

excerpts from Chapter Four of Hari Sauri's Transcendental Diary, Volume 3

July 26, 1976 — Bhaktivedanta Manor

Gurudāsa Mahārāja brought George Harrison to see Śrīla Prabhupāda at 3:00 in the afternoon. George is an old friend of Gurudāsa and Mukunda and he was happy to respond to Śrīla Prabhupāda's invitation to come and see him. George has not been very actively involved with us lately, but he is still very favorable and certainly likes to chant the *mahā-mantra*. George struck me as a good candidate for spiritual advancement—unpretentious and humble. He lacked the air of self-importance one usually associates with those who have attained some status in life, and he was at ease in the presence of devotees.

Prabhupāda was resting in bed when he arrived. There is a standing rule that Śrīla Prabhupāda is never to be woken for any reason, but for George, Prabhupāda made an exception. I went into the bedroom and informed him George had arrived.

“Yes, bring him immediately,” he said. And then, rather than come into the sitting room, he sat up in bed to talk to George.

When he entered Prabhupāda had a seat brought for him and instructed us to feed him some *prasādam*. We set up small tables for George and some of the senior men. Prabhupāda engaged him in light conversation as they ate.

Having been informed of Śrīla Prabhupāda's illness, George inquired, “How do you feel?”

Prabhupāda smiled. “I have old man's disease, cough and cold, so coughing. But still, work is going on. And I shall complete eighty years this month, September, eighty-one. So now, due to age, it is becoming little difficult.” Then Prabhupāda asked George how he was and if he was still chanting.

George said he was, and Prabhupāda replied, “Thank you. That is our life and soul. *Gṛhe vā vanete thāko, 'ha gaurāṅga bole dāko*. Wherever you live, it doesn't matter, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. That's all. That is our only support.”

George complimented Śrīla Prabhupāda that he was pleased to see that his disciples were looking healthy and strong.

Prabhupāda chuckled. “Yes. *Phalena paricīyate*. By the result, one has to study. Yesterday, one devotee's father and mother came, Hari Śauri. She and his father were very pleased to see him healthy, bright. So we are inviting everyone, ‘Come here. Such a nice house given by George. You live here comfortably, eat nicely and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.’ We don't want any factory work.” Prabhupāda laughed. “Simply *karatāla* and *mṛdaṅga*. Still, people do not come. They'll prefer to go the factory, whole day work in the hell.”

“I suppose some day the whole of the world will just be chanting in the country,” George mused.

“That is not possible,” Prabhupāda said, “but if some of the leading men, they take it seriously, then others will follow. Just like in our book, your signature is there, ‘Oh, George Harrison. Yes.’ They take it without any consideration, *Kṛṣṇa* book. *Yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas tat tad evetaro janaḥ*. If the leading man does something, then his followers also do. This is the way. So if some of the leading men of the world, they take this Movement seriously, then people will be happy. There's no doubt about it.”

All the while Prabhupāda attentively supervised the serving of *prasādam*. Noticing which preparations George had a taste for, he told us to give him more. At the same time he kept him at ease with sweet words. “Hare Kṛṣṇa. You give him two more *samosās*, he likes it. Yes. All the boys and girls are so nicely qualified for Kṛṣṇa's service.”

George expressed pleasure at seeing his old friends. “They are looking better and better all the time. It's nice for me to see Gurudāsa. He's turning into a mountain!”

Prabhupāda smiled. Then, referring to Yamunā dāsī, he said, “His wife has also [become] *sannyāsī*, renounced. Have you seen her lately? She has cut hair and white dress, living alone in the temple. *Vairāgya-vidyā-nija-bhakti-yoga*. This *bhakti-yoga* means *vairāgya-vidyā*, means detachment. That is the perfection of life. If we remain attached, that is conditional. *Māyā* has made so many things attractive so that we have to remain attached. And to come out of this attachment is called *bhakti*.”

Referring to the current drought, George said there was a lot of concern over how dry it was. He said some claimed it was a result of too much pollution.

Prabhupāda told him it was the result of too much sinful activity, especially the killing of innocent animals. Prabhupāda also told Jayatīrtha prabhu to arrange for the Manor’s grounds to be watered as he was concerned the grass was yellowing.

George ate steadily with Prabhupāda ensuring he had enough. When he offered more *samosās*, George laughed. “I’ve got plenty, thanks.”

