

The mystery of Lord Jagannatha

By H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami

The appearance of Lord *Jagannatha* is actually a mystery. Who is Lord *Jaganatha*? We know that *Jagannatha* is *Krsna*. But if *Jagannatha* is *Krsna* then why doesn't he look like *Krsna*? *Jagannatha* looks different. *Krsna*'s form has been described as *nara vapuh*, a human-like form. His form is different to *Narayana* who has four arms. *Krsna* has two arms like human beings. Seeing *Narayana* one can see that he is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But *Krsna* doesn't look like the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He looks like a human being. And not only does he look like a human being, but he looks like a cowherd boy. He doesn't even look like a city boy but like a simple village boy. He doesn't look like a prince, but like a very ordinary boy from a village. But when it comes to *Jagannatha* we don't see any resemblance to *Krsna* at all.

There are many different misconceptions about Lord *Jagannatha*. Some people think that *Jagannatha* is a Buddhist deity of worship. They don't consider *Jagannatha* to be a Hindu God. There is the misconception that the Buddhists actually established the *Jagannatha* temple. There are many misconceptions because of a lack of understanding. This is mainly due to the different influences of the time. In the past, when different sects became prevalent in India and took over the worship of *Jagannatha*, they influenced the worship and tried to give their own stamp on the identity of *Jagannatha*. So at one point in time the *Jagannatha* temple was predominately influenced by the Buddhists who took over charge of the temple. At this time the whole of India was under the Buddhist influence.

King Ashoka defeated the King of Kalinda, the King of Orissa, and he started to spread Buddhism. And in the temples, which are places of worship, common people, hearing the prevalent ideology of the time, naturally accepted and followed that doctrine. After Buddhism the influence of impersonalism emerged. But, in due course of time, by *Krsna*'s mercy, *Jagannatha*'s original identity was once once again established for our benefit. We are now recognising *Jagannatha* as He is, as *Krsna*. How can there be any doubt of His true position in anyone's mind? When we see *Jagannatha*, *Baladeva* and *Subhadra* then we naturally understand that when *Balarama* and *Subhadra* are present then the personality of *Jagannatha* must be *Krsna* Himself.

From the *Skanda Purana* we learn how the Lord instructed King Indradyumna that these forms of *Jagannatha*, *Baladeva* and *Subhadra* are His eternal forms in the spiritual sky. So who and where are these forms in the spiritual realm? This esoteric truth was explained by Srila *Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakura* on the occasion of *Rathayatra* as he delivered a lecture on a radio programme.

The Queens of *Dvarka* often noticed that *Krsna* was often absent minded during the day. Although He was present in *Dvarka*, His mind was elsewhere. At night they would hear *Krsna* in His sleep calling out the residents of *Vrndavana*. He was calling for His father and mother, for His friends and cows and for the *Gopis*. They could therefore understand that although *Krsna* was living in *Dvarka* but actually He was always in *Vrndavana*. During the day His mind was in *Vrndavana* and at night, though His body stayed in *Dvarka*, He went to *Vrndavana*. So they became curious, what is there in *Vrndavana* that makes *Krsna* always absorbed in *Vrndavana*? What is so special about *Vrndavana*? One day the

Queens approached Mother *Rohini* and asked her, “You were in *Vrndavana* with *Krsna* during His childhood, so please tell us what did *Krsna* do there and what is there that attracts *Krsna* so? Who are those residents of *Vrndavana* who always absorb *Krsna*’s thoughts?” Mother *Rohini* replied, “I will explain to you when *Krsna* and *Balarama* are not present. If *Rama* and *Krsna* are here and they hear these descriptions they will be put into a very painful situation. We should spare Them from that agony.” So one day when *Krsna* and *Balarama* were away, the Queens asked Mother *Rohini* to tell them about *Krsna* and *Balarama*’s activities in *Vrndavana*.

While Mother *Rohini* began describing events, *Subhadra* was kept at the gate to guard the entrance; She was to stop *Krsna* and *Balarama* from entering in case they entered. As Mother *Rohini* was speaking, *Krsna* and *Balarama* indeed appeared there. But *Subhadra*, hearing *Krsna* and *Balarama*’s activities in *Vrndavana*, became so overwhelmed with emotions that her voice became choked and she could not speak. So she couldn’t warn Mother *Rohini* and the Queens that *Krsna* and *Balarama* had arrived. Although she could not speak she stretched her arms out wide to stop Them from entering the room. *Krsna* was on one side of *Subhadra* and *Balarama* was on her other side. Standing there *Krsna* and *Balarama* listened to their own activities in *Vrndavana* with the *Vraja vasis*.

