ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA'S VISION

FOR THE

BHAKTIVEDANTA INSTITUTE

By

Śrīla Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara Maharāja

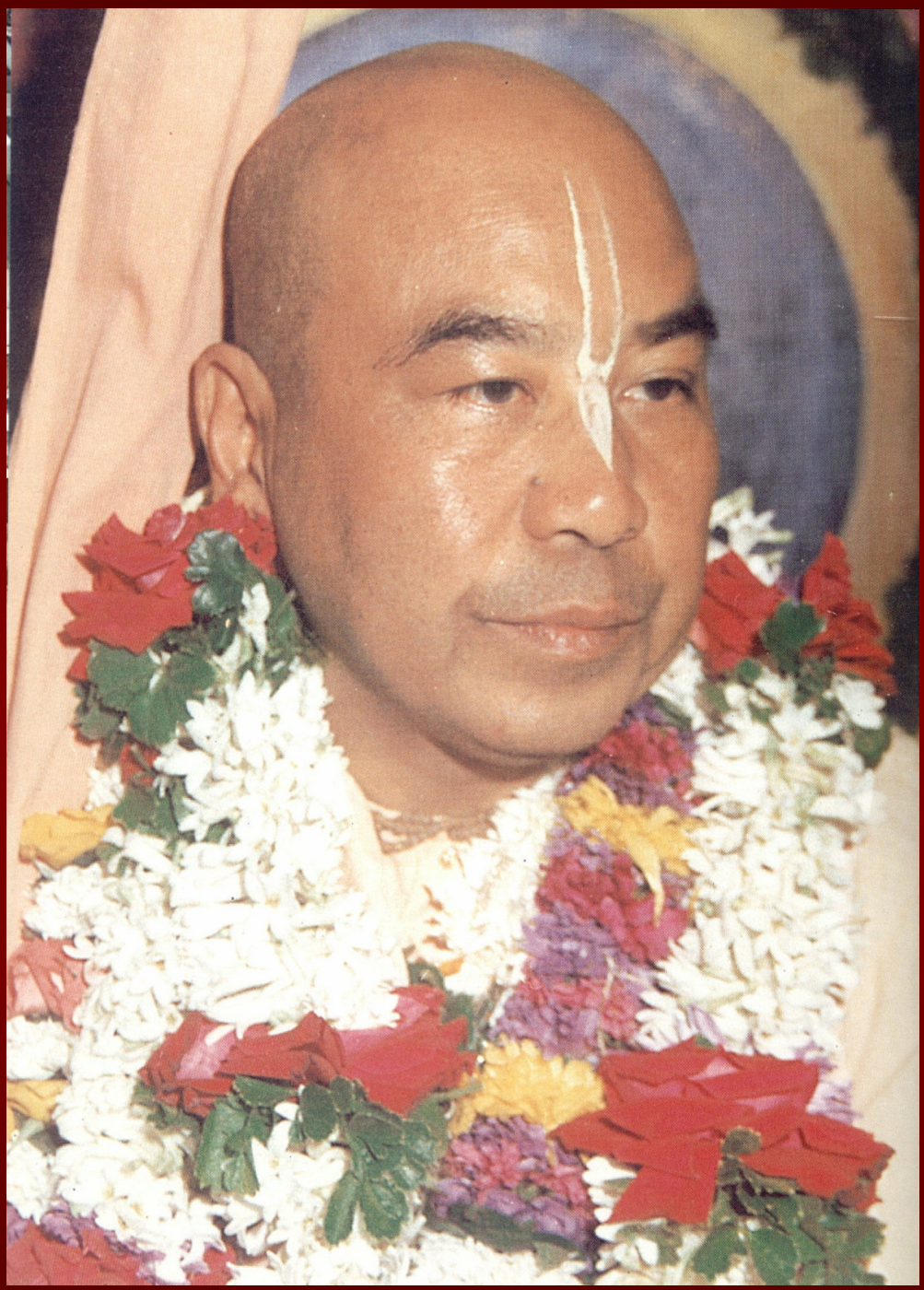
Śrīla Prabhupāda, my lord and master,

Kindly give me shelter at your lotus feet.
The influence of the modes of nature
Only your divine mercy can cleanse.
Fortunate are those whose hearts were
Touched by your gentle glance.
Kṛṣṇā dāsa Kavirāja sings of your glories:
"Guru kṛṣṇa-rūpa hana ṣāstrera pramāne
Guru-rūpa kṛṣṇa kṛpā karena bhakta-gane."
The revealed scritures enunciate
The spiritual master to be nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa;
Kṛṣṇa in spiritual master's form
Showers blessings upon the devotees.
Gurudeva, I have nothing to offer, but beg
Please bless me, that I may sing
Your glories birth after birth.

Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodar

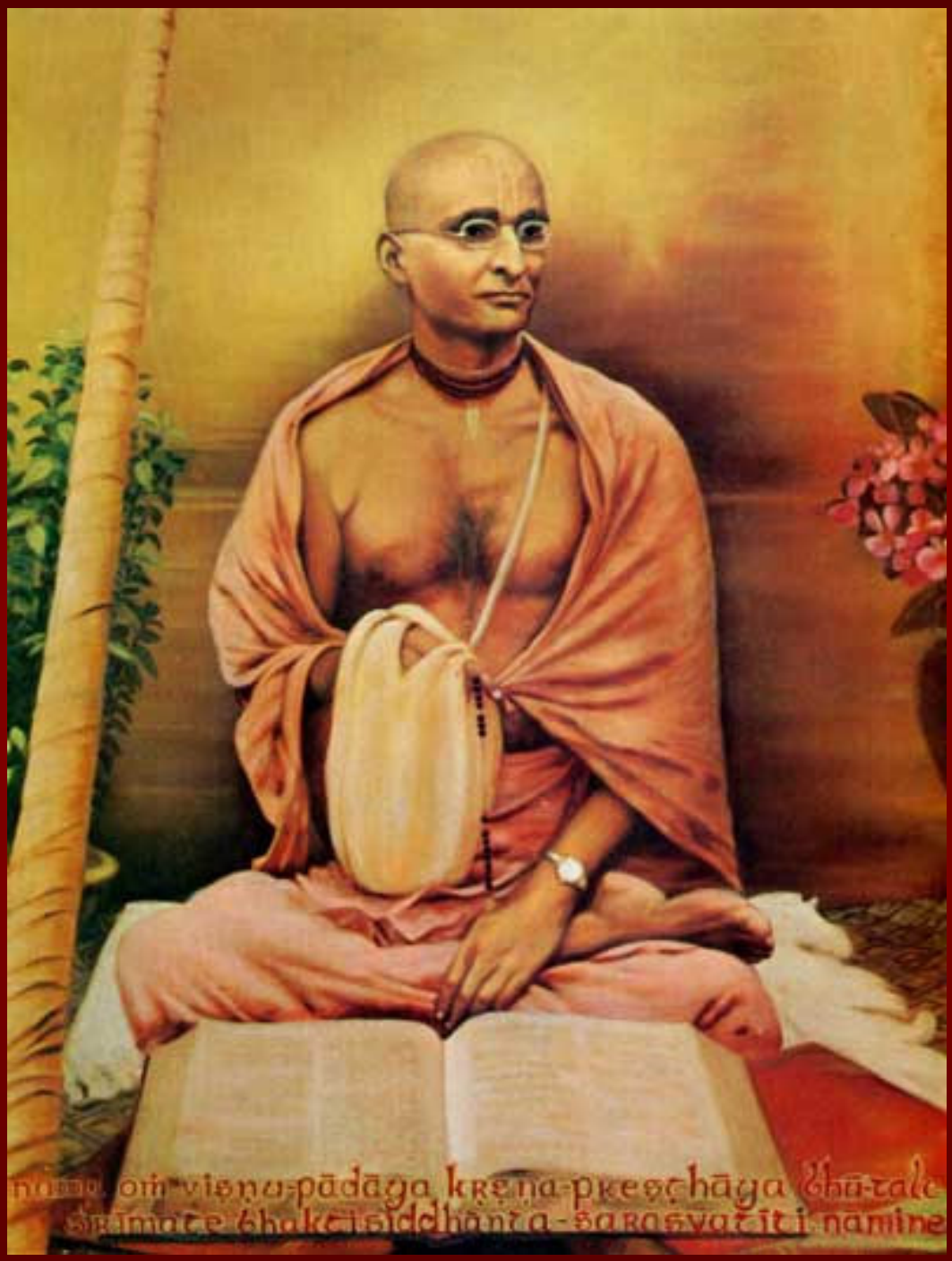
"ISKCON is a spiritual society in which every person in this planet regardless of religion, community, nationality and so on, can participate. It is a universal platform wherein people are to be educated in the science of the soul, consciousness and life's mission. For the first time in the cultural and spiritual history of the world, everyone can be united under the banner of ISKCON. This is the greatest gift given by a saintly person in the twentieth century for the well being of everyone on this planet."

Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodar



Śrīla Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara deva Goswāmī

Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhpāda



Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Ṭhakura

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

Śrī Pañcha-tattva

Śrī Śrī Rādha Kṛṣṇachandra

Maṇimandir

All Glories to Śrī Guru and Śrī Gaurāṇga

FOREWARD

Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda established the Bhaktivedanta Institute under the direction of Śrīla Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara Maharāja. In the physical absence of Maharāja's direction, what must our responsibility be?

First we must realize that Śrīla Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodar Maharāja is irreplaceable. He was specifically empowered by Śrīla Prabhupāda to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the scientific community. He was also uniquely qualified to fulfill that role as he was born and raised in a Vaiṣṇava family, and possessed all the good qualities of a genuine Vaiṣṇava, and he had earned an advanced degree in science (Ph.D. from the University of California at Irvine in Organic Chemistry).

On the back cover of the book dedicated to him, called *Bhagavat Sevarpanam*, is given the most significant message of how a genuine disciple remains in perpetual contact with his Spiritual Master throughout his life. There, with the faithful disciple sitting at the bedside of Śrīla Prabhupāda, it is written, "The Spiritual Master lives forever by his divine instructions and the follower lives with him..."

On the first page of this essay, Śrīla Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara Maharāja begins with the same mood: "The disciples live eternally with the divine instructions of the spiritual master. Those divine instructions are our constant guide and strength." This is really the sum and substance of Maharāja's life.

In a letter dated May 3, 1968, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "Please be happy in separation. I am separated from my Guru Maharāja since 1936 but I am always with him so long I work according to his direction. So we should all work together for satisfying Lord Krishna and in that way the feelings of separation will transform into transcendental bliss." And on June 22, 1970 he writes to his disciple, "So far I am concerned, I do not factually feel any separation from my Spiritual Master because I am trying to serve Him according to His desire." This was the firm conviction of Śrīla Prabhupāda throughout his life.

There are a handful of instructions from Śrīla Prabhupāda that are not mentioned in Śrīla Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodara's essay, and which are included here.

In a letter to Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodar Maharāja on September 30, 1975 Śrīla Prabhupāda explains what the Bhaktivedanta Institue is:

"The Institute will be primarily for those who have not entered our temples. The subject matter will not be different from what is taught in our temples. There will be no difference between our temples and the Institute, but the Institute will be official for the general mass. It will be a formal education and they will get degree. It will be open for everyone, including those who have already entered our temples, they may also participate. But, the subject matter should not be different from what is in the temples."

Then on Jan 10, 1976 Śrīla Prabhupāda gives the following more specific directive to Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodar Maharāja,

"I have read the aims and objects of the Institute and it is done very nicely. I am satisfied that you are properly understanding the philosophy.

I have also suggested for the GBC's consideration, that we introduce a system of examinations for the devotees to take. Sometimes there is criticism that our men are not sufficiently learned, especially the *brāhmaṇas*. Of course second initiation does not depend upon passing an examination. How one has molded his life—chanting, attending arati, etc., these are essential. Still, *brāhmaṇa* means *paṇḍita*. Therefore I am suggesting examinations. *Bhakti-śāstrī*—(for all *brāhmaṇas*) based on *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrī Iśopaniṣad*, *Nectar of Devotion, Nectar of Instruction*, and all the small paper backs. *Bhakti-vaibhāva*—the above plus first six cantos of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Bhakti-vedānta*—the above plus cantos 7-12 S.B. *Bhakti-sārvabhauma*—the above plus *Caitanya-caritamṛta*.

These titles can correspond to entrance, B.A., M.A., Ph.D. So just consider how to organize this Institute. "

Further, on January 29, 1976 in a letter to Svarūpa Dāmodar Śrīla Prabhupāda writes,

"In the tentative course outlines some additions are as follows. In the philosophy section there should be a class dealing with all the Vaiṣṇava philosophies (the four *sampradayas*). Music class can be based on the *Sama Veda*. In the Political Science class Maharāja Prthu's life may also be studied."