Prabhupāda also laughed. “*Prasādam*, we can eat up to the neck! There is no harm. You’ll never get indigestion. You have got some fruits?” Prabhupāda continued to encourage him, offering cauliflower, mango drink and other preparations. “Take little.”

George was doing his best, responding warmly to Prabhupāda’s hospitality. “I can’t finish,” he laughed. He said he had been sick with jaundice recently. He had turned yellow and his liver had been affected. He thought he had contracted it from eating Chinese take-away food. Śrīla Prabhupāda advised him to cook simple foods for himself.

As conversations are wont to do, theirs meandered from one subject to another. Prabhupāda mentioned our growing number of Govinda’s restaurants, and asked George if he had met Ambarīṣa. He also filled him in on the successful New York Ratha-yātrā.

Prabhupāda also told him about the Māyāpur project. “We are just attempting a big planetarium in Māyāpur. We have asked government to acquire land, three hundred and fifty acres. That is negotiation going on.

We shall give a Vedic planetarium.”

Gurudāsa furnished some of the details. “The planetarium will be three hundred fifty feet high and show the cosmology of the spiritual world.”

Prabhupāda added, “The construction will be like your Washington capital, like that.”

“A big dome?” George asked.

“Yes. Estimated eight *crores* of rupees.” Then Prabhupāda offered him more *dāl* and fruit.

George was grinning as he said, “Very good. Fantastic. Maybe just a little bit of, but now I’m not ... Thanks. That’s fine. No, okay, thanks, fine, that’s enough, that’s fine.”

Prabhupāda smiled. “That watermelon, you can give. It is water.”

Prabhupāda asked George if he was reading his books at all.

George said he was, mainly the *Kṛṣṇa* book. “Mukunda gave me the new books, but there’s so much in, ah, there’s just so much to read. I don’t know how anybody could have written it; it’s difficult enough to read all that amount.”

Prabhupāda acknowledged his appreciation. “Sometimes they are surprised how one man can write so many books, but it is *Kṛṣṇa*’s grace,” he said humbly. “Otherwise not possible. For a human being, it is not possible.”

As they chatted, Prabhupāda ensured a steady flow of *prasādam*. “Pradyumna, give him little, this one here.”

“Oh, no, no. Please, no more,” George laughed. “I’m really full. I won’t have to eat for a few days.”

That was the signal for the finale. “Sweets,” Prabhupāda offered.

George smiled and conceded. “Very well.”

“Sweet will help you digest,” Prabhupāda said. To the server he instructed, “Don’t give three—at least four.”

With George protesting that he wouldn’t be able to eat much more,

Prabhupāda explained, “Three is given to the enemy. According to our Indian system, if you give somebody three, that means he is enemy.”

George was a little surprised. “Oh, really? I always liked the number three.”

While waiting to be served some fruit, Prabhupāda listed three enemies; *kāma*, *krodha*, *lobha*—lust, anger and greed.

“Yes. But there’s a lot of nice threes,” George said.

Prabhupāda agreed. “Yes. Just like Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara. Three worlds, Śāṅkha, Martya, Padma. Trinity. These are nice things.”

George gallantly tackled the sweets. As he downed the last one he declared, “My compliments to the chef.”

While we cleared away the small tables and pots, Śrīla Prabhupāda thanked George for coming. “So I am very much pleased that you take so much trouble to come here.”

“It’s my pleasure,” George smiled. Then he asked, “Are you ever going to stop traveling?”

“That is Kṛṣṇa’s desire. I don’t want personally. But if Kṛṣṇa wants, that is everything. We have got more hundred and two centers in different parts of the world.”

“Still six more to go,” George said, aware of the auspiciousness of one hundred and eight.

Prabhupāda then told him about Detroit, inviting him to visit. He also mentioned New Māyāpur, the French farm.

When Jayatīrtha prabhu said he thought we would have a hundred and eight temples by this year, Śrīla Prabhupāda downplayed it. “We want worker. Otherwise, Kṛṣṇa is giving us so many centers. In India I can get so many places, but how to manage? Simply taking from persons. And if I cannot manage nicely, that does not look well. Therefore I say first of all get men, then take donation. There is no harm. How many devotees were living here?”

“There’s about a hundred, Śrīla Prabhupāda,” Jayatīrtha informed him.

“Yes, then it is all right. And if there was no devotees, ten devotees, then how could we manage?”

When Jayatīrtha said it took ten to fifteen devotees full time to simply look after the grounds, Prabhupāda revived his concern about the lack of irrigation water.