While hearing these pastimes *Krsna* and *Balarama* experienced such emotions that their forms changed and were transformed. *Krsna*’s eyes became large like two fully bloomed lotuses. His face lit up with a beautiful, bright smile, and his limbs dissolved. His whole countenance and existence changed. His entire body became just His head and His arms. His arms stretched forward with an intense desire to embrace the residents of *Vrndavana*. Seeing *Krsna* and *Balarama* assuming that form *Subhadra* was also induced with similar ecstatic emotions. She also assumed a similar form. But as she felt extremely guilty for stopping *Krsna* and *Balarama* from entering the room her arms became withdrawn into her body. This is why *Krsna*, *Balarama* and *Subhadra* assume these transcendental forms: *Krsna* and *Balarama*’s arms are stretched forward with an intense desire to embrace their most intimate associates of *Vrndavana* and *Subhadra*’s arms are withdrawn within her body. This is the mystery of the wonderful forms of *Jagannatha*, *Baladeva* and *Subhadra* and how these forms are eternally present in the spiritual sky. These forms are present in *Dvarka* where *Krsna* of *Dvarka* intensely desires to go back to *Vrndavana* to be with His most intimate devotees in the mellows of friendship, parental and conjugal relationships and principally in the mellow of conjugal love.

There is another aspect of Lord *Jagannatha*’s pastimes which have been revealed in *Chaitanya Caritamṛta* through the pastimes of *Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu*. When *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu* was dancing in front of the chariot of Lord *Jagannatha* He was singing a love song and describing a love affair between a young boy and a young girl. The young girl describes: The one who stole my heart when he was young, today he has become my lord and we have now become united. It is the same spring night where the gentle breeze blows from the kadamba trees carrying the fragrance of malati flowers. I am the same heroine, the lover with my beloved. But still my heart is yearning to go back to the bank of the River *Reva*, under the betasi trees.

Mahaprabhu was singing this song in front of Lord *Jagannatha*’s chariot. Apparently this song describes a young girl’s love story, her dissatisfaction and her desire to go back to the days of their youth when they were not married and to relive their love affairs. All the devotees were wondering why *Mahaprabhu* was singing this song? The only person who knew the meaning and purpose of this song was *Svarupa Damodara*.

After the *Rathayatra* was over, one day *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu* went to the kutir of *Rupa Goswami*. At that time *Rupa Goswami* was not there. He had gone to take a bath in the ocean. *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu* was waiting for him in the thatched hut and he noticed a palm leaf stuck on the ceiling. Out of curiosity He pulled it out and saw that a beautiful verse had been written on that leaf with hand writing as exquisite as pearls. The verse described a song where *Radharani* is telling Her friend, "My dear friend, I met *Krsna* again in *Kuruksetra*. I am the same *Radha* and I met *Krsna* again.

But still my heart is yearning to go back to the River Yamuna in the forest of *Vrndavana* where the whole atmosphere is steeped with the sound of the fifth note of *Krsna's* flute." When *Rupa Goswami* returned, *Mahaprabhu* asked *Svarupa Damodara*, "How did *Rupa* get to know my heart?" *Svarupa Damodara* said, "My Lord, who can ever get to know your heart? Only when you reveal your heart to somebody and allow them to enter it, then only can one understand your heart." *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu* said, "Yes, *Rupa* is very dear to me."

The song that *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu* was singing was actually in the mood of *Srimati Radharani*:

Srimati Radharani met *Krsna* after a hundred years of separation. *Srimati Radharani* could not even bear a moment's separation from *Krsna*. When her eyes would blink, for just one moment she was unable to see *Krsna*. But She could not bear this separation, and She blamed *Brahma*, "What kind of creator are you that created a body which has eyes that blink?" That *Radharani* had to bear separation from *Krsna* for a hundred years. After a hundred years, on the occasion of the solar eclipse, *Krsna* went to *Kuruksetra*. It is custom, since time immemorial, that people go to *Kuruksetra* on the occasion of the solar eclipse and take bath in the Samanta Pancake. The residents of *Vrndavana* also went there on that occasion. After the solar eclipse, when everyone was arranging to leave the place, the Gopis received news that *Krsna* was also there.