Generally, Śrīla Prabhupāda is stating that all branches of knowledge may be studied strictly in the context of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, within a Vaiṣṇava University, taking authority from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.5.22,

idam hi pumsas tapasaḥ śrutasya vā
sviṣṭasya sūktasya ca buddhi-dattayoḥ
avicyuto 'rthaḥ kavibhir nirūpito
yad-uttamaśloka-guṇānuvarṇanam

"Learned circles have positively concluded that the infallible purpose of the advancement of knowledge, namely austerities, study of the Vedas, sacrifice, chanting of hymns and charity, culminates in the transcendental descriptions of the Lord, who is defined in choice poetry."

Then on September 8, 1974 Śrīla Prabhupāda writes to Svarūpa Dāmodar, "You are one of the strong pillars of the mission. So I have all confidence in you. Follow strictly all our rules and regulations. Be fully strong to push on this cult amongst the educated scientific circle."

Finally, once again stressing the great importance of the Institute in a letter to

Armarendra Prabhu dated April 2, 1977, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes,

"You may be knowing that we have formed one party of scientists under the leadership of Śrīman Svarūpa Dāmodara prabhu. Also we have formed the Bhaktivedanta Institute for organizing scientific presentations of Krishna Consciousness. This party is our most important preaching arm with which we will be able to destroy the bogus speculation and cheating which goes under the banner of scientific advancement. Therefore I have got great hope for Svarūpa Dāmodara and his colleagues. I want them to travel vigorously throughout the world to lecture in all universities and other institutions. There is no lack of financial resources and we shall spare nothing to see to this party's success."

The first aphorism of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is, *janmādy asya yato 'nvayād itarataś cārtheṣv abhijñaḥ svarāṭ.* "I meditate upon Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa because He is the Absolute Truth and the primeval cause of all causes of the creation, sustenance and destruction of the manifested universes. He is directly and indirectly conscious of all manifestations, and He is independent because there is no other cause beyond Him." The purpose of the Bhaktivedanta Institute is to present this fundamental teaching of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in a scientific way, as "Life comes from Life." Thus the message of Bhaktivedanta Institute is non-different from that of the *Bhagavat Purana* and *Vedanta-sutra.*

In 1977, after the completion of the Mumbai Temple in Juhu, when Śrīla Prabhupāda's manifest pastimes were coming to an end, he turned to Svarūpa Dāmodar Maharāja and said, "The next phase is yours. You must establish our movement as a genuine scientific movement." (p.15) Śrīla Prabhupāda established Kṛṣṇa consciousness throughout the world, and now he wanted it to be accepted scientifically in the highest academic circles so that the whole world would understand that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not simply religious sentiment but the authentic ontological Truth of Reality.

Śrīpad Maharāja sacrificed his life in carrying out this order of Śrīla Prabhupāda, and met with so much success that the enemies of truth felt threatened that he would take from them the illusions that they so eagerly cherished. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu became as enraged as Lord Nisringhadeva when Nityānanda Prabhu was attacked by Jagai and Madhai, but Lord Nityānanda magnanimously reminded Mahāprabhu that his mission in Kali Yuga was not to kill the demons but to mercifully save them, for all are fallen in this age. The followers of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodar Maharāja are many, and although, by the Will of Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Bhaktisvarūpa Dāmodar Maharāja has been withdrawn to his eternal pastimes, there is an army of his followers willing to sacrifice their lives to carry on his mission in this world. With the blessings of all the Vaiṣṇavas, in a spirit of unified and firm resolve and dedication, we pray that those who are willing and able to take up the service of Bhaktivedanta Institute may become glorious in fulfilling the desires of Śrīla Prabhupāda and Śrīla Śrīpada.

The Editors

October 11, 2006

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om ajñana-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā

cakṣur unmīlitam yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ

nama om viṣṇu pādāya kṛṣṇa preṣṭhāya bhū-tale

śrīmate bhaktivedānta svāmin iti nāmine

nama te sārasvate devam gaura vānī pracāriṇe

nirviśeṣa śūnyavādi pāścātya deśa tāriṇe

All glories to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda! The disciples live eternally with the divine instructions of the spiritual master. Those divine instructions are our constant guide and strength.

In 1974, during the month of August, I spent two weeks in Vṛndāvana with His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda. At that time he was constantly speaking about expanding the ISKCON preaching projects, especially in the academic world. One day Prabhupāda called me to his room. Alone in the room with me, he showed me three or four magazines produced by the Vaiṣṇava Oriental Research Institute. Śrīla Prabhupāda's God-brother Bon Maharāja established this institute, which is just across from the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandira in Vṛndāvana, many years ago. Śrīla Prabhupāda asked me whether I thought we could also establish a Vaiṣṇava Research Institute to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness among the intellectuals all over the world.

I replied, "Śrīla Prabhupāda, your plans and desires are perfect. It will be highly essential to establish such an institute as we expand our movement."

Then Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "You be the director of this project."

"Śrīla Prabhupāda. I have no experience--I have no knowledge to run such a project. I am completely unqualified."

"I'll give you all the instructions," said Śrīla Prabhupāda. "You simply follow them."

Thus Śrīla Prabhupāda's original plan was to establish the Bhaktivedanta Institute in Vṛndāvana, the holy Dham.

He requested Bon Maharāja to hand over the Vaiṣṇava Oriental Research Institute to us, and this was quite reasonable, since under Bon Maharāja's direction the Institute's activities were going very slowly. Śrīla Prabhupāda also had plans to start a *gośalla* (cow- protection facility) on Bon Maharāja's spacious tract of land and run it side-by-side with the institute's programs.

One day Śrīla Prabhupāda made an appointment with Bon Maharāja to discuss these plans. At the scheduled time Śrīla Prabhupāda took Brahmānanda Maharāja, Jagadīśa Prabhu, and myself to see Bon Maharāja at his institute. At Prabhupāda's request I brought along the little book I had written, called *The Scientific Basis of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness,* and also my Ph. D. Thesis, which I had dedicated to His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda. When we met Bon Maharāja, Śrīla Prabhupāda showed him my writings and said. "These books were written by my disciple."

In this way, Śrīla Prabhupāda kindly introduced me to Bon Maharāja and then began outlining a scientific Vaiṣṇava research institute that we could all organize together--including Bon Maharāja—to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the academic world. Bon Maharāja was very impressed with Śrīla Prabhupāda's ideas, and he expressed his willingness to help in the project—but he wanted to wait for some time before committing himself and his institute property. Bon Maharāja then gave us a tour of his institute: he showed us where the libraries were, where the classrooms were, and so on. Śrīla Prabhupāda. Brahmānanda Maharāja. Jagadīśa prabhu and myself then returned to Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandira, full of hope that a settlement would come quickly so that we could start the new institute as soon as possible.

Shortly thereafter I left for the United States. Now whatever letters I received from Śrīla Prabhupāda always contained plans for the institute project and instructions on how I should begin the academic preaching programs.