George chipped in with some knowledgeable advice about how to establish a bore well, based on his personal experience with his estate in Henly-on-Thames.

Śrīla Prabhupāda then asked George if he would like to take a little rest after eating. George declined, suggesting that Śrīla Prabhupāda himself might need some rest. The other devotees echoed his concern. As he sat up in his bed, his elbows resting on a pillow across his knees, Prabhupāda grinned. “I am taking rest now these twenty-four hours. I have no other business than to take rest.”

“Always resting at the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa,” Jayatīrtha prabhu said reverentially.

Prabhupāda paused a second and responded with devotional objectivity. “That is real rest.” He quoted a verse the saintly King Kulaśekhara wrote in the *Mukunda-mālā-stotra*. “*Kṛṣṇa tvadīya-pada-pankaja-panjarāntam*. The *pankaja* means lotus flower. So Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet is just like lotus flower. The lotus flower has stem down; and the swans, they take pleasure to go down in the water and be entangled by the stem. Have you seen their pleasure? Yes. That is their great sporting, to be entangled by the stem and come out, in this way, go deep, this is their sporting. So this Kulaśekhara is praying, ‘My Lord Kṛṣṇa, let my swan of mind be entangled with the stem of Your lotus feet.’ *Adyaiva*, ‘immediately;’ *viśatu*, ‘let enter.’ Who? *Mānasa-rāja-hamsaḥ*, ‘my mind which is just like a swan.’ So why *adyaiva*—immediately? He says that *prāṇa-prayāṇa-samaye*. ‘At the time of death,’ *kapha-vāta-pittaiḥ*, ‘when the physical condition of the body will be in disorder,’ *kaṅṭhāvarodhana*. ‘At that time I shall not be able to speak. I’ll *ahn, ahn*, but that’s all. So I may not be able to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Better I am now in good health, so let my mind be entangled in the stem of Your lotus feet.’ Very nice poetry.”

The Sanskrit verse rolled off his tongue once more in a rhythmic, melodious flow, pleasing the ears, minds and hearts of the small assembly. He went on, “At that time I may be not able to utter *Kṛṣṇa* or think of You. And now I am healthy, let me finish this business.’ That means, ‘Let me die immediately. Now I’m healthy, I’m quite fit.’ This is the ideal. *Ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ*. At the time of death, if one remembers *Kṛṣṇa*, then his life is successful. Immediately he goes to *Kṛṣṇa*. Just like Ajāmila; he chanted ‘Nārāyaṇa,’ and immediately his path to Vaikuṅṭha became clear. So this practice means, whatever we practice all through life, there is chance of coming that remembrance at the time of death, and then life is successful. If at the time of death one can remember *Kṛṣṇa*, then his whole life is successful.”

Prabhupāda told a story to illustrate this point. “Our one students, Kārttikeya, his mother was very fortunate. So his mother had nothing to do with this Society, but the boy was attached, and she heard several times ‘*Kṛṣṇa*,’ that this boy is attached to *Kṛṣṇa*. At the time of her death, she asked her son, ‘Is your *Kṛṣṇa* here?’—and died. Just see how fortunate she is. She simply uttered this word, ‘Is your *Kṛṣṇa* here?’ then she died. Very fortunate. So on account of her son she got salvation.

“Otherwise, Kārttikeya told me that he went to see his mother, and the mother was going to ball dance, and the mother did not receive him well. ‘All right, you sit down. I’ll come again.’ She was such lady. But by *Kṛṣṇa*’s grace, at the time of death, she inquired her son, ‘Is your *Kṛṣṇa* here?’ Very fortunate.”

Prabhupāda’s narrative inspired George to describe his own experience of dealing with death. “When my mother died, I had to send my sister and father out of the room because they were getting emotional. And I just chanted Hare *Kṛṣṇa*.”

“Oh, very nice,” Prabhupāda said. “So she could hear?”

“I don’t know,” George said. “I don’t know, she was in like a coma or something. It was the only thing I could think of. In 1970. It was the only thing I could think of that may be of value, you know.”

“Anyway,” Prabhupāda told him, “if she has heard Hare Kṛṣṇa, she’ll get the benefit. Either she chants, or somebody chanting, if she hears, *śravaṇam kīrtanam*, both the same thing. Little chance, *sv-ālpam apy asya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt*. So let us practice in such a way that at the time of death we may remember. That is success.”

Prabhupāda again asked George if he was reading *Kṛṣṇa* book.