So they ran to meet *Krsna*. At that time *Krsna* was just about to leave. He was already on His chariot along with *Balarama* and *Subhadra* on Their respective chariots. Though *Krsna* was leaving, the residents of *Vrndavana* immediately ran there to see Him after enduring a hundred years of separation. But *Radharani* wondered, "This is not the *Krsna* that I used to know. The *Krsna* that I know is a cowherd boy, but this is a prince. The *Krsna* that I know wears a peacock feather on His head, but this *Krsna* is wearing a crown. The *Krsna* that I know wears a flower garland around his neck, but this *Krsna* is wearing valuable ornaments and jewels. The *Krsna* that I know is in *Vrndavana* in the serene atmosphere of the forest, but this personality is surrounded by noblemen, soldiers, elephants and horses and they are making such a clamorous noise." Although *Radharani* was meeting *Krsna* after a hundred years, she felt dissatisfied because He was not the same *Krsna* that She knew.

In the meantime, *Krsna*, seeing the residents of *Vrndavana* who were His dear-most friends and intimate associates, experienced such emotions that His face lit up with a beautiful smile and His eyes became large like two fully bloomed lotuses. In that emotional state His whole countenance became just His arms and His head. And with His arms He just wanted to embrace the residents of *Vrndavana*. The residents of *Vrndavana*, seeing the mood of *Srimati Radharani* and the mood of *Krsna*, grabbed hold of the chariot along with the horses and started to drag it towards *Vrndavana*. This is the festival of *Rathayatra*.

In this way, in different scriptures and through the descriptions of our *acaryas*, the identity of *Jagannatha*, *Baladeva* and *Subhadra* has been most wonderfully revealed to us. No matter what others think about *Jagannatha*, *Baladeva* and *Subhadra*, to us the understanding is very clear: this is *Krsna* along with *Baladeva* and *Subhadra*. *Jagannatha* Puri is actually *Kuruksetra*. *Dvarkesa Krsna* has come here and He is yearning to go back to *Vrndavana*. *Krsna* doesn't want to be in *Dvarka*. He simply wants to be in *Vrndavana* because He wants to be in the association of His devotees exchanging the most intense love of friendship, parental and conjugal relationships. That is why when *Krsna* came as *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu*, assuming the mood of *Srimati Radharani*, He came to *Jagannatha* Puri because He was in the same mood of separation. *Jagannatha* is *Krsna* Himself, hankering for the association of the devotees of *Vrndavana*. That is why after taking *sannyasa*, *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu* came and took shelter of Lord *Jagannatha* in *Jagannatha* Puri where the mood of separation and wanting to go to *Vrndavana* is prevalent.

Guru Upadesa (H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami)

Srila Prabhupada had a very big plan to spread *Krsna* consciousness all over the world. He stressed that this movement must expand. Today ISKCON has grown extensively but now we have to think how to expand it further. In *Krsna* consciousness there is no room for stagnation. *Krsna* consciousness is dynamic. Dynamic means movement. If we are not moving forward we will move in the opposite direction. If you do not progress, then you will regress towards *maya*. In *Krsna* consciousness there is no room for stagnation. We cannot stay static. We have to move forward. So in *Krsna* consciousness we should be very concerned and careful that we are always progressing.

Now that we have come to *Krsna* consciousness and accepted it sincerely we should not lose it. There is no way that we should fall back into *maya*. We must move forward towards the lotus feet of *Krsna* in the spiritual sky. In order to move forward we must follow the four regulative principles and chant sixteen rounds daily. And we must render devotional service. Devotional service means doing things as an expression of our love for *Krsna* and to please *Krsna*. *Krsna* is very quickly satisfied. *Krsna* Himself says, "If somebody offers Me with love a leaf, a fruit, a flower or water I will accept it."

