



*Śrīla Prabhupāda's  
Beautiful  
Transcendental Qualities*



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*Ajitānanda dāsa*



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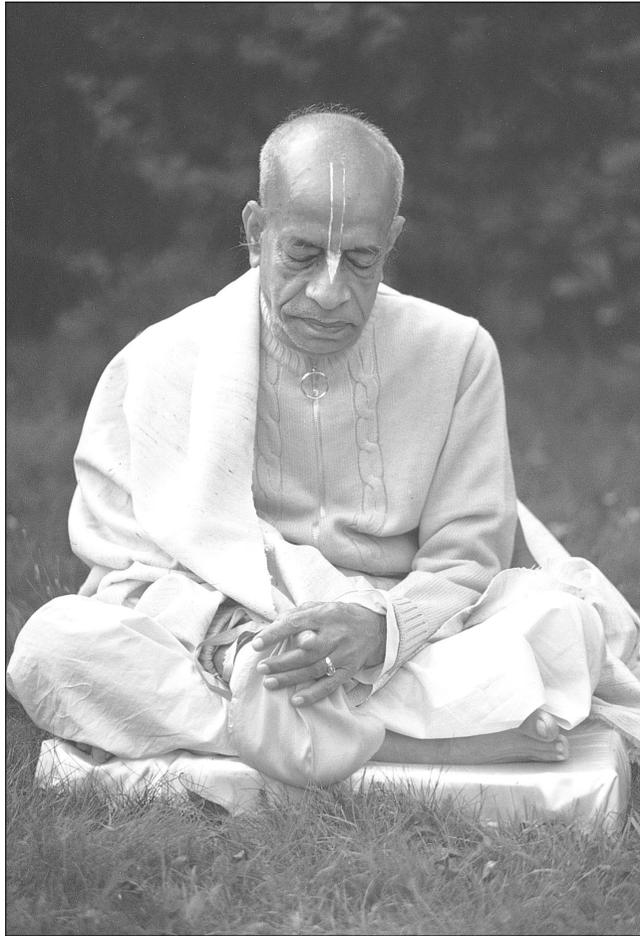




## *Dedication*

To my spiritual master,  
Śrīla Prabhupāda,  
who is an ocean  
of love and compassion.





His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda  
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for  
Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

## Introduction

**H**is Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who successfully distributed the message of Lord Kṛṣṇa throughout the world, was not an ordinary conditioned soul, governed by the harsh laws of material nature. Although he always felt himself to be most insignificant, it is evident through careful study of his life that Śrīla Prabhupāda perfectly displayed the twenty-six qualities of a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, as given in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

The Vedic literature states that only one who is free from material bondage can possess these qualities in full. Such a great soul is rarely found within this material realm, and owing to his unparalleled purity and exalted status as an intimate associate of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, he is worshipable by the entire world. Following are the sublime qualities of a pure devotee so eminently exemplified by Śrīla Prabhupāda.



## *Merciful*

**T**he ultimate expression of mercy is to freely afford everyone the opportunity to develop pure love of Godhead. This Śrīla Prabhupāda did by opening over one hundred temples, printing millions of books and sending his disciples all over the world to teach the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. His distribution of mercy manifested naturally as a result of his heartfelt compassion for the long-suffering conditioned souls. His mercy fell everywhere, like pleasing rain upon the burning hearts of this age.

When Śrīla Prabhupāda lectured during the early days of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in America, he would often tell his listeners, “I have come to your country not to take anything, but simply to give.” Those who were honest and sincere were able to sense Śrīla Prabhupāda’s unalloyed desire to bestow upon them the highest form of mercy, and directed by Kṛṣṇa within their hearts, they voluntarily placed themselves under his guidance and protection.

Although Śrīla Prabhupāda is now gone from our material vision, his mercy is still available. A liberated soul is not bound by time and space, and neither is his mercy. One only has to open up one’s heart to receive this benediction, which is being distributed freely to everyone.



## Truthful

**D**uring the 1960's, a generation of young men and women took part in a mass rebellion against the untruths that had been perpetrated upon them by governments, schools, media and big business. At that time Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived on the scene, boldly preaching the message of Lord Kṛṣṇa. He spoke truthfully, never altering the pure message in deference to the time and circumstance to attract followers, fame and money. In an atmosphere seething with the fumes of unrestricted sense gratification, Śrīla Prabhupāda presented a process of spiritual life based on personal sacrifice and purification of the senses.