George said that once in while he did but he always carried a *Bhagavad-gītā* with him wherever he went. He admitted that he wasn’t a great reader.

Prabhupāda chuckled. “No, you have got chance here to think soberly. But on account of your chanting ‘Kṛṣṇa’ so many people are chanting.”

George displayed his natural modestly saying, “I don’t think it’s on my account.”

“No,” Prabhupāda said approvingly. “They say, ‘George chants Hare Kṛṣṇa.’ They say, do they not?”

Mukunda prabhu assured him it was true.

“And you have got many thousands followers,” Prabhupāda added.

George was self-effacing. “It’s nice, but I think we all ...”

“Anyway,” Prabhupāda said, “you go on chanting. That will influence.” To encourage him further, he cited Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. “There is a poetry, ‘I do not know what sweetness there is in these two words, *Kṛṣ-ṇa*.’”

The conversation then progressed to the topic of *gurukula*. George said that, “all kinds of strange things” were written in the newspapers about the Dallas school. He was quick to add that he didn’t necessarily believe them.

The devotees also mentioned the half dozen new schools that were opened this year.

Śrīla Prabhupāda had Pradyumna read the Sanskrit and translations for the first fourteen verses of Chapter Twelve from the newly-published Seventh Canto part three in which the *brahmacārī* training given in the *gurukula* is described.

George listened carefully, and at the end of the recitation Prabhupāda presented him with his personal copy of the book. George appeared to be very grateful for this.

It was evident that although George appreciated hearing the *Bhāgavatam* verses, his mind was focused on Prabhupāda's previous comment about the holy name. "Yes. But I thought you were saying something about the sound of the two sounds of *Kṛṣ* and *ṇa*."

Raṇacora dāsa looked up the verse up, while George expressed his respect for Śrīla Prabhupāda's hard labor. "These books are such a lot of work. I don't know how he did it all."

Gurudāsa Mahārāja explained that Śrīla Prabhupāda translated at night, and Prabhupāda added, "At night I don't sleep, not that because I am nowadays sick, but generally—I don't sleep. At most two hours. I take little rest during daytime. So on the whole, three to four hours. But actually, I do not like to sleep."

George empathized. "No, it's a waste of time."

"I think it is. When I go to sleep I think that now I'm going to waste my time. I actually think like that."

"What's the word for it?" George said. "They call it a little death. Sleep is the little death."

Prabhupāda quoted Prahlāda's instructions in the Seventh Canto part two. "He's estimating you have got hundred years at most. Out of that, fifty years lost, sleep. And then twenty years playing as child, a boy." He then had me read out the verses that describe how a materially attached person wastes an entire life of one hundred years.

George showed some interest in those verses, so Prabhupāda gave him that volume too. Turning to the devotees, he asked, "*Kṛṣṇa varṇa-dvayī*, you have got that?"

"Raṇacora found it," Jayatīrtha said. Then he read, "*Tuṅḍe tāṅḍavinī ratim vitanute tuṅḍāvalī labdhaye*. And the translation is, 'I do not know how much nectar the two syllables *kṛṣ-ṇa* have produced. When the holy name of Kṛṣṇa is chanted, it appears to dance within the mouth. We then desire many, many mouths. When that name enters the holes of the ears, we desire many millions of ears. And when the holy

name dances in the courtyard of the heart, it conquers the activities of the mind, and therefore all the senses become inert.”

Prabhupāda smiled. “That is very nice poetry.” He asked Pradyumna to recite the full Sanskrit, instructing me to record him doing it. “In India,” Prabhupāda told George, “all different states they have different alphabets, but the Sanskrit is the same; there is no change in Sanskrit. India’s culture, all the provinces, they talk a little Sanskrit. If you chant this *mantra* according to the Sanskrit tune, oh, your admirers will take it very nicely. And that will be a great benefit to the mass of people.”

George was laughing, “I don’t know if they’d like it. Already they don’t understand such a lot, even if you say it in English.”

“That word *Kṛṣṇa*, if they hear, that will be sufficient,” Prabhupāda assured him.