As we make advancement our service attitude will develop. Initially, our service may not be so widespread or extensive because in the beginning our love for *Krsna* has not developed. But as we develop our love for *Krsna* our service attitude will increase. Just like when you love something as an expression of your love, don't you want to do something for that person? The more we love the person, the more we want to do for him. Similarly, as we develop our love for *Krsna*, we will want to do more and more for *Krsna*. It is not that we just offer some fruits and flowers and think we have done our duty. If we love *Krsna* then we always want to offer more to *Krsna*. And when we do something for *Krsna* then we will see how *Krsna* reciprocates with us. *Krsna* says, "You have shown so much love for Me, now I will love you even more." Then the devotee feels "*Krsna*, You have done so much for me and shown me so much love, I will do even more for You!" In this way a competition begins between *Krsna* and His devotee to see who can love more. And actually in this loving contest *Krsna* becomes defeated. *Krsna* loves to be defeated by His devotee. That is how wonderful *Krsna* is.

As we develop your love for *Krsna*. He will inspire you to do things. When you become an instrument in *Krsna's* hands, there is no way of knowing how much *Krsna* will do through

you. We can become instruments by offering ourselves to *Krsna* and giving up our false ego is stopping us from surrendering to *Krsna*. So let us try to offer everything to *Krsna*. He is sitting in our hearts and knows everything. The whole world may think that I am a big devotee of *Krsna*, but if my heart is full of selfish desires, then *Krsna* will know. We can't hide anything from *Krsna*. But if our heart is pure, then *Krsna* will be so pleased. If we sincerely want to serve *Krsna*, then He will give us everything.

Sacrifice means offering everything to *Krsna*. Nothing is for me. Even though I am not mine. I am *Krsna's*. This body is *Krsna's*, the mind is *Krsna's*, this intelligence is *Krsna's*, everything is *Krsna's*. When you offer everything to *Krsna*, then *Krsna* gives Himself to us. *Krsna* gives liberation very easily, but He doesn't give devotion so easily because through devotion *Krsna* becomes sold out to the devotee. When a devotee offers Himself to the devotee. *Krsna* becomes a servant of the devotee.

It is such a wonderful process. If we practice this process properly, then the benefit will be inconceivable. Is it that only Arjuna, or *Prahlada* Maharaja, Janaka, or Nanda Maharaja, are meant to be devotees? No. Everyone has the right to become *Krsna's* devotee. These are examples we must follow. These examples are there to inspire us to become devotees of *Krsna*.

Prabhupada was often asked how he managed to spread *Krsna* consciousness all over the world in just ten years. His answer was that it was *Krsna* who did it. *Krsna* can do anything. He can make the impossible endeavour of his devotee possible. *Krsna* can empower him because He is the supreme controller. By *Krsna's* divine arrangement He can make His devotees achieve all kinds of wonderful things. We simply have to become devotees of *Krsna*, then all kinds of wonderful things will happen by His mercy.

Preaching at the United Nations

H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami attends the UN giving *Krsna* conscious solutions to Global Concerns By *Krsnarcana* dasa

Saranagati devi dasi (Mrs Sharon Hamilton-Getz) is a disciple of H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami. Both her father and brother are renowned in the American film industry; her brother being the famous Hollywood actor George Hamilton. She is a member of the NGO (Non- governmental organisation) Committee of Spirituality, Values & Global Concerns (CSVGC)- at the United Nations.

In October this year, the CSVGC expressed interest in meeting Guru Maharaja during their annual Week of Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns. Unfortunately he was unable to attend. Nevertheless in November, *Saranagati* mataji organised an informal meeting of CSVGC representatives at the UN offices in New York. Three other NGOs- The Sacred and Transcendental Arts Working Group, The Institute of International Social Development and The Institute for the Development of Education, Arts and Leisure, attended the meeting.

One of the guests was a young girl called Kamania from Dr. Mishra's Ananda Ashram. *Srila Prabhupada* stayed with Dr. Mishra when he first arrived in America and gave some lectures at the ashram before he founded ISKCON. Guru Maharaja discovered that Kamania loves to sing *kirtana* and so he asked her to open the programme. Playing on her

folding harmonium she sang a beautiful *kirtana*, leading the group in chanting, thus creating a perfect environment for Guru Maharaja's talk.

Guru Maharaja began speaking on the present problems gripping the world, and pointed out how these problems are due to people's selfishness, anger and greed to possess more and more. However, in reality everything is owned by the Supreme Being, and He is providing for everyone in all respects. Whatever name we may call Him, God, Allah, Jehovah or *Krsna*, He is the same Supreme Person. He is our Supreme Father, and with Him in the center if we become brothers and sisters then we can become a true family on earth.