Śrīla Prabhupāda visited the Atlanta Temple at the end of February 1975, and at that time he again reminded me of the institute project. He said he was still negotiating with Bon Maharāja so that we could start the institute in Vṛndāvana. But just after that, when Prabhupāda was in New Orleans, Brahmānanda Maharāja called me to convey a message from Prabhupāda. The message was that the negotiations with Bon Maharāja were not going well, and the hope for starting the institute in Vṛndāvana did not seem very bright. Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed me to begin thinking of someplace in the United States where we could start the institute.

On August 31, 1975. Śrīla Prabhupāda confirmed this message by writing me as follows: "The negotiations with Bon Maharāja are not very feasible. They are too encumbrous. So, if possible, you should start the institute in the USA. In the meantime request all the GBC's to send me a list of all our disciples who have an M.A. , B. A., or Ph.D. degree."

So the institute would be in the U. S. However, since I was still working at Emory University in Atlanta, at that time I could not do anything concrete toward starting the institute, although I did talk with Rūpanūga prabhu about Prabhupāda's plans and desires for the project. Rūpanūga prabhu was most interested, and he immediately invited all our members (Mādhava prabhu, Sādapūta prabhu, Ravindra Swarūpa prabhu, and myself) for a meeting on his farm, which was in Virginia at that time. We decided that during the coming Mayapura Festival we should get some solid guidelines about the institute project from His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda and the GBC body.

Unfortunately, as it turned out I could not go to the Mayapura Festival that year, because I was struggling with my visa and could not leave the United States. So the Mayapura Festival came and went, with little progress on our project.

Then, in July 1976, Prabhupāda came to the Washington Temple, and Sādapūta prabhu, Mādhava prabhu. Bhakta Hans Bickel (an economist who works for the Federal Government). Rūpanūga prabhu, and myself all went there to have his *darśana.* For nearly a week Prabhupāda constantly instructed us about preaching among the scientists and scholars, and about how to organize the Bhaktivedanta Institute. At that time Prabhupāda specifically instructed us to build a model of the universe that could later be built full-size at the future Mayapura Temple and Planetarium complex.

Later that year I got my permanent visa, and I began planning to leave Emory University once and for all and start the Bhaktivedanta Institute, as Śrīla Prabhupāda had so mercifully instructed me. In December of 1976 Rüpnnüga prabhu hosted the organizational meeting of the Institute at the Washington Temple.

In January I left the U. S. to see Śrīla Prabhupāda at Bhuvanesvara, a city not far from Jagannātha Pūrī that is the capital of Orissa. At 8:30 p. m. on January 31 I arrived at the little hut where Śrīla Prabhupāda was staying. He called me in immediately and started speaking about the preaching program among the scientists and scholars around the world. Śrīla Prabhupāda's heart was full of love for the disciples present there, and full of enthusiasm for preaching to the scholars. He said to me, "Don't worry about expenses; I'll give you everything. Just go and preach. "

On February 3 Śrīla Prabhupāda laid the foundation stone for the Bhuvanesvara Temple. On this day His Divine Grace kindly instructed me to give a lecture on science and Kṛṣṇa consciousness before the invited scholars and other guests.

That night Śrīla Prabhupāda left Bhuvanesvara with his servants, and I followed a little later in another car. I arrived in Calcutta on the morning of February 5, and that evening all the devotees gathered around Śrīla Prabhupāda in his room at the Calcutta Temple. Once again he instructed me extensively about the academic preaching project. Among many other things, Śrīla Prabhupāda said, "Your dress must command respect. You should dress like a scientist-- in suit and tie--for preaching."

After that I took leave of Śrīla Prabhupāda and went to Manipura. Then, toward the end of March 1977, I attended a big *pandala* program in Bombay that had been organized by Gopāla Kṛṣṇa prabhu and Girirāja Maharāja. The subject was "Modern Civilization Is a Failure: Kṛṣṇa Consciousness Is the Only Solution. " Śrīla Prabhupāda was there, and many prominent guests and speakers were invited. On March 26, in the presence of His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda and about three thousand guests, I presented a talk and slide show on the science of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

At that time our Bombay guesthouse was not yet ready, so His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda was staying at Mr. Mahadevia's home. Mr Mahadevia is one of our important life members in Bombay. He served Śrīla Prabhupāda in many ways and Śrīla Prabhupāda very much appreciated his sincere service.

On the morning of March 27, Śrīla Prabhupāda called for me to come to Mr. Mahadevia's home, and I arrived there at 10 o'clock. Tamāla-Kṛṣṇa Maharāja, Bhavānanda Maharāja, Śrīdhara Maharāja, Acyūtānanda Maharāja, and Nava-yogendra Maharāja were there, and in their presence Śrīla Prabhupāda said to me, "Thank you very much for the nice lecture you gave yesterday. It was very scientific." His Divine Grace was so appreciative of this very little, insignificant service. He continued, "If necessary, make the whole new Bombay building Bhaktivedanta Institute. We will construct another building. Bhaktivedanta Institute has the greatest responsibility for enhancing the prestige of ISKCON. Invite scholars and students to the Bhaktivedanta Institute. Give them a nice place to sit, offer them nice *prasādam,* and preach to them very nicely. It is for this that I trained you on the morning walks at Venice Beach in Los Angeles. That is why I took you every morning at that time. Take good care of your health. "

In a few days Śrīla Prabhupāda's quarters in the Bombay guesthouse were ready, and he prepared to move there from Mr. Mahadevia's house. On the morning Śrīla Prabhupāda was scheduled to arrive, I was in the Bombay Temple. We all heard that he was coming, but we didn't know the exact time he would be arriving. Of course, everyone was preparing to receive Śrīla Prabhupāda, but all of a sudden he appeared--and there hadn't been enough preparation. There weren't enough devotees to receive him nicely, and to top it all off the elevator broke down. Everyone was at a loss what to do. Prabhupāda was very angry» and he chastised all the devotees. We were all completely silent; we didn't know what to say. We quickly arranged for a palanquin and carried him

up to his quarters on the fifth floor.

When Prabhupāda entered his rooms, his eyes were full of love for all the devotees. He smiled broadly as he inspected the walls, the doors, the windows, the lamps, etc. He was very pleased with all the arrangements in his quarters. Then he sat down, and all of us--there were about fifteen devotees-gathered around him. Śrīla Prabhupāda started speaking very softly and very lovingly: "Thank you very much. You have given your life--everything--to me. I am eternally indebted to all of you." All of us were silent. Then he turned to me and said, "The next phase is yours. You must establish our movement as a genuine scientific movement. You must preach to all the scholars and scientists very vigorously." Śrīla Prabhupāda then asked me how much money I would need per month for the institute. "'I am ready to spend any amount of money for your preaching," he said.