George told him about his visit to Vṛndāvana, and a song he picked up there. “We were singing, in the morning, singing this ‘*Jaya Kṛṣṇa*.’ This person said to me, ‘You should make it into a song in English.’ So I wrote English verses, and in each chorus it has ‘*jaya kṛṣṇa, jaya kṛṣṇa, kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa, jaya kṛṣṇa, jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa; jaya rādhe, jaya rādhe, rādhe, jaya rādhe, jaya śrī-rādhe*.’ I don’t know if you heard that song. It was on that *Extra Texture*. I wrote the English words: ‘He whose eyes have seen, what our lives have been, and who we really are, it is He, *jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa*.’ And then it has a chorus. ‘He whose sweetness flows, to any one of those, that cares to look His way, see His smile, *jaya śrī-rādhe*,’ then the chorus again. And, ‘He who is complete, three worlds at His feet, cause of every star, it is He, *jaya śrī-kṛṣṇa*.’ It’s a nice song. I took the tune that we sang in Vṛndāvana, and just made it slightly different, you know, with chord patterns.”

“So in your next record, you can give this.” Prabhupāda smiled.

Pradyumna sang the verse out loud three or four more times in a lilting, harmonic cadence. When he finished I slipped the cassette out and handed it to George.

George told Prabhupāda about a friend who was trying to think of a name for his little girl. “I told him to call it Dhārā, you know? ‘Cause from Rādhā—*rādhārādhārādhā*—it becomes *dhārā*. So he called his girl that name.”

Jayatīrtha pointed out how George had followed in the footsteps of the great sage Nārada Muni without even realizing it. “Valmīki was a murderer, or a dacoit, thief. So he was met by Nārada Muni. And he was advised by Nārada Muni to please chant the holy name of the Lord and give up this thievery. So he wouldn’t. So instead Nārada Muni said, ‘You chant *māra*.’ *Māra* means ‘death,’ so he agreed.”

Prabhupāda explained. “*Māramāra-rāma*.”

“Later on, this Valmīki,” Jayatīrtha continued, “he wrote the *Rāmāyaṇa* after having chanting *rāma*, *māra*, he became purified.”

By this time it was five o’clock. The *darśana* had lasted one and a half hours, and everyone noticed that Śrīla Prabhupāda was looking a little strained. Everyone took their leave and George, Gurudāsa, Mukunda, Jayatīrtha and the other devotees called, “All glories to Śrīla Prabhupāda!” as they left the room.

Prabhupāda smiled at George and blessed him. “*Jaya*. Long live!” The devotees took George downstairs and showed him the film, *Spiritual Frontier*, which he liked. He left after that, full of satisfaction at the state of the temple and devotees, and enlivened by his meeting with His Divine Grace. He promised Gurudāsa and Mukunda he would come again.

* * *

Bhagavān prabhu and Pṛthu-putra Swami arrived from France. Śrīla Prabhupāda saw them in the early evening. They brought samples of the new French *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* First Canto, first part. Although Prabhupāda has been strictly supervising the production of the English versions of his books, he has allowed some leeway in the presentation of the foreign language editions. Bhagavān and his men have taken full opportunity to exercise this prerogative, and the book he placed before

His Divine Grace drew exclamations of delight from Harikeśa and even Prabhupāda. It was gorgeously produced, with elaborate gold stamping, colorful end-pages, and built-in silk bookmarkers—an ISKCON first. The first run was 25,000 copies.

Bhagavān reported high annual distribution figures for the French *Bhagavad-gītā*, and he said the printing of the first half of the *Kṛṣṇa* book and *Upadeśāmṛta* was imminent. He told Śrīla Prabhupāda they are now printing at very good prices in Italy.

Prabhupāda was extremely pleased with the book's format as well as the distribution figures. He especially enjoyed hearing Pṛthu-putra translate the Preface from the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. A professor Śrīla Prabhupāda met the year before last, Jean Vardin, had written it. In halting English Pṛthu-putra read it aloud. "Amongst all the *Purāṇas*, the most famous is the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, called *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* because this literary form is achieved the most beautiful, and also because it's the poem which expresses best the doctrine of the faith that Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Person, Puruṣottama, the principle of everything, the absolute unique without second, *advaitam-brahman*. Like in the *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* the Lord reveals His majesty in plain. Much more than an *avatāra* of Viṣṇu, He appears in our eyes like the unique God. Towards Him all devotion is due. ... We have to thank very much the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, to give us that very big text, one of the master book of the humanity. This book is very benefic, and with the translation of the Sanskrit there is the majestic commentary, which is given verse after verse by the master, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder of the association.

"As he did it with the *Bhagavad-gītā* which was published in French in 1975 with the preface of Professor Harvi Delacombe, Swami Prabhupāda explains word by word each *mantra*—stanza or sacred text—to give a signification. Then the reader can judge every piece, what is the meaning of the teaching of the master, by confrontation with the text itself ..."