In those days, with the peace movement in vogue, it was extremely unpopular to speak out on behalf of any form of military activity. But rather than cater to public opinion, Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke the truth about the *Bhagavad-gītā*, explaining to his youthful audience that Arjuna attained spiritual perfection by fighting a war under the order of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Because of Śrīla Prabhupāda's own spiritual qualities and his straightforward presentation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's message, people gradually began to understand the message and received it with great delight. Such was the powerful effect of Śrīla Prabhupāda's truthfulness.





## Magnanimous

Śrīla Prabhupāda's gifts to the world were filled with tremendous spiritual value. He gave us a wonderful philosophy to live by, knowledge of our true spiritual identities, beautiful Deities of Kṛṣṇa to worship, the all-auspicious holy name of Kṛṣṇa and delicious *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*. Śrīla Prabhupāda also gave us the spiritually enlivening association of devotees and the chance to attain love of Kṛṣṇa and return to a life of eternity, bliss and knowledge in the spiritual world.

In return for all these blessings, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked nothing for himself. He simply asked that we refrain from sinful activities, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others. In this way, selflessly giving of himself at every step, Śrīla Prabhupāda perfectly exhibited the magnanimous nature of a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa.





## *Desireless*

One is said to be desireless when his only interest lies in satisfying the transcendental senses of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Desires are eternally flowing like a river from the heart of the living entity, and the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness can change the quality of those desires from material to spiritual.

Although Śrīla Prabhupāda began his preaching work very humbly, his mission became enormously successful, and Kṛṣṇa blessed him with great opulence. When a person acquires great amounts of wealth and power, he usually becomes thoroughly attached and polluted due to the strong force of his material desires. Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, remained aloof from this contamination because of his complete absorption in the desire to please Kṛṣṇa.





## *Indifferent to Material Acquisition*

**B**ecause a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is desireless, he is naturally indifferent to material acquisition. Material facilities may come and go, but that does not concern him in the least.

Śrīla Prabhupāda once pointed out that if he had simply sat beneath a tree and preached, very few people would have come to listen. Therefore, to effectively deliver the message of Lord Kṛṣṇa, he constructed beautifully ornate temples. At no time, however, was he desirous of settling in comfortably to enjoy these facilities, choosing instead to follow a rigorous schedule of traveling and preaching that even the youngest and healthiest of his disciples could not keep pace with.





## *Without Material Possessions*

*A* pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is always diving and surfacing in the ocean of spiritual happiness. The *Vedas* explain that one drop of this happiness is millions of times greater than the paltry relish afforded by material sense gratification or even the pleasure derived from liberation from material existence. A pure devotee never depends on the accumulation of material possessions for his happiness. He accepts only what is necessary to perform devotional service and maintains full awareness that these facilities are actually the property of the Lord.

During Śrīla Prabhupāda's years spent in Vṛndāvana preparing for his eventual journey to the West, he lived very simply in a tiny room in the courtyard of the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple. After preaching vigorously in the West for a number of years, Śrīla Prabhupāda had access to much opulence, yet he never claimed any of it as his own and used every penny in the service of Kṛṣṇa.



## *Fixed*

When Śrīla Prabhupāda was instructed by his spiritual master to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness in English, he took his order as his life and soul and fixed his determination upon carrying it out diligently. Founding the *Back to Godhead* magazine in 1944, Śrīla Prabhupāda single-handedly attended to its publication and distribution for many years, never once deviating from his sincere effort to please his spiritual master. As a result of Śrīla Prabhupāda's fixed determination, all of his preaching activities were crowned with glorious success, and even now, in his physical absence, his followers carry on his work all over the world.



## *Without False Prestige*

Śrīla Prabhupāda's humility was inconceivably deep and heartfelt, and it inspired a generation of young men and women, who had based their lives on the rejection of authority, to willingly accept his authority. Śrīla Prabhupāda never took credit for his many successes, always preferring to acknowledge his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and the assistance given to him by his disciples.

During one lecture, Śrīla Prabhupāda touched the hearts of his disciples when he stated that he considered them to be representatives of his spiritual master, sent to assist him in his preaching mission. By this expression of sincere gratitude, Śrīla Prabhupāda displayed his mood of devout humility. Anyone pursuing the spiritual path should aspire to follow in his footsteps in this regard.



## Grave

Śrīla Prabhupāda once explained to a group of his disciples that a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is always grave. Upon hearing this, one devotee, a very colorful and effusive person, decided to tone down his disposition and became straight-faced in an attempt to please his spiritual master. After a few days of this behavior by his disciple, Śrīla Prabhupāda looked at him quizzically and asked what was the matter. The disciple replied that he was trying to be grave.

