

## Preface

Srila Prabhupada's struggle to build a temple and establish Hare Krishna Land in Juhu, on the outskirts of Bombay, was perhaps the greatest effort of his preaching movement. In fact, from the time he returned to India in August 1970, he spent 554 days in Bombay, more than any other place in the world. It took six years—from 1972, when he took possession of the land, to 1978, when the temple opened—and after the conveyance was signed, he declared, “It was a good fight. Someone should write a book about it.”

I served in Juhu as temple president and later as Governing Body Commissioner between 1972 and 1999, raising funds and overseeing every aspect of the project—the only devotee to be closely involved throughout that period—and Srila Prabhupada had already told me, in 1971, “You should write. This is your first business,” and repeated this instruction over the years. So despite my limitations and disqualifications but with the encouragement and assistance of many well-wishers, I took up writing about him and Juhu.

It was an illuminating experience. I became absorbed in Prabhupada's divine qualities, activities, and words, and I came to understand him and the history of the project—even events to which I had been party—in new, deeper ways. I felt like I was mining a limitless reservoir of precious gems. And I came to appreciate him—and his servants—and those who have supported me in my efforts to write—even more than I had before.

In his purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.13.50, Prabhupada explains, “The word *svakārtthānām* refers to great desires. As mentioned in this verse, the glance of Lord Viṣṇu creates the desires of the devotees. A pure devotee, however, has no desires. Therefore Sanātana Gosvāmī comments that because the desires of devotees whose attention is fixed on Kṛṣṇa have already been fulfilled, the Lord's sidelong glances create variegated desires in relation to Kṛṣṇa and devotional service.” Thus, in “a place where there was no temple . . . a devotee desired, ‘Let there be a temple and *sevā*, devotional service.’ Therefore, what was once an empty corner has now become a place of pilgrimage. Such are the desires of a devotee.”

## I'LL BUILD YOU A TEMPLE

By the strength of Prabhupada's desire, an overgrown plot of land in what had been a remote fishing village became a place of pilgrimage and devotional service. And in the process—a long one—he engaged so many of us—his disciples and so many others—in devotional service.

Throughout, in spite of so much opposition and so many obstacles, Prabhupada remained perfect in Krishna consciousness—an ideal sadhu: “tolerant, merciful, and friendly to all living entities. He has no enemies, he is peaceful, he abides by the scriptures, and all his characteristics are sublime.” (SB 3.25.21) And after his departure, by his mercy, we were left with great challenges of work and responsibility, both for our own spiritual benefit and for the benefit of all those who would associate with the temple.

It was our greatest good fortune to be able to associate with Srila Prabhupada, and through this book, I want to share with you that good fortune and give you his association.

*'sādhu-saṅga', 'sādhu-saṅga'—sarva-śāstre kaya  
lava-mātra sādhu-saṅge sarva-siddhi haya*

“The verdict of all revealed scriptures is that by even a moment's association with a pure devotee [sadhu], one can attain all success.” (Cc Madhya 22.54)

Writing this book describing Prabhupada's monumental efforts has been a humbling endeavor but one with great rewards. In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Krishnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami, after enumerating some of his superiors, writes, “It is by the mercy of all these Vaiṣṇavas and gurus that I attempt to write about the pastimes and qualities of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Whether I know it or know not, it is for self-purification that I write this book.” (Cc Adi 9.5)

Prabhupada explains, “This is the sum and substance of transcendental writing” and directs that “[o]ne should write transcendental literature to purify oneself,” since “[b]y writing about the pastimes of the Lord, one associates with the Lord directly.” I have tried to follow Srila Prabhupada's and his—our—predecessor acharyas' instructions and examples.

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The benefits of reading about such an empowered pure devotee are incalculable. I think of Srila Rupa Gosvami's statement (*Vidagdha-mādhava* 1.6, *Cc Antya* 1.139):

*abhivyaktā mattaḥ prakṛti-laghu-rūpād api budhā  
vidhātrī siddhārthān hari-guṇa-mayī vaḥ kṛtir iyam  
pulindenāpy agniḥ kim u samidham unmathya janitor  
hiraṇya-śreṇīnām apaharati nāntaḥ-kaluṣatām*

“O learned devotees, I am by nature ignorant and low, yet even though it is from me that [this book] has come, it is filled with descriptions of the transcendental attributes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore, will not such a literature bring about the attainment of the highest goal of life? Although its wood may be ignited by a low-class man, fire can nevertheless purify gold. Similarly, although I am very low by nature, this book may help cleanse the dirt from within the hearts of the golden devotees.”

*e vacana mora nahe, sarva-śāstre kaya  
bhaktākhyāna śunile kṛṣṇete bhakti haya*

“This is not my statement; this is the verdict of all the scriptures. Simply by hearing topics about the devotees, one develops devotion for Kṛṣṇa.”  
(*CB Madhya-khaṇḍa* 10.104)