Prabhupāda liked that. "Yes," he interjected agreeably.

Pr̥thu-putra read on. Describing Prabhupāda's position as a member of the succession from Lord Caitanya the professor wrote, "It is a considerable advantage for the French public to have these volumes where there is a vitality manifested from one of these past *panthā*, which are the most followed by the followers of the Hinduism. We hope that there is a large distribution of this tradition and commentary of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. Anyone who is interested in the life of India can find the authentic teaching, spiritual teaching authorized, and can also have access to one of the most beautiful religious poem from the Hindu tradition."

Pr̥thu-putra Mahārāja looked up with a bright smile. "It's wonderful!"

Śrīla Prabhupāda's eyes gleamed with pleasure. "Yes. So he likes our ..."

"Oh yes," Bhagavān said. "We are very respected in the country."

"That's nice," Prabhupāda said. "You must keep our position."

The devotees also included some reviews inside the book. Pr̥thu-putra translated one from a doctor of letters in Neuchatel, Switzerland.

"The truth is one and universal, and the tradition of this work is always valuable. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is an essential development of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. It's talking about the questions metaphysical, philosophical, religious, psychologic, political and social. The wonderful tradition of Swami Prabhupāda is inspired from the same principles that the one who guided him in his translation of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Every Sanskrit verse is written in Latin characters and then a literary version. The commentary, which is referring always from the *Veda*, *Upaniṣad* and other texts, is allowing the reader to make spiritual progress. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is a precious work and will be revealed for a lot of people from the West. And there is a very urgent need to spread this message throughout the world."

Śrīla Prabhupāda was delighted with both the high praise and the production standard of the books and Bhagavān told him they plan to produce a whole library with all the books done in a similar style.

Throughout the meeting Prabhupāda had frequent heavy coughing bouts, his voice was thick and his nose was congested. This prompted Bhagavān prabhu to inquire how he was feeling.

He told Bhagavān that he had heart palpitations and it was difficult for him to go up any stairs. He therefore felt that further travel would not be possible. Still he asked about the French farm. “So in the village, how many devotees are there?”

“Almost two hundred.”

“Oh, very good.”

“They are waiting for you,” Bhagavān said with a gentle laugh.

“Yes,” Prabhupāda said appreciatively. “They must be waiting. So farming is going?”

“Oh, yes, we’ve just harvested barley and oats, big harvest. And the farm is supplying beans, cauliflower right now. And tomatoes, they have planted three thousand tomato plants, and all the farmers, they are asking how we have done.”

“And milk?”

“We have not bought many cows yet. We will.”

“No? No milk at all? No cows?” Prabhupāda asked him again.

“Oh, yes, we have five cows, six cows.”

Prabhupāda was glad to hear they were getting at least some milk. He told him about his visit to the Pennsylvania farm and to New Vrindaban, once again repeating that the world’s economic problems could be solved by having sufficient milk and grains. “Kṛṣṇa is providing so much facilities for becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious, and why should we deviate and spoil this life, take the risk of again going into the cycle of birth and death? Common sense affair. We have got the good, greatest opportunity to solve this problem of repetition of birth. And only for little sense gratification we are going to sacrifice so great opportunity of life? This much education is wanted. *Na sādhu manye yata ātmano ‘yam*. Find out the verse, Fifth Canto, Fifth Chapter. Very bad civilization. Mad civilization, *pramatta*. Simply for a little sense gratification they are prepared to take so much risk. Next life you may become cat, dog or a small grass or a tree by laws of nature.”

Listening as Jayatīrtha read out the verse and purport, Prabhupāda added that although it is such a serious subject matter, when you speak it in public they think, “What nonsense he is speaking.” He went on to explain, “Dull brain. By eating meat and intoxication they have lost their all human brain tissues. Such a condition. Still, some professors receiving and doing some applause. That is, otherwise who is understanding? The brain is so dull in the modern world ... *Pramatta*, that we can see, mad. And everyone, especially in the Western country, so many madmen. The hippies, their whole sect—mad. Then so-called businessmen, so-called scientist, so-called philosopher—everyone is mad. And *kurute vikarma*, all sinful activities, especially the slaughterhouse, horrible. Everyone is taking share of these sinful activities. They’re fighting amongst themselves, this party, that party, Communist party, Fascist party, then barking in the United Nation and so on, so on. All mad. At least we must know it.” He looked pointedly at his GBCs and smiled. “Or we are talking nonsense; they are all right. What is your conviction?”