At that, Śrīla Prabhupāda laughed and explained to him that being grave means to be serious about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It has nothing to do with artificially repressing one's individuality. Śrīla Prabhupāda himself was a most vibrant personality. His life abounded with laughter and spiritual enjoyment, yet he was always serious about Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He never forgot Lord Kṛṣṇa, not even for a moment, and in this way displayed perfect gravity.



## *Not Defiant*

When Śrīla Prabhupāda first met his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, he was a supporter of Mahātmā Gandhi's effort to free India from the clutches of British rule. During that meeting, the two engaged in a discussion, during which Śrīla Prabhupāda expressed his view that to be spiritually potent India first needed to be politically free. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta responded by using sound logic and scriptural evidence to prove that Kṛṣṇa consciousness alone could rid India, as well as the rest of the world, from all forms of material suffering.

Because Śrīla Prabhupāda was not defiant, being endowed with all humility and respect, he graciously surrendered to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta's infallible conclusion and accepted him as his spiritual guide. From this transcendently instructive pastime we can see how a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is never defiant, and also how we must conduct ourselves in the presence of genuinely advanced Vaiṣṇavas, if we wish to rise to the platform of spiritual consciousness. Although Śrīla Prabhupāda was a personal associate of Lord Kṛṣṇa, capable of giving spiritual guidance to the entire world, he was always surrendered to the lotus feet of his spiritual master and never evinced even a hint of defiance in his character.



## Respectful

Śrīla Prabhupāda was respectful to all living beings because he saw them as parts and parcels of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, with whom he was fully in love. During his extensive preaching tours, he was usually greeted at temples by adoring throngs of devotees and guests. On one such visit to the New York City temple in 1976, as he strode gracefully down the center aisle amid a multitude of beaming devotees assembled in the front lobby, they all paid obeisances to him, as is the custom when receiving a worshipable guest. At that time a young *gurukula* boy, who had innocently bowed down too far into the aisle, was eased backwards by the devotee next to him, so as not to obstruct the path. When Śrīla Prabhupāda reached the boy, he stopped, placed his hand on his head and looked at him with affection, as if to make sure that his feelings had not been hurt. In this instance, and in all of his personal dealings, Śrīla Prabhupāda treated everyone he met with the utmost respect, thus softening their hearts and rekindling their spiritual sentiments.

## *Equal to Everyone*

A pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa sees the spiritual nature of all beings, regardless of their temporary material forms. He observes that all souls, in their pure state, are qualitatively equal, though their individual spiritual identities are unique. In addition, he is always trying to uplift them and sees and treats everyone in that spirit. Śrīla Prabhupāda perfectly exhibited this sublime quality and was thus the ideal representative of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda, who desired to flood the entire world with love of Kṛṣṇa. He was constantly immersed in distributing Their mercy to everyone, and he humbly requested his disciples to assist him in this effort.

One evening in July 1966, while Śrīla Prabhupāda was lecturing at 26 Second Avenue in New York City, an old derelict staggered into the storefront, put two rolls of toilet tissue in the bathroom, set some paper towels atop the sink, turned and staggered out. Being equal to everyone, Śrīla Prabhupāda was undisturbed by the man's odd behavior and appreciated the spark of devotion shining through. "Just see," said Prabhupāda, "he is not in order, but he thought that, 'Here is something. Let me give some service.' Just see how automatically it comes. This is natural."



## *Clean*

**S**rīla Prabhupāda exhibited summit cleanliness, both internally and externally. His heart and mind were constantly submerged in the purifying waters of love of Godhead, and his shining body was always engaged in Lord Kṛṣṇa's pure devotional service. Śrīla Prabhupāda's cleanliness was so profound and far-reaching that not only was he himself impeccable, but he also purified the lives of thousands of young men and women who had previously possessed no proper concept of spiritual or bodily cleanliness.





## *Peaceful*

**S**rīla Prabhupāda once described the mind of a pure devotee as being very peaceful, like a country pond filled with crystal-clear water, beautiful lotus flowers and swans gliding happily across it. This much desired state of mind is a natural quality of one who is situated in transcendence, at the lotus feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa, far beyond the turbulent material world and senses. Śrīla Prabhupāda was very peaceful due to his own pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Shouldering the immense pressure and responsibility of a worldwide spiritual family, with its concomitant problems, Śrīla Prabhupāda gracefully meted out love, guidance and practical instructions with full composure, never once losing touch with his peaceful Lord Kṛṣṇa.