I answered. "Śrīla Prabhupāda, I don't have any experience in running such an organization. I am very ignorant about these matters. I think Tamāla-Kṛṣṇa Maharāja will be able to give you a more accurate estimate, since he is more experienced."

Then Śrīla Prabhupāda turned to Tamāla-Kṛṣṇa Maharāja and asked his opinion. Tamāla-Kṛṣṇa Maharāja replied, "About $10,000 per month."

Prabhupāda said. "Yes. I'll give you $10.000 per month--or more, if you need more. "

Then Gopāla Kṛṣṇa prabhu asked. "Prabhupāda, where will the money come from? "

Prabhupāda replied, "From the BBT in Los Angeles." Śrīla Prabhupāda then instructed Tamāla-Kṛṣṇa Maharāja to make arrangements with Rāmesvara Maharāja immediately. Prabhupāda said, "We should set aside a minimum of $10,000 per month. This money should not be touched for any purpose except the preaching work of the Bhaktivedanta Institute." Śrīla Prabhupāda then turned to me, "I am ready to give you whatever money and manpower you need to assist you in this work. Do not worry about money. As a result of this promise, His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote the letters to Rāmeśvara Maharāja and Draviḍa prabhu. excerpts of which are quoted below:

* * *

Hare Krishna Land
Juhu Road
Juhu. Bombay 400 054. India
2 April. 1977

My dear Rameswar,
Please accept my blessings.

Now we are forming a scientists' party, and we shall try with their help to establish Krishna consciousness as the genuine scientific movement of the world by exposing the so-called scientists as nothing but speculators. Swarūpa Dāmodar has received very good response here in India from the scientific community, and there is good hope that many others will join him. He is returning to America for preparing some publications, and when these are completed I have asked him to tour vigorously throughout the world, lecturing with his other colleagues at all major institutions and universities. He has drawn up a budget of immediate needs, a copy of which is enclosed, and I immediately sanction this amount. Whatever expenditure he requires, supply him immediately from the BBT. I am prepared to give $10, 000 or more monthly, if required, to finance this most

important preaching program. So whatever money Swarūpa Dāmodar needs must be supplied monthly, and he will send you accounts. ...

Swarūpa Dāmodar has requested that Draviḍa dās may come and help him with editing work. The scientists are publishing some booklets to be completed by their return here on Janmastami. If possible, please arrange for Draviḍa dās to join them.

Hoping this meets you well.

Your ever well-wisher, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

ACBS/tkg

His Holiness Rameswar Swami ISKCON Los Angeles

* * *

Hare Krishna Land
Juhu Road
Juhu. Bombay 400 054, India

2 April. 1977

My dear Draviḍa das,
Please accept my blessings»

You may be knowing that we have formed one party of scientists under the leadership of Sriman Swarūpa Dämodar prabhu. Also, we have formed the Bhaktivedanta Institute for organizing scientific presentations of Krishna consciousness. This party is our most important preaching arm, with which we will be able to destroy the bogus speculation and cheating which goes under the banner of scientific advancement. Therefore I have got great hope for Swarūpa Dämodar and his colleagues. I want them to travel vigorously throughout the world to lecture in all universities and other institutions. There is no lack of financial resources, and we shall spare nothing to see to this party's success.

His party already consists of Mādhava prabhu, Sadäpüta prabhu, Ravindra Swarūpa prabhu, and himself, and he has approached me that he would like you to help with the editing work, as they are publishing scientific papers. In consultation with Rameswara Maharāja, try to have whatever work you are doing assumed by others so that you can free yourself for working with Swarūpa Dämodar. You may contact Swarūpa Dämodar, who is returning to America, for more details.

Hoping this meets you well.

Your ever well-wisher, A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

ACBS/tkg

Sriman Draviḍa das

ISKCON Los Angeles

* * *

Shortly after the gathering in Śrīla Prabhupāda's quarters at the Bombay Temple, I left for the United States to publish our monographs, which were then being prepared. But suddenly His Divine Grace called all the GBC members to Vṛndāvana because his health had taken a turn for the worse.

I arrived in Vṛndāvana on May 25 at 4:30 p.m., and when I showed Śrīla Prabhupāda the manuscripts of the three monographs, he was extremely pleased. I was at Śrīla Prabhupāda's bedside from 7:30 p.m. until 12:00 midnight, and during that time he spoke many times about defeating the scientists. Indeed, his heart was full of desires to defeat the material scientists. Occasionally he instructed the devotees about the duty of *brahmacārīs* quoting from Narada Muni's instructions in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. He

said the *brahmacārīs* should follow in the footsteps of Narada Muni. Śrīla Prabhupāda also spoke about life within the atom and about our farm projects--especially our farm project in Hyderabad. He was very concerned about our farm project in Hyderabad; he wanted to make it very successful. Śrīla Prabhupāda mentioned how during Kṛṣṇa's time the land of Vṛndāvana was wet with milk because of *sankirtana-yajña.* Prabhupāda said, "We should make our farm projects like Kṛṣṇa's Vṛndāvana. Then we can show them to the whole world, and people will be happy."

I attended His Divine Grace every day, and he almost always spoke from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and about the Bhaktivedanta Institute. Thus, although Śrīla Prabhupāda's physical body seemed to be very weak, he was mentally very, very strong, and his heart was full of enthusiasm to defeat the material scientists and transform the Godless society. He was advising me very strongly to make programs so that we could establish Kṛṣṇa consciousness in scientific circles.

It was very clear that His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda was constantly thinking about the Bhaktivedanta Institute and how it would introduce Kṛṣṇa consciousness into the academic community. On June l, at 5:30 a. m., Śrīla Prabhupāda called me into the washroom. He was rinsing his face and mouth and simultaneously chastising Bhakti Caru Maharāja because he was pouring water on Śrīla Prabhupāda's hands too slowly. Then Śrīla Prabhupāda turned to me and said, "You should establish a branch of the Bhaktivedanta Institute here in Vṛndāvana. The guru-kūla here will be more prestigious if the Institute is added. The name of the institution here in Vṛndāvana should be 'The Bhaktivedanta Gurukūla and Institute for Higher Studies,' and you should be the director of both."

Later that morning, in Śrīla Prabhupāda's room, he repeated the above in the presence of Jagadīśa prabhu. Then Dr. Sharma (the principal of our guru-kūla). Jagadīśa prabhu and myself got together to decide what to do in light of Śrīla Prabhupāda's new instructions. As a first step in establishing the institute in Vṛndāvana, we hit upon the idea of holding a scientific conference there, and that evening I informed Śrīla Prabhupāda of the idea. He was very pleased. He said we should work very actively and enthusiastically. "Personally," he said, "I never liked to be idle, and I do not want you to be idle. Make programs; always keep busy. Our mission is to take people out of darkness."