He had more of the purport read out, and then he pointed out the helplessness and foolishness of the materialists who are so stringently controlled by material nature yet believe they can make adjustments. Describing an Indian cartoon, he said, “There was some drought. So there was some representation: ‘And there is no water. We are suffering. This is the difficulty.’

“Yes, we are taking step, but next week you’ll have television!”

“Because there was no television, so this is the advancement. Next week they have television. As if television will solve the problem. All *mūḍhas*, rascals, are very horrible condition. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. There is no other way.”

After repeating his criticisms of the Mars and moon excursions, he turned his attention back to the books laying on his desk. “My Guru Mahārāja is very pleased. As soon as a book comes out, he is pleased. He was lamenting that ‘These men, they did not publish any number of books. They are simply after this stone and bricks.’ He condemned. He was very, very sorry. So I thought that I must take a risk. And he’s pleased.”

“So now you have books and temples,” Bhagavān said.

Prabhupāda smiled. “Yes, temple is automatically. I never stressed on temple. I was engaged in publishing the *Back to Godhead*. Whatever I could do, I did it because I took it very seriously that he is very sorry that these things were not done. He said that, ‘There will be fire in this Gaudiya Math.’ *Āgun jvalbe*, he said. *Āmari taci loka kichui boi kakrayebo*: ‘If I can, I shall sell these marbles of this temple and convert them into books.’ That was his ambition. He started a very nice press and this Tīrtha Mahārāja sold it.”

“Sold it?” Jayatīrtha asked in surprise.

“Yes,” Prabhupāda said. “He’s not representing guru ... ‘Better let’s have money for fight in the court.’”

“Sometimes I’m sorry that my name also has this word in it,” Jayatīrtha said a little ruefully.

Prabhupāda paused a moment, and then offered him a word of comfort and encouragement. “You are *Jaya-tīrtha*; you are victorious. Now whatever is being done, it is by his [Bhaktisiddhānta’s] blessing. Let us work sincerely. Things will be all ... Otherwise it is humanly impossible. It is by his grace.”

“George was also commenting on that, how one man could have written so many books,” Jayatīrtha said. “He could not even read them all, what to speak of writing them.”

Prabhupāda quoted a Sanskrit verse: *mūkaṁ karoti vācālaṁ paṅguṁ laṅghāyate girim/ yat-kṛpā tam ahaṁ vande śrī-guruṁ dīna-tāriṇam*. “A dumb [person] is a great orator. The lame man, is jumping over the mountain. *Yat-kṛpā*, by the mercy of guru it is possible. So let us cooperate and do this business. Higher authority will be pleased, and that is our success. *Yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādaḥ*. If the higher authorities are pleased, then Kṛṣṇa is pleased. That is our success.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda returned to the topic of his health. “So, Bhagavān may carry one letter that ‘I am very sorry. On account of my health failure, I could not go to see you,’—that professor and all devotees. And, I am very, very sorry for this, but, I humbly invite you, come to

India, and we shall be very glad to sit together,' like that.”

For Bhagavān and the European devotees it was an obvious disappointment. Still hoping to attract His Divine Grace to France, Bhagavān gently presented that Prabhupāda's rooms were completed, the weather was warm and the sun shone into his quarters throughout the day. He added that if the difficulty was going up the stairs, there were three hundred devotees waiting to carry him in a palanquin. The castle on the farm was quiet and peaceful, and there was a private kitchen just for Śrīla Prabhupāda right next to his rooms. In addition, Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma were to be installed. Bhagavān described how he had personally worked through the previous night to make ready a new *vyāsāsana* carved from the best Italian marble. He also explained that a comfortable Mercedes car was available to drive him to the farm from Paris.

Because he was reluctant not to go, Śrīla Prabhupāda let him speak. He needed reassurance that his health would not be adversely affected, and Bhagavān's gentle persuasion seemed to be working.

“We shall go immediately?” Prabhupāda asked.

Jayatīrtha cautiously tempered Bhagavān's query. “I think that, Śrīla Prabhupāda, you should not feel obliged in any way to go. Only whatever you think is best for your health condition.”

“No, obliged. I am always obliged to you. That's a fact. Yes,” Prabhupāda said humbly.

“We are only obliged to you. That's a fact. That is the actual fact. It must be decided, though, what you think is best for your health situation.” Jayatīrtha said.

“Whatever you decide,” Prabhupāda told him.

