of silence before she spoke could  
have been a millennium within  
which my mind raced through  
everything dear and of value to  
me. Which one of them was I about to lose. And then  
she said it 'Gaurī, Tamal Krishna Mahārāja has died in a  
car accident'

Words, what are words?

Alphabets, sounds, strung together into sentences that  
should ultimately make sense? You're failing to make  
sense! Are you just by nature cruel or perhaps you are  
disciples of the Vṛndāvana bell who is a thief by nature?

Words you will have to prove yourselves. You are not an  
evidence in yourselves, you will have to work a lot  
harder before you will be acknowledged. Familiar as you  
may sound to a bell in Vṛndāvana, I know there is no  
such bell in Elstree.

I hung up the phone. All three phones then rang in  
unison. "Phones why do you cheat me out of life itself?  
Don't ring! Go away! Why have you followed me here  
from Vṛndāvana? I am a servant of Guru Mahārāja, why  
should I attend to your call?"

More words, almost believable. But, no bell. I rest my case.

Driving to the temple on the A41 at 4 am.

What does the Esso station know of the glories of the  
Vaiṣṇavas? Shrubs and blossoming trees how will your  
youth be fulfilled or your beauty be of worth when you  
don't know the glories of the Vaiṣṇavas? What do traffic  
lights know about the glance and grace of a Vaiṣṇava.  
You are all so meaningless, I feel intimidated by your

As a celibate renunciate, I sometimes laugh when I hear  
myself speak of my "children." But what else is a disciple  
than a child? With the *guru* as father and the *Vedas* as  
mother, it is practically an immaculate conception:  
birthing by *mantra*. The *guru* implants Vedic knowledge  
into the disciple's heart through the power of  
transcendental sound. Like an expectant father, I wait  
impatiently for that embryonic knowledge to mature. On  
initiation day, I name my children, utter prayers for their  
protection, and keep them close and secure. I listen  
attentively for any alarming cry or sign of disease in my  
disciple's/children's lives. I place the soothing balm of  
faith on their confusion and wrap them with the bandage  
of perseverance. My heart swells with pride as I note  
their victories, and shrivels as I confront their failures.  
Sometimes I am stern, sometimes tender, but almost  
never indifferent. I bind them with loving affection. No  
secret do they keep from me. We are inseparable, always  
together in each other's heart.

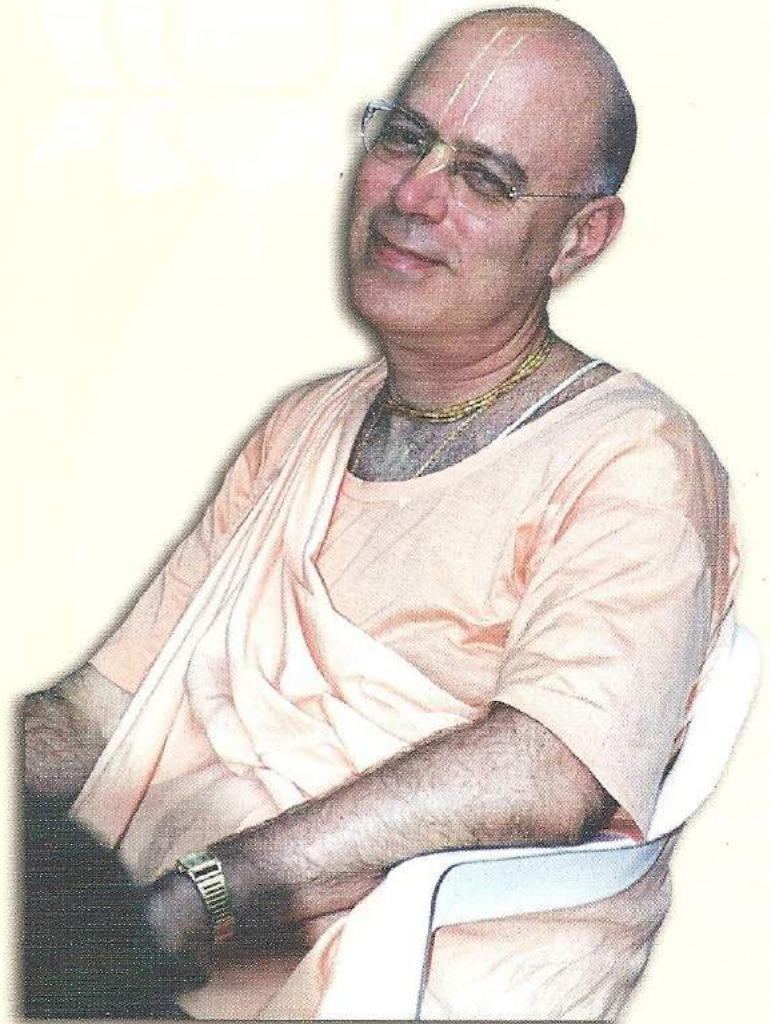
—Tamal Kṛṣṇa Goswami (A Hare Kṛṣṇa at SMU)