On June 2, at 6:00 a. m., Śrīla Prabhupāda continued his instructions to me, "You have everything--books, money, men—so show that our movement is scientific. Make a movie to show that there is a superior energy, and that without *jīva-bhūta* this material energy has no value. Also, hold conferences in Bombay and in all the major cities around the world. Do it! I've trained you for all this." On June 4, at 5:00 a. m., Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed me, "Start a revolution. Hold conferences everywhere. Transform the Godless society." Then Tamāla-Kṛṣṇa Maharāja informed me. "Śrīla Prabhupāda has advised Rāmeśvara Maharāja to set aside at least $7000 to $8000 per month as the account for your preaching program."

On June 5, at 3:00 a.m., Śrīla Prabhupāda called for me to come to the roof of the Vṛndāvana guesthouse. When I arrived, I saw Prabhupāda sitting, and Śatadhanya Maharāja was standing beside him, massaging his head. Prabhupāda started instructing me about the Bhaktivedanta Institute: "The Bhaktivedanta Institute should be based on *Bhagavad-gītā*. We have to prove that for the solution to economic problems, agriculture and cow protection are the topmost programs--not industry. For all aspects of society—religion, economics, politics, etc. --the foundation is the *Bhagavad-gītā*. That is a fact."

A few days later Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke about the Bhaktivedanta Institute hall

that I had requested be constructed in Vṛndāvana. Bhagatji (an old friend of Prabhupāda's from Vṛndāvana), Tamāla-Kṛṣṇa Maharāja, and myself were present. Śrīla Prabhupāda approved my idea. There had been some talk of building a *dharmashalla*, but Śrīla Prabhupāda said we should build the Bhaktivedanta Institute hall instead.

After that I left for Manipura for a few days, returning at 11:30 a. m. on June 19. I brought some lotus flowers from Manipura and offered them to Śrīla Prabhupāda, and he made some wonderful comments of appreciation. Then Tamāl-Kṛṣṇa Maharāja came in with the latest Saṅkīrtana Newsletter and read it aloud to Prabhupāda. He was extremely pleased to hear the report of book distribution. He remarked with wide-open eyes. "As long as book distribution goes on, I'll never die; I'll live forever." Then he turned to me and said, "You have to distribute your publications to the scientists."

On June 20 Śrīla Prabhupāda called me at 6:45 a. m. and poured out divine nectar until 9:00 a. m. He was keenly interested in preaching to the scientists, and he was very pleased with my short report about my meeting with a few scientists in Calcutta. I suggested that if we could convince at least two or three leading world scientists about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, that would be enough to convince the whole world. Śrīla Prabhupāda commented, "I have said that many times before." I then suggested that the scientists, had to be from the U.S. because nowadays anything done in the U. S. is respected all over the world and taken as authoritative. "So," I said, "the Bhaktivedanta Institute must have a strong base in the U. S."

Śrīla Prabhupāda approved and remarked, "I have great respect for the USA. It is my fatherland. And India is my motherland. " Then Śrīla Prabhupāda started instructing me about the life within the atom and about the science of *bhakti-yoga*. Next he said, "The whole human civilization has become an animal civilization--animals nicely dressed. I want to change them into human beings: this is my noble desire." Then Śrīla Prabhupāda changed the subject and began speaking about evolution. He remarked, "A long time ago a rascal named Darwin spoiled the whole human civilization."

On June 21 I came back from a visit to a few scientists in Āgra. I went to see Tamāla- Kṛṣṇa Maharāja at 2:30 p.m., and he told me that Śrīla Prabhupāda had asked about me that morning. When Prabhupāda heard that I was there, he called for me immediately and started instructing me: "Whatever I say is 100% correct. Whatever I say is completely undefeatable. I'll give you all the ideas; you develop them." Then he asked me, "Do you know what God is?" I remained silent, and Prabhupāda asked me to get the little Oxford dictionary on his desk and look up the word "God." I opened it and read out loud. "'God is the supreme being.'" Then Prabhupāda said, "So, the dictionary says, the *śāstras* say, the Vedas say that God is the Supreme Person: *nityo nityānām cetanaś cetanānām*. So, prove scientifically that God is the Supreme Person."

Then I inquired from Śrīla Prabhupāda whether the title "Bhaktivedanta Vijñana Conference" would be acceptable for the coming Vṛndāvana conference. But Prabhupāda suggested that people would not take this title seriously, and he said the title should be "The First International Life-Comes-From-Life Conference." Prabhupāda continued. "If you prove that life comes from life, then the logical question will be 'What is the original life?' The original life is Kṛṣṇa, or God. So the whole world has to accept God; this will be our success in Kṛṣṇa consciousness." Prabhupāda further explained. "We are all small 'Gods.' We all possess the same quality as God, but we are maintained." Then Śrīla Prabhupāda asked me three times. "Is this clear?" I mentioned to Śrīla Prabhupāda that I was leaving for Bombay the next day, and that I would then go on to the U. S. Prabhupāda said, "Take the best part of the new Bombay building as your office."

Tamāla-Kṛṣṇa Maharāja later reminded me, "Prabhupāda told me that you should be given the best part of the building as your office. It should be impressive. Prabhupāda wants a showcase."

At 8 o'clock in the evening Śrīla Prabhupāda again called me. "All religions of the world," he said, "have some conception of God, but none of them has any idea about the personal character of God. Write books and show that God is a person."

Soon afterward I took leave of Śrīla Prabhupāda and left Vṛndāvana to catch a train from Mathura to Bombay. I was heading for Boston. Since Prabhupāda's health was deteriorating, and since he was instructing me almost every moment I was in Vṛndāvana, I was very reluctant to leave him at that time. However, I wanted to make a little humble offering in the form of the life-comes-from-life conference, and under the circumstances I was thinking the conference should be held as soon as possible. But to do that I had to prepare the monographs in Boston. Before I left, Tamāla-Kṛṣṇa Maharāja suggested that I not leave immediately, because Prabhupāda had been instructing me so much. He said, "Prabhupāda never speaks to anyone for as long as he speaks to you." He asked me to remain for some time. I told him, however, that if I stayed in Vṛndāvana, there would be no conference. So he agreed that I should go to Boston to print the monographs and then return to Vṛndāvana as soon as possible. Thus I left Vṛndāvana very reluctantly, planning to return well before the conference's October 14 starting date.

