

## Foreword

*I'll Build You a Temple* transports us into one of the great events of our time. It is a story of surrender on the path of pure love—an incomparable story that many have tried to relate but which no one will ever be able to tell like His Holiness Giriraj Swami. He was there, intimately involved, from the beginning to the end.

Giriraj Swami gives us personal witness into the life of Srila Prabhupada at a time when Prabhupada faced insurmountable odds against him at every step. The story reveals Prabhupada's unwavering faith, indomitable courage, and profound humility. As we turn the pages, absorbed, we find that these virtues expand from Prabhupada's unconditional love and all-encompassing compassion.

In *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*, Srila Prabhupada writes, "One's greatness has to be estimated by one's ability to tolerate provoking situations." In this extraordinary book we discover how Prabhupada personified this quality.

In 1971 devotees were eager to build a temple in prosperous downtown Bombay. Instead, Srila Prabhupada chose a site on an undeveloped property infested with rats, infectious mosquitoes, and hostile opponents in a swampy fishing village miles away from the city and foresaw that it would soon be a place of pilgrimage. He welcomed the Deities of Radha-Rasabihari into a small shack and promised to build Them a wonderful home.

As the story unfolds, powerful, corrupt politicians conspired with the local mafia to cheat, exploit, and evict Prabhupada and the devotees. Intimidated by threats, violence, and disease, almost everyone lost hope and was ready to give up—except Srila Prabhupada. He inspired the handful of inexperienced young Western devotees to follow him as he personally led the charge.

There are two types of *Bhāgavatas*: the book *Bhāgavata* (sacred scripture) and the person *Bhāgavata* (one who embodies the scripture). This book opens a door to understanding the goal of life and how to achieve it. It shows us how a great soul interacts with the world of dualities, with all of its struggles, while remaining fixed in remembering

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Krishna (God). Herein, Prabhupada teaches us how to see every situation as a blessed opportunity to serve with compassion and devotion.

*I'll Build You a Temple* is a contemporary narration that shares the emotions, excitement, and message of sacred texts such as the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and *Bhagavad-gītā*, whose conclusive teachings are revealed through the lives of great souls, such as Srila Prabhupada, who battle and ultimately vanquish powerful enemies against seemingly insurmountable odds.

Appreciating the sincere dedication of young Giriraj dasa, Srila Prabhupada entrusted him with the leadership of this most complex and difficult project, and to carry things on whenever Prabhupada was away from Bombay. Giriraj—and all the devotees who sacrificed so much in the course of their service—deserves to be honored with gratitude and affection.

Srila Prabhupada said that his project in Bombay was his heart. We are sincerely grateful to His Holiness Giriraj Swami Maharaja for dedicating years of research, writing, and praying to authentically reveal Srila Prabhupada's heart to the world, as only he can do.

Radhanath Swami