Problems emerge in the world when we move away from our inherent relationship with our Father: He is like the sun showering its rays on everyone. He loves us: He gives us food, water, oxygen and the balanced cycles in nature for our sustenance. But we have forgotten Him and are trying to lead our lives independent of His divine care. However, when one decides to reestablish one's relationship with Him, offering all the love of one's heart to Him, then He dances with joy. This bountiful joy is felt by both the devotee and the Lord, and that leads to a joyous chanting of His name, qualities and divine pastimes. This is called *kirtana*. When many people congregate to sing and chant the glory of the Lord it is called *sankirtana*.

Guru Maharaja emphasized the point that God is the Supreme Personality. He is the Supreme creator, the Supreme maintainer and the Supreme proprietor. Many people think that God is an imaginary concept, that He is formless or a bright light. But he is a person: He has a name, form and pastimes. He is real. He is not a product of man's imagination but the Absolute reality. Creation cannot be the result of an accident; it is a systematic and intelligent arrangement. Energy may not have form but behind it is the energetic, who is a person. That energetic personality is active. He is not alone but is surrounded by His associates. He enacts pastimes to experience joy and provide joy to His devotees.

Then Guru Maharaja went on to describe the importance of the human form of life. The human form is distinct from all other forms of life because of the human being's ability to develop his consciousness to such an extent that he can conceive the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore it is extremely important that human beings take advantage of this most wonderful opportunity by developing their loving relationship with God. After the programme all the attendees asked questions. Many were deeply affected by the speech. But Guru Maharaja deflected any praise, saying whatever he had spoken was but a plain and simple representation of his spiritual master His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami *Prabhupada*.

One of the NGO members, Georgina Galions, wrote about her experience of attending the programme. Experts include:

What does one expect when they meet a holy man in a saffron robe? And how can one allow an infusion of that sort to settle and take root in oneself? With the fragrance of a newly blossomed jasmine field, Bhakti Charu Swami Maharaja graced our bland conference room, with a transmission of *darsana*, a light of hope to be imprinted on one's psyche and soul. His answer is a simple one- open your heart like a flower. The room will never be the same again for if the walls could speak they would echo. There was no pretense of political unrest, just a luminous glow surrounding his presence, which he generously left behind. His Holiness had a warm upturned smile that reflected golden into the iris of his eyes, into corners of the room, to seep into the hearts of those present, a gift

of committed activism. “Whatever little I can I will,” he said, and humbly urged us, “This is not a time to be complacent. It is a time to re-spiritualize our world.”

Each person approached Swami Maharaja with their contribution of thought and perspective of which he openly addressed as if you were in a private room with him. His message was simple, personal, and joyfully lit. There were tears of happiness. There were frustrations and confessions. There were deep sacred directives and diverse insights exchanged. Alongside the sustenance of His Holiness’s words, were deliciously prepared Indian delicacies of *prasada* that we all shared at a table dressed with silk and gold threading. Surely this appearance allowed God Power and divinity to blossom once again at the United Nations.

During his visit to the United Nation Guru Maharaja was introduced to Mrs. Salwa Kader, president of the US Federation for Middle East Peace (USFMEP) and her husband, Mr. Ralph Kader, the chairman of the UN Military Mission for Peace. They had a long discussion with Maharaja and felt they must have a programme with him in the UN before he left for India in December.

The programme was arranged on 3rd December. The event, organised by USFMEP, was a discussion on, “Exploring the Practice of Reconciliation: Muslims’ and Hindu’s vision of Understanding, Tolerance and Peace.” There was media coverage from both India and the Middle East. Salwa Kader opened the meeting by mourning the victims of the recent terrorist attacks in Mumbai and expressed her community’s deepest sympathy for them and their family members. In Guru Maharaja’s moving speech he addressed the need to understand the real purpose of religion:

Synopsis of Guru Maharaja’s Speech:

At a time like this, while mourning for those who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, we are forced to wonder how can a group of individuals become so insensitive and brutal that they heinously slaughter so many innocent people who have nothing to do with the cause they are trying to advocate. Let us not try to find the answer to this question through some cheap sentiment or impractical intellectual speculation, but through the proper perception of reality. This problem is particularly difficult to deal with because it is happening in the name of religion, and religion, when misrepresented, can very easily turn into blind faith and fanaticism, and the breeding ground for violence and atrocities.