ignorance, don't submit to  
sleep, wake up to those who  
have graced this earth.

### The Temple

The temple seems normal.  
"Kaliyapāṇi prabhu did you  
hear my *guru* died." That  
was easy because it was just  
words. I stood together with  
Prāna and Abhi. We spoke  
more words, but our eyes  
were having the real  
conversation, "Do you  
believe in words and what  
they have to say for  
themselves" I tell you, "they  
are disciples of a bell I knew  
in Vṛndāvana."

The conch blew and the  
*pujārī's* bell rang. It's okay he rings during every *ārati*, he  
does not bring misfortune. I picked up the gong, but  
then quickly put it back down again, "You sound to  
much like someone I left in Vṛndāvana, take a rest. You  
won't ring on me, at least not today."





## A Convincing Announcement

"I am sorry I have a sad announcement to make..." More words, but why am I gasping for breath and why does it feel like Mount Meru has taken birth in my throat and is attempting to choke me to death. "Meru! killing me will by no means prove the meaning of words, your attempts are futile."

## Entering the patrons office

Entering the office someone said, "Is this becoming the bereavement room, where we cry and plan the ceremonies of departed Vaiṣṇavas." Why could she only remember the few meetings we had in this room to discuss the departure of Tribhuvanātha prabhu when I've had hundreds of meetings in this room. Had someone died? We sat together. "How are you Gaurī?" "Oh, fine, just fine." I look around the room, I felt a million times removed. The conversation went on, individuals came and left. My mind drifted, following its own course as if being pulled by a golden thread. It then came to rest on the 'song of the bee', I had discovered a gold mine of *vrajabhāṣā* poems describing the *gopīs* bereavement. How much I had wanted to share these poems with you on your return, but had you now

become my song of bereavement? Anyhow songs of bereavement I can withstand, it is the song of the bell that kills me.

## Class

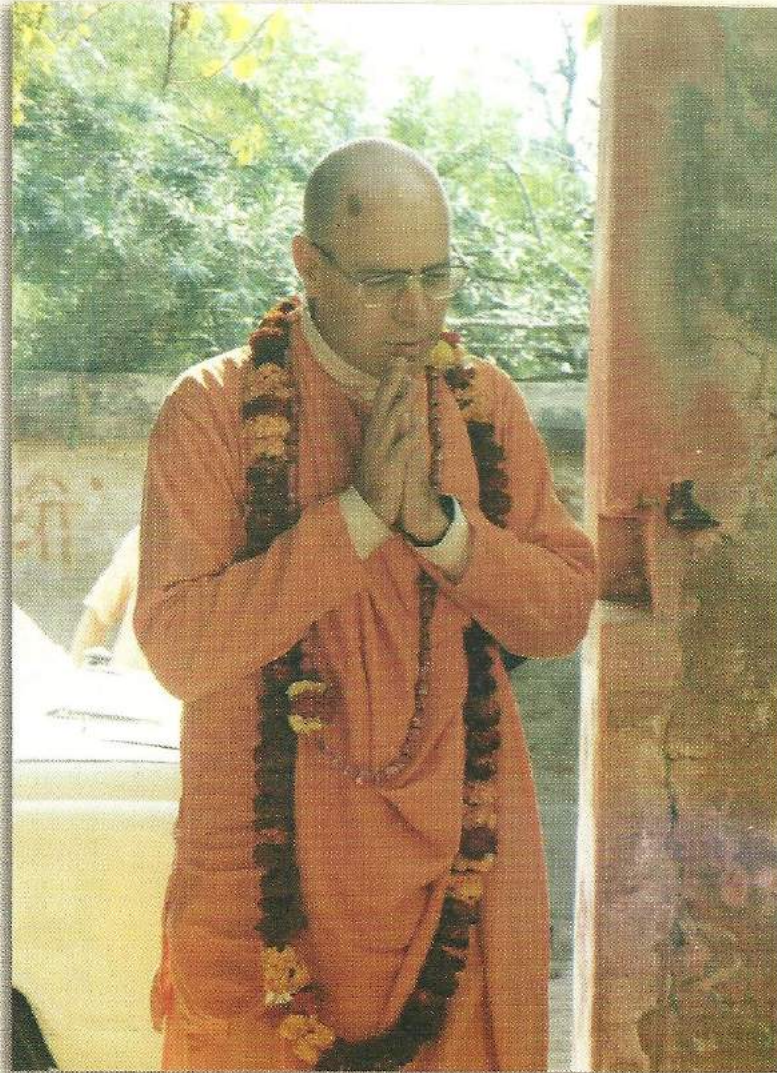
Kālakaṇṭha prabhu, "Gaurī I will give class as long as you sit right by my side, just in case I give way to grief." "Sure," I reply. Sitting before you in class I don't know what you must all be thinking of my behaviour. As he speaks my heart swells and heaves like tremendous waves about to break and flood forth in the form of tears and sighs of grief... I hold my breath and focus on the floor, that raging sea then settles as I again become conscious that Meru is still trying to choke me from within my throat.