Bhagavān told him that the only thing he was concerned about was whether Prabhupāda might suffer some difficulty on the car drive. “But if that won't be too difficult,” he said. “I really think that this is ideal. Your quarters are really first-class, extremely wonderful. And the only other thing is at night it's cool, but that's not so bad either.”

“No, at night cool will be good.” Prabhupāda agreed.

Perhaps more compelling than any of the other reasons Bhagavān presented for remaining in Europe were the difficulties he envisioned for

Prabhupāda in India, where he would be obliged to see a constant stream of visitors. Bhagavān remembered how, two years ago Prabhupāda had been seriously ill in Vṛndāvana. Even still, at least fifteen people were coming to see him each day.

Jayatīrtha prabhu agreed that it would be difficult for Prabhupāda to avoid seeing people in India. “I like Indian people, but these Indian people are not very conscious of your position. They think that you’re just another guru. Many of them do. Of course, some of them appreciate you.”

Prabhupāda explained the Indian mentality. “That ‘If we see one saintly person and offer obeisances, we get some blessing for our material ... *Āśīrvāda*.”

As a sample of what to expect, Jayatīrtha told him about an incident that happened just last night. “One man came with his family. They wanted to have your *darśana*. I said, ‘Prabhupāda is in bed. He’s resting.’

“He was insisting, he said, ‘I do not want to hear him speak, I simply want to see him.’

“I said, ‘He’s in bed; you can’t go into his bedroom. How is it possible?’

“No, that is all right. I will just go in, and I will see him.’

“I said, ‘What is this? Get out.’”

When Prabhupāda asked Bhagavān about the water on the farm, he was told that it was from their own underground source, pure, light and tasty. On hearing this, Prabhupāda decided, “All right, let us go.” Prabhupāda said that if he got good water it might help his digestion. Jayatīrtha laughed. “I never thought that you would go to India. I knew that Bhagavān would come, and you would go to Paris.”

“No. If I improve my health, I shall stay there for some time,” Prabhupāda told him, and added smilingly. “Everywhere is my home. Not that India ... If I am attached to India, then how I am *sannyāsī*?”

Left with only Harikeśa and me after everyone else exited, Prabhupāda admired the work of the French BBT staff. He complimented Yogeśvara for being so intelligent.

When Harikeśa went out to attend to some work, I remained a few minutes more, alone with His Divine Grace. During the conversation I had flipped through the pages of the new book and had noticed a picture of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s kitchen in the Rādhā-Dāmodara temple in Vṛndāvana. I now told him about it.

“Oh! Where it is?” he enthusiastically asked.

I found the page for him. Opportunities like this don’t arise frequently, so as he inspected the brownish photo I asked a few questions about Prabhupāda’s life before ISKCON. “Through that window you could see Rūpa Gosvāmī’s *samādhi*. And for those two rooms they were charging five rupees a month?”

“Yes,” Prabhupāda said. “These rooms were broken. So they told me that ‘You can repair these, and whatever you like, you can give.’ So I thought, ‘Don’t need much space.’ Before me there was a tenant in that other room, he was paying three rupees. So I thought, ‘Two rooms, but I have spent money. So I’ll give him five.’ Now I am giving them ten rupees.”

“To retain it.”

“Yes.”

“Sometimes the devotees go down there and clean out the rooms,” I told him, “and they have *kīrtana* there sometimes. I think this is the first book that someone included this photo.”

“Yes. It was very calm and quiet. And people used to offer obeisances from outside because they knew. Practically everyone knew me. So they used to offer ...”

“You were very well known in Vṛndāvana before you came?”

“Not very well known, but people knew me.”

“Because you were writing?”

“Yes.”

“Or because of your ambition to come to the West?”

“No, at that time there was no such thing,” Prabhupāda replied. “I was living there, retired man.”

“So when you went to Vṛndāvana, you’d given up the idea of coming to the West?”

“No, coming to the West, the idea was there, but I was planning how to go, how to go there, how to preach there, how to take some books, how to bring them—everything alone ...”

“So as soon as you had some books then you were ...”

“Yes. Then I decided. Everything was being dictated by superior.”

With Śrīla Prabhupāda in such a congenial mood, I took the courage to broach something Harikeśa once mentioned to me. “I was told that one day you were told by Rūpa Gosvāmī that you must go.”

Prabhupāda’s mood changed slightly. “But that was open secret,” he said dismissively. “Everyone knew.” Then he changed the subject.