When I came back to the U. S., Sadäpüta prabhu. Mādhava prabhu, and myself worked very hard in Boston to get all the monographs printed before the conference. We worked very hard, day and night. I was hoping to return to India as soon as possible to arrange for the conference. And, of course, I wanted to see Śrīla Prabhupāda very badly.

Then, during August, Karandhara prabhu called for a meeting in Los Angeles on the First American Theistic Exhibit. Rāmeśvara Swami, Jayatīrtha Maharāja, Sādapūta prabhu, Rūpanūga prabhu, Ravindra Swarūpa prabhu, Nara-nārāyana prabhu, Baradrāja prabhu, Karandhara prabhu and myself were present. While the meeting was going on we got a telephone call saying that Śrīla Prabhupāda was coming to the U. S. We were shocked; we couldn't believe it. We learned that Prabhupāda would be in England very soon, and that he would stay there for a few weeks before coming to the U.S. All of us were very concerned, and we immediately sent a telegram to Vṛndāvana requesting Prabhupāda not to make this journey in his present condition. Rāmeśvara Swami, Jayatīrtha Maharāja, Rūpanūga prabhu, and myself signed the telegram. However, within a few days we learned that Śrīla Prabhupāda was already at Bhaktivedanta Manor.

I had been planning to leave for India as soon as possible, but when I heard that Śrīla Prabhupāda was at the Manor, I decided to stop there to see him on my way to Vṛndāvana. I left Boston on September 9 and arrived in London at 8:30 a. m. on the 10th. Jñāna dāsa prabhu was waiting for me at London Airport, and we immediately went together to see Śrīla Prabhupāda at the Manor.

When I saw Śrīla Prabhupād, I noticed for the first time a great change in his appearance. He looked very pale and very weak, and he remained almost silent when I entered the room. I offered Prabhupāda a big flower garland from the Boston devotees, and then he started slowly speaking to me in a low voice. He told me how to preach to the material scientists--how to defeat their philosophy. He said, "We do not condemn the material scientists for their work, but at least they should not neglect the existence of the Supreme Being, God, Kṛṣṇa." Then Prabhupāda's eyes filled with tears, and he did not speak any longer.

At 8:30 the next morning--it was Sunday, September 11— Śrīla Prabhupāda called me to his room. He spoke in Bengali: "*Āmāra jīvana śeṣa hate yācche."* [My life is coming to an end]. I would like to spend the last few days in India, and I would like to see the Bombay Temple. It will give me great encouragement. Arrange for it immediately--call Tamāla. " Then we all discussed the matter together, trying to make some plans for Prabhupāda to go back to India as soon as possible.

I was glad, at least, that Prabhupāda would go back to India. I left England that day at 5:40 p.m. to make arrangements for the Vṛndāvana conference, for I knew that Prabhupāda would be back in India in a few days. When I reached Vṛndāvana I saw that no preparations had been made for the conference. Before I left I had arranged for some preliminary arrangements to be made, but somehow they had been neglected. I was very concerned, because there was very little time before the conference. So I immediately started running all over Delhi and Āgra to invite scholars and scientists to the conference. By the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda I was able to contact more than one hundred scholars in a short time, and I invited them all to attend the conference.

The conference would last three days—Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, the 14th, 15th and 16th of October. At this time all the GBC members also came to Vṛndāvana to be with Śrīla Prabhupāda.

After Prabhupāda returned to Vṛndāvana, he constantly expressed great concern about the conference. Almost every day he asked about it--how many scholars were coming, how the arrangements had been made, whether the hall was suitable for the guests, whether there were enough chairs and desks, whether the decorations were complete, and so on. Prabhupāda also asked about the arrangements for the *prasāda*, and he specifically requested Kīrtanānanda Maharāja and Bhavānanda Maharāja to help me make the conference a success.

By the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda we had finished the three monographs, and we offered them to him before the conference began. He was very pleased with them. Then, on October 13, Prabhupāda told me specifically, "Do something so that I can see the results before my departure." So Prabhupāda was actually preparing for his departure. However, I always felt that Śrīla Prabhupāda was going to recover soon and be active again.

Early in the morning on October 14--the initial day of the First International Life-Comes-From-Life Conference--I went to see Śrīla Prabhupāda. He told me, "I want to come to your conference, but because of my health I cannot do so. So take this bust of me and put it on the desk in the conference room, and put a garland on it every day during the conference, and conduct the conference very nicely." His Divine Grace Śrīla Prabhupāda is so enthusiastic about the conference that he called me three times that morning, at two-hour intervals, to inquire how everything was going.

At 6:00 in the evening, as soon as the first day of the conference was over, all the members of the Bhaktivedanta Institute who were there in Vṛndāvana went to see Śrīla Prabhupāda. Brahmātīrtha prabhu, Sadäpüta prabhu, Mādhava prabhu, Jñāna dāsa prabhu, Rūpanūga prabhu, and myself were present. Tamāla-Kṛṣṇa Maharāja said to Śrīla Prabhupāda, "Prabhupāda, all the scientists are here. They're all dressed up in shirts and ties." Śrīla Prabhupāda immediately opened his eyes wide, and he insisted that we all sit before him in chairs. He was full of love and appreciation for our little attempt to render him some service. He spoke very lovingly to all of us and then said, "You must all be tired now. Go and take rest."

Early on the morning of the 17th, when the three-day conference had ended, Śrīla Prabhupāda asked me about the overall effect of the event. He asked me how many

scientists had come and what their overall reaction had been. I answered, "Only fifty scientists came; I was expecting more. Many more promised to come, but not everyone came. Still, those few who came were very interested. They thought it was a very good conference, because it opened up some dialogue about the real status of our present understanding of the origin of life. So, it was a small beginning, and I would have been happier if all the scientists had come."

Śrīla Prabhupāda was quiet. Then he remarked, "It was a success. " Prabhupāda was always encouraging whatever we did. He was always appreciating our small efforts and trying to encourage us as much as possible. He further said, "In this way hold conferences everywhere and establish Kṛṣṇa consciousness as a scientific movement."

Thus, in his last days in Vṛndāvana, Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke to me practically every day about how to preach Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the scientific community--how the Bhaktivedanta Institute must become a very powerful means to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness among the scholars and intellectuals.

Fortunately. I was personally attending Śrīla Prabhupāda in his last days, and every day, whenever I went to him, he spoke about science and Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Although his physical body was extremely weak, every time I entered his room he spoke to me: "Swarūpa Dāmodara, you must preach this Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the scientific community." It was very clear that this scientific preaching program was very, very dear to Śrīla Prabhupāda, and he wanted us, somehow or other, to make programs so that this type of preaching would go on very vigorously. I was with Śrīla Prabhupāda practically all the time during those last days, except for a few hours when I took rest, and all the time I was with him he would speak of the Bhaktivedanta Institute.