## Returning home after class. The Bell Rings

At home I stand in the kitchen before the *mahāprasāda* of our Deities. To fast or not to fast, that is the question. Would fasting be an admittance of tragedy. I have to eat, I have to do something. In the lounge a lecture of Guru Mahārāja plays, it is from Vṛndāvana and he is speaking so well. I move towards the sound and take my seat. Slowly I become absorbed in life, I feel a sense of comfort and security in unity... In the background I hear all the familiar Vṛndāvana sounds such as birds chirping, pigeons fluttering, visitors talking and noises from the road outside. I imagine myself in the Kṛṣṇa Balarāma Mandira, amidst the huge columns, arches and marble floors. I am home again and then all of a sudden my enemy the Vṛndāvana bell rings again and again pronouncing the time with heart shattering resound. I lunge backwards in my chair remembering that I am in my home listening to a lecture and from the tape the sound of the Vṛndāvana bell continues. "This is my home in Elstree, how did you find me!" Aggrieved, shocked and feeling utterly cheated I cry in internal anger, "Why did you ring on me, why have you rang on my Guru Mahārāja, I forbid you to ring. Stop, stop, please I implore you, do not ring! Can you not see my anguish?"

Words, you were disciples of the Bell and seeing my disbelief in you, you had to call him to your defence. I bow before you and accept the inevitable.

Guru Mahārāja, I hate the ringing of the Vṛndāvana bell. Mercilessly it announces the passing of time and it has now announced your departure.