## *Mild*

Śrīla Prabhupāda's mild demeanor was another very attractive feature of his divine personality. In the material world, when a person attains a position of high authority, he often becomes influenced by false pride and loses the quality of gentleness in his behavior. Thus he becomes a source of anxiety for his subordinates. Śrīla Prabhupāda, although the world's greatest spiritual authority, never displayed even a drop of false pride and always maintained a mildness around which everyone felt at ease.

The beautiful photograph on the cover of this book, in which Śrīla Prabhupāda appears as the most humble Vaiṣṇava, does far more to depict his mild nature than this insignificant writer can hope to express.





## Poetic

Śrīla Prabhupāda was poetic, not only in the literary sense, as evidenced by his beautiful poems glorifying his spiritual master and Lord Kṛṣṇa, but in every aspect of his personality as well. His gesturing, walking, talking, singing, smiling, dancing and worship were all done with a natural poetic grace, as befitting a swanlike pure devotee of the Lord.

For those sensitive souls who had embarked on a pilgrim's progress, in search of ultimate truth and beauty, attaining Śrīla Prabhupāda's sublime association marked their journey's end, and they happily gave up all mundane pursuits to engage in his service. Such was the attractive power of Śrīla Prabhupāda's poetic nature, which manifested wonderfully due to his superexcellent level of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.



## Sane

**T**he living entity in the material world has become mad due to the influence of *māyā*. In reality, he is an eternal spiritual spark, part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, but in illusion, he sees himself as a material body, forgets his intimate relationship with the Lord and fails to see how everything around him is emanating from the Absolute Truth.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was never under such misconceptions, however, as evidenced by his pure devotional service. Out of natural humility, he never promoted his own elevated status, but once, when pressed by his disciples for information concerning his position, he modestly replied, “Never was there a moment when I have not thought of Kṛṣṇa in this life.” Śrīla Prabhupāda’s unwavering remembrance of Kṛṣṇa provided the perfectly effulgent example of spiritual sanity, and by faithfully serving his lotus feet we will soon become free from our material illusion.





## *Faultless*

**D**ue to his being situated in the internal, spiritual energy of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Prabhupāda was faultless, free from the four material defects, namely, the tendency to commit mistakes, to be in illusion, to cheat others and to possess imperfect senses. Because Śrīla Prabhupāda performed his devotional activities in a mood of full surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa, he was guided by the personal hand of the Lord and was consequently mistake-free. His freedom from illusion was shown by the fact that, through his preaching work, millions of souls were enlightened with spiritual knowledge. By sacrificing his own bodily comforts for the service of mankind, he demonstrated his complete freedom from the tendency to cheat others. And finally, his eyes, being smeared with the ointment of love of God, were fully spiritual, as were the rest of his senses, which were ever engaged in the transcendental loving service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.





## *Surrendered to Kṛṣṇa*

Śrīla Prabhupāda's complete surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa was shown by his constant engagement in devotional service with mind, body and words. Another symptom of a soul fully surrendered to Kṛṣṇa is absolute detachment from the bodily concept of life.

At the advanced age of seventy, despite several heart attacks and many other ordeals, Śrīla Prabhupāda single-handedly penetrated Māyā's formidable stronghold and planted the seed of devotional service in the hearts of thousands of fallen souls. He was able to do this because he was completely free from material attachment, owing to his full surrender to Kṛṣṇa.



## *Eats Only as Much as Required*

*A*lthough Śrīla Prabhupāda received the most opulent *prasādam*, presented to him in grand amounts by loving disciples, he never indulged in luxury, taking only modest portions and distributing the remainder to the devotees. As a rule, one in the renounced order of life is forbidden to eat delicious food, as this may drag him by the tongue into a whirlpool of material desires and thus ruin his spiritual advancement. Śrīla Prabhupāda, however, was never victimized by these culinary delights. He always maintained full spiritual potency and complete dedication to satisfying the transcendental senses of Lord Kṛṣṇa.





## *Completely Controls the Six Bad Qualities*

*A*n aspiring devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is serious about spiritual life, strives to control the six bad qualities, namely, lust, anger, greed, illusion, madness and envy, which act like deadly poison upon his consciousness if not subdued. His practical method for accomplishing this is to actively engage his body, mind and words in the Lord's devotional service, which has the potency to neutralize these vices, as a serpent is robbed of its capacity to inject poison when its fangs are removed.