On October 27, at 8:00 in the evening. Gopāla Kṛṣṇa prabhu brought Śrīla Prabhupāda a newspaper clipping about the scientific conference we had held. The clipping was from the *Statesman*, one of the most important newspapers in India. The headline read, "The Non-physical View of the Origin of Species." I showed the clipping to Śrīla Prabhupāda, and he asked Tamāla-Kṛṣṇa Maharāja to read it to him. When Śrīla Prabhupāda heard the newspaper report, he was extremely pleased, and he remarked, "The Bhaktivedanta Institute is now recognized."

During the next few days, whenever any guests came to visit Śrīla Prabhupāda, he would always ask someone to read the *Statesman* article on the conference. On October 30, Śrīla Prabhupāda's Godbrothers Ananda Brahmacārī and Kṛṣṇa-däsa Bābaji came to see him at 11:00 a. m., and again Śrīla Prabhupāda asked someone to read the *Statesman* report. In this way, Śrīla Prabhupāda was always trying to encourage his disciples and always appreciating the little service they were trying to render him. To Ananda Brahmacārī and Kṛṣṇa-däsa Bābaji, Prabhupāda specifically mentioned how I had dedicated my Ph.D. thesis to him. He also quoted the *śloka* from *Śrīmad - Bhāgavatam* beginning *idam hi pumsas tapasaḥ śrutasya vā*. Prabhupāda said that whatever knowledge one may have, it becomes meaningful only if it is utilized properly in the service of Kṛṣṇa.

As Śrīla Prabhupāda's departure approached, we were all gathered around him day and night, and every time he knew I was nearby, he would speak about science and Kṛṣṇa consciousness. On November 6, at 9:00 a. m., Śrīla Prabhupāda specifically asked me, "What have you learned to preach?"

I responded. "Śrīla Prabhupāda, we have learned only how to repeat what you have taught us. We are all part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, and our duty is to serve Him under all

circumstances."

Śrīla Prabhupāda nodded his approval....

This has been a narration of Śrīla Prabhupāda's visions, desires, and instructions for preaching among the scientific class of people. From these instructions we derive constant guidance and strength to execute his orders. I humbly bow down to all my Godbrothers, praying that they bestow their blessings upon me so that we can all join together in fulfilling Śrīla Prabhupāda's vision in the spirit of unity and cooperation. This will be the perfection of our lives.

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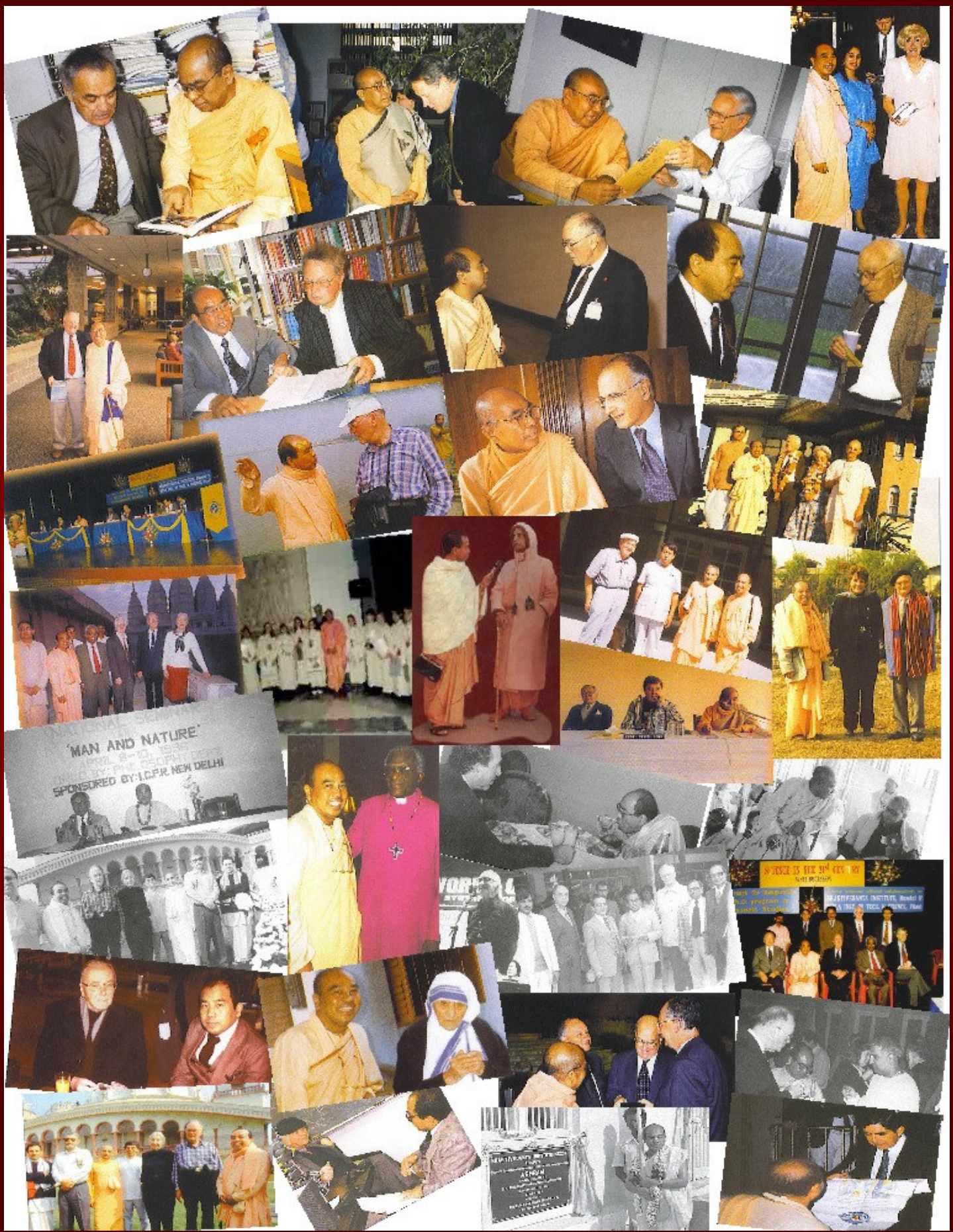
H. H. Bhakti Swarupa Dāmodar Maharāja first wrote this essay around 1981.

"Bhaktivedanta Institute has the greatest responsibility for enhancing the prestige of ISKCON." – Śrīla Prabhupāda