## A Touch of Separation

By H.G. Kālakanṭha dāsa

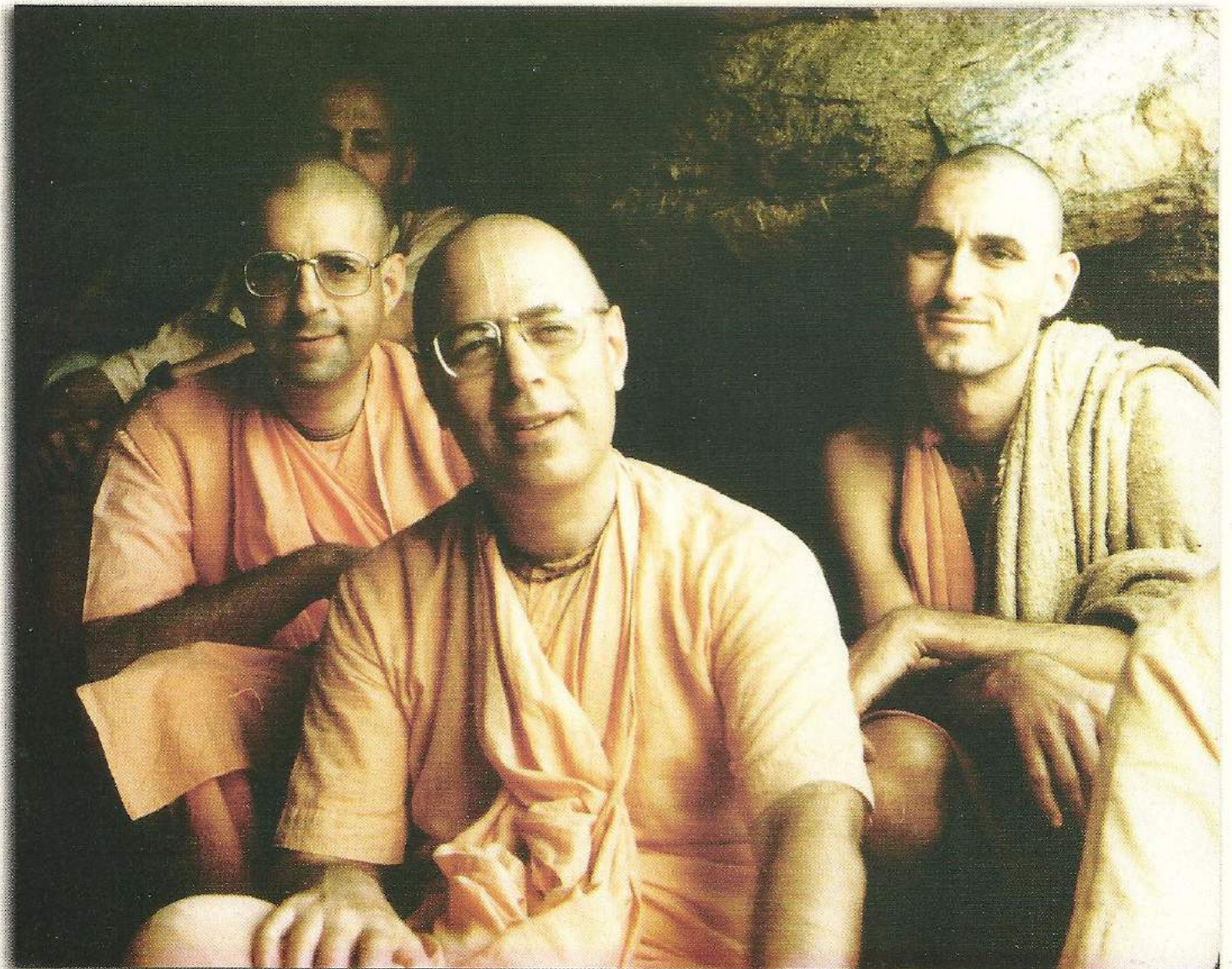
Kṛṣṇa, why do You take back the best devotees first,  
And leave such fools as me behind, our happy bubbles burst?  
You surely have Your reasons, Lord, I don't want to complain.  
But it may ease my aching heart if You will please explain.

You've taken back the very best, my friend, my inspiration,  
Who always served so cheerfully, with such determination.  
I know we're not these bodies and this servant reached perfection,  
But how am I to know You, Lord, without my friend's direction?