Therefore the first responsibility we have is to recognise the real purpose and objective of religion and work towards achieving that goal. Let us not try to recognise the existence of God through some blind faith and superstitious rituals, but apply our common sense to understand Him and recognise His true identity. Let us not recognise Him as the Absolute Reality by observing His divine arrangements. Let us observe with a truly inquisitive mind and wide open heart, how a small seed falls on the ground and turns into a seedling. Then it grows into a tree and bears beautiful flowers with exquisite displays of colours, which gradually turn into fruits with innumerable seeds. And in each seed there is a tree with the possibility of producing innumerable fruits. Let us honestly consider whether this can be a result of a chance happening or the divine arrangement of the Supreme Omnipotent Personality. Let us consider with an honest heart how wonderfully we are receiving the supply of our food, water and oxygen, and how that Supreme Personality, like our dear-most Father, is taking care of all our needs.

Let us rise above all petty superstitions and blind faith, and sincerely try to know Him. Let us recognise the fact that all religions are speaking about Him and showing the way to develop our loving relationship with Him. Due to differences of language He may be indemnified by different names but He is the one, and only one, Supreme Personality, who created everything and is maintaining everything. He is our Supreme Father and dear-most friend.

We speak of universal brotherhood. That brotherhood can be established only with that Supreme Father in the center. We aspire for everlasting peace. That peace can be achieved only by recognising Him as the Supreme Proprietor and our greatest benefactor who is so concerned about us that He is residing in our hearts and taking care of us in all respects. It is due to our ignorance of Him that we submerged ourselves in an ocean of miseries and created such a precarious condition for the entire world. The solution to all the problems and of this world lies in our recognising Him and accepting Him.

Therefore, my sincere appeal to all the intelligent, concerned and thoughtful people of this world is: Please become united with a common mission to recognise your Supreme Father and dear-most friend. Please become aware that you have been endowed with a wonderful ability to expand your consciousness that enables you to perceive a reality that exists beyond your sight; and there your Supreme Father is waiting for you to return to His loving embrace. Utilize your intelligence and common sense to become convinced about His existence. If you are convinced, then try to get to know Him. Information about Him is available. Please make a sincere endeavour to collect that information. Please act according to His instructions and develop your loving relationship with Him. And when you have experienced that love, distribute it generously to others and invite them also to experience that joy, which is the natural outcome of that divine loving relationship.

Moments of Inspiration (HH Bhakti Charu Swami)

Confidence: You have something to offer to this world. Even if your presentation is filled with flaws, still the world will benefit.

Learn: Accept what you lack. Appreciate what others have and give them credit for it.

Ambition: The determination to move mountains to make way for the devotees to progress towards the lotus feet of *Krsna*.

Honesty: *Krsna* is always watching you. He will correct you when you make mistakes and He will reward you as you deserve.

Sleep: How I sleep is not important. How I stay awake is what really matters.

Sincerity: Although you are completely insignificant and *Krsna* is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, still He wants you to do something for Him. Therefore, Try your best.

Yours in the Service of *Srila Prabhupada*

A personal message from H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami

To me my birthday never really bore any special significance. Later on, however, after coming in contact with *Srila Prabhupada's* teachings, I became aware that although our birth in this material nature is meant for undergoing various kinds of sufferings, yet birth as a human being offers us a golden opportunity to develop our loving relationship with *Krsna* and go back to our eternal home in spiritual sky. Therefore, irrespective of what others may think about the purpose of my coming here, to me it is clear that the only significant reason for my coming to this world is to take advantage of the causeless mercy of my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. *Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabupada*.

When I started to give initiation, my disciples, following the custom of ISKCON, started to celebrate my birthday with great pomp and grandeur. This used to make me feel extremely embarrassed and guilty. Therefore, at one point I decided to stop that and turned this day into the *Srila Prabhupada* Memorial Festival in order to mark the day of his arrival in the USA.

It is through His Divine Grace that I received my real birth. He delivered me from my miserable material existence and reinstated me in my spiritual identity. He gave me a new life full of purpose and joy. He is my real father, and my real identity is in being his son. Ever since I became connected to him my life found its true meaning. The joy that I was searching for all my life became achieved simply due to my connection with him. He gave me everything that I was hankering for. Therefore, the best way I can celebrate my birthday is by singing his glories and broadcasting his greatness all over the world.

Yours in the service of Srila Prabhupada,
Bhakti Charu Swami