Śrīla Prabhupāda did not need to control these vices, however, as they were completely absent from his nature. He was like a *vaidurya* gem, manifesting many beautiful, transcendental qualities at every moment, as he moved about in the brilliant light of pure devotional service. Since we are still susceptible to the onslaught of the six bad qualities, we should place our heads, in all humility, at the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda, engage enthusiastically in his glorification and try to please him by serving his mission to the best of our abilities. In this way, we are sure to become completely free from material contamination and develop pure love of Kṛṣṇa.





## Performs Welfare Work for Everyone

**I**t is stated in the *Kṛṣṇa* book story of Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa that when loving service is rendered to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the entire creation benefits. Thus, a pure devotee of the Lord, who always engages in devotional service, performs welfare work for everyone. This welfare work is nothing like mundane philanthropy, which provides unfortunate persons with material facilities to temporarily offset their suffering condition; rather, it is meant to completely extricate them from material existence and award them an eternal blissful life in the spiritual realm.

Śrīla Prabhupāda served Lord Kṛṣṇa wholeheartedly and without deviation during his *līlā* among us. In this way he benefited the entire world, indirectly, by his own pure devotional service, and directly, by offering a potent spiritual program, capable of eradicating the material existence of anyone who takes to it seriously. His welfare work did not stop with his physical disappearance, however, as the preaching force he set in motion will continue to spiritually uplift the inhabitants of this planet for the next ten thousand years, far exceeding the meager philanthropy performed by those absorbed in the bodily concept of life.



## *Expert*

When Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived in America in 1965, he faced the tremendous challenge of attracting gross materialists to the sublime spiritual process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Although such a feat seemed impossible, Śrīla Prabhupāda miraculously ignited a spiritual explosion, whose vibrations are still resonating throughout the world. He demonstrated unprecedented preaching skill by presenting Kṛṣṇa consciousness perfectly according to time and circumstance, offering such an attractive and palatable spiritual program that any sincere soul could easily follow.

Today, at Ratha-yātrā festivals all over the world, millions of people chant, dance, wave and cheer in a universal expression of appreciation, as Lord Jagannātha's colorful chariots float through the city streets. From this it is clear that Śrīla Prabhupāda was so expert that, even in his physical absence, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is being spread far and wide by the faithful application of his instructions.



## Silent

According to Vaiṣṇava philosophy, being silent means to engage the tongue in speaking only about topics related to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura used to encourage silence in his disciples, telling them, “Nonsense talk breeds nonsense thought, breeds nonsense action, breeds birth, death, old age and disease.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda, being the foremost disciple of his spiritual master, was the chief exponent of this adage in the modern age, single-handedly spreading *kṛṣṇa-kathā* all over the world through his lectures, discussions and translating work. His words are a river of nectar flowing mercifully into the hearts of the devotees, and in due course of time this mighty river will silence the nonsense of all souls suffering in this world.



## Compassionate

A pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa is always compassionate upon the fallen souls, who are suffering greatly in the blazing fire of material life. He is ever busy making arrangements to relieve their distress and is pleased when he sees them advancing on the path of spiritual happiness. Śrīla Prabhupāda, compassion personified, dedicated his every breath to spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness, resting only a few hours every night to keep body and soul together.

As his body dwindled during his last days with us, many doctors visited Śrīla Prabhupāda to offer their advice and treatment, but with little or no result. Finally one day, a physician suggested that his condition arose from his grave anxiety over the tribulations that would beset his disciples after his physical disappearance. At that, Śrīla Prabhupāda looked up and told the man, “Yes, you have diagnosed my condition correctly.” With these words, Śrīla Prabhupāda demonstrated his utter selflessness and his extraordinarily profound compassionate nature.





## *A Friend*

**I**n the *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa states that He is the friend of all living beings. As the Lord's intimate associate, Śrīla Prabhupāda also displayed friendship to all by dint of his constant engagement in spiritual welfare activities. In the material world friendships are formed on the basis of mutual sense gratification, and when sense gratification is disturbed, the relationship is either damaged or discontinued.

Śrīla Prabhupāda was a true friend to all, however, because he formed relationships with others motivated by his unalloyed desire to assist everyone in achieving the highest goal of life. He never desired to exploit anyone, and if there was ever an offense committed against him or some difficulty caused by others, he never took it seriously.

Because Śrīla Prabhupāda accepted the *karma* of five thousand disciples, he had to undergo what appeared to be suffering. In spite of this, he never withdrew his mercy and friendship. Significantly, he always closed his letters to his disciples with the words, "Your ever well-wisher." The spiritual friendship of a pure devotee like Śrīla Prabhupāda is the rarest of gems, and intelligent persons will certainly appreciate, revere and guard it as life's dearest treasure.





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