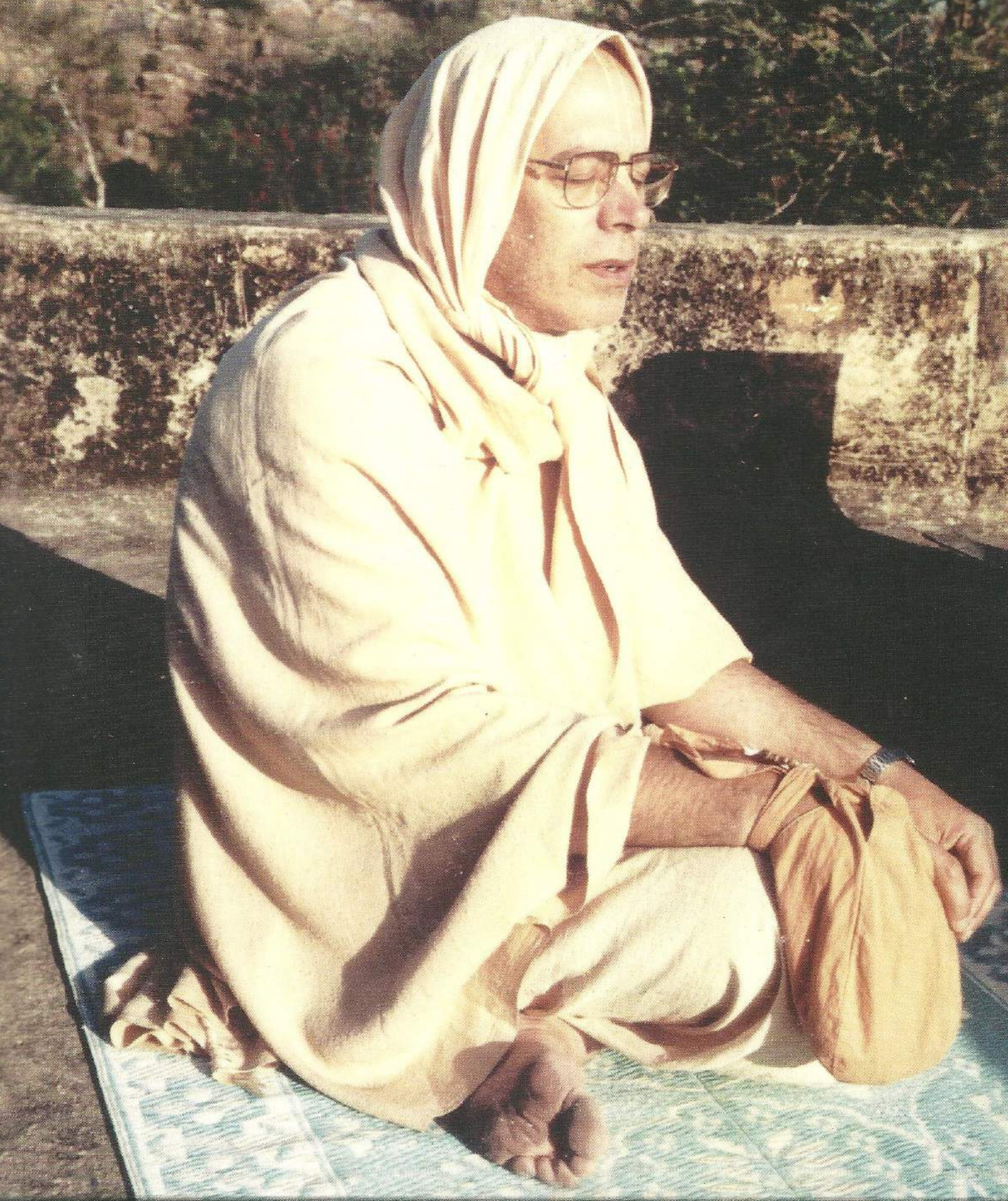
Why did You take one whose presence made me feel secure,  
One who showed how Prabhupāda's disciples can be pure?  
Did You require a general to help Rāma conquer Rāvana,  
Or seek another cowherd girl in Goloka Vṛndāvana?

Life was looking pretty nice before this dreadful day.  
Could this be why You always choose the best to take away?  
Can I enjoy a paradise in what is just a place  
Where birth and death so rudely reign behind a painted face?

Kṛṣṇa, I don't know You well, but this beloved friend  
Was someone I saw daily and on whom I could depend.  
Kṛṣṇa, since You took my friend, would You please take me too?  
Seems my friend has left me here to learn to count on You.







This is the mood of service in separation. The spirit behind our careful attention to all detail is the desire to please the spiritual master. It is he only who we are actually meditating upon, who inspires us throughout the performance of our service. Our sole purpose is his satisfaction, and through such fixed attention we attain his association. Therefore when the object of our meditation actually calls us, we drop all such details of service, because in a sense our goal is achieved. The person who we are aspiring to please and to be with, whose attention we are hoping to attract, has now called. This meditation and service mood was perfectly demonstrated by Kṛṣṇa's foremost devotees, the *gopis* of Vṛndāvana. They were merged in constant remembrance of Kṛṣṇa, always hoping to meet Him at every moment. And when Kṛṣṇa actually called them, playing upon His flute, they immediately dropped whatever they were doing, and not caring for any other responsibilities, they rushed to meet Him. Because the spiritual master is the representative of Kṛṣṇa, to develop these strong feelings of attachment for him in separation is nondifferent than the feelings of separation for Kṛṣṇa. Thus the spiritual master brings his disciples to the highest devotional perfection by stimulating such loving dealings on behalf of Kṛṣṇa.

—Tamaḷ Krishna Goswami (Servant of the Servant)



*“He lives forever by his  
divine instructions,  
And the follower lives with him.”*

