

Srila Prabhupada in Vrndavana

Venue: Vrindavana

Dated: 2008

We welcome all of you, **Srila Pabhupada ki jai!!!**

So English we'll be speaking in English, Srila Prabhupada also did most of his talking in English. Occasionally he gave some Hindi classes. They are available, there are some CDs in which you will get Srila Prabhupada Hindi lectures; few dozens of them. English lectures, there are thousands of them, English classes. But there are may be 20- 30 Hindi classes. He gave some Bhagavat Gita classes, Rama katha, Mayapur but we spoke in English also with Prabhupada.

I really don't know where to start, keeping in mind that we have only, not whole seven days. We'll focus more and talk about Vrndavana. **Srila Prabhupada in Vrndavana** and it would be also more appropriate to talk about his pastimes towards end of his staying with us in his manifest lila, you could call it. And again first we'll talk where I come in the picture. There was not I the only one in the picture. There were so many hundreds of them. It's my memories time so in those memories are more fresh. They are my property. They are with me all the time, so I would like to share.

When Prabhupada came to Vrndavana in '77. Last time he came to Vrndavana and then he stayed in Vrndavana, entered Krsna's pastimes. I mean that coming to Vrndavana was in beginning of October and Prabhupada was not well. This was going on, in fact, the whole year 1977 Srila Prabhupada was not being well. Just quickly, briefly he came back from around the world tour. He landed in Bombay but immediately he was making plans to go to Kumbha Mela in January 1977. He travelled by train to Allahabad. We were there; hundreds of Prabhupda's followers were there in Kumbha Mela. Prabhupada made his visit of Kumbha

Mela a brief one. And then, he went to Kolkata and then on over to Bhubanesvar. He made a side trip to Jagannatha Puri, came back to Bhubanesvar and to Mayapur for Mayapur Festival. This was the first time he just gave few classes, no morning walks. This was different from previous years. Then Srila Prabhupada, he skipped Vrndavana, part of the festivals. He used to do Mayapur festivals, then Vrndavana festivals. These were two festivals he had been attending. This year he just did Mayapur festival and he went to Mumbai, then it was known as Bombay. He wanted to move into his new apartments as Hare Krsna Land was not ready.

Prabhupada insisted, "I will stay in my own quarters". But they were not ready and Prabhupada stayed downtown and held public lectures series in Mumbai. This was the last public lectures series. Seven days in the evening was Krsna festivals. He spoke very strongly. Physically he was so unwell and we had to lift him and put him on the vyasasana. But once he had a microphone, he was roaring like a lion. His topic was, **"The modern civilization is total failure only alternative is Krsna consciousness"** every night on this theme. A disciple would read a verse that was selected from the 2nd canto of Bhagavatam, verse after verse. One verse and then Srila Prabhupada would give the purport and more talk on the verse or theme. 'Modern civilization is total failure'. And then after the festival downtown, he moved back to Juhu Hare Krsna Land.

This time his quarters were ready and he was moved into his new quarters. It was very gorgeous, very opulent. He was very pleased. I was there watching Srila Prabhupada and hearing him talk. He was very grateful for offering such special facilities. He was not well. He would spend lot of time lying on bed. We would be doing some kirtan, very soft kirtans in his quarters. He had been still meeting VIPs and members of the Parliament. They would have appointments. He was there for some time and it was decided that he will go to Hrishikesh for

recuperation; getting better on the banks of Ganga and Himalayan mountains. Better climate it was suggested during May, June like that. Through Delhi he went to Hrishikesh. There is a place, that house is still there where Srila Prabhupada stayed. We visited there few years ago on the banks of Ganga. Then he was not well again, then he rushed back to Tamal Krsna Maharaj, Yadubara prabhu, Bhakti Caru Maharaj, were also few devotees were waiting.

He was in Vrndavana during June- July, he was getting a little better and then plans were made that he would go to America, Gita Nagari. So he made the trip, on the way to America, he went to London. He was there for Janmasthanmi of '77 in London at Bhaktivedanta Manor. Again not well, so he dropped his one way journey to America and rushed back. He wanted to come to India, so he landed in Mumbai. We were there at the airport receiving Srila Prabhupada. We had gone dozens and dozens of times earlier also to receive Prabhupada at Bombay airport. Bombay was Srila Prabhupada's office, so he was spending lot of time in the office. There were some legal matters, legal battles over Hare Krsna Land in Mumbai Juhu. Srila Prabhupada was battling and ultimately he was victorious. We won the case. Prabhupada was genius; he was giving all the mantras which that advocate should present in the court. He was advocate of the advocates (Laughter). So it was last time he was received at the airport by British Airways he came to Mumbai. His briefcase is still on display in Mumbai in Prabhupada's quarters. And the bag tag is still there, its British Airways first class. He spent some time in Mumbai then finally to Vrndavana. He remembered his doctor friend from Prayag or Allahabad called Dr. Ghosh. And Prabhupada wanted him to come and treat him.

So someone had to go, I was asked to go to Allahabad and it was a big rush and it was emergency. So I went. Well, he was not in Allahabad; he was in Darjeeling where his granddaughter was studying. So I had to go to Darjeeling, it is in Assam top

of the mountain. In Allahabad I remember, I first went to Dr. Ghosh's home and found out he was not there. And then I had to go back to the airport. On the way to the airport there was one Hanuman mandir. I was praying to Hanuman, I still remember, I saw the Hanuman mandir and started praying. I thought my mission is somewhat similar to that of Hanuman (Laughter). Because when Lakshman who is Adiguru was not well, that time during the battle at Sri Lanka, some medicine was required. So Hanuman was sent to Himalayan Mountains. So I thought I also have to, not to get the medicine but the doctor who will provide medicine to Prabhupada (Laughter). And I had to go to Himalaya Mountain. So I was praying and by the grace of Hanuman, I did find the doctor.

We drove to Kolkata and then to Delhi. Then the doctor was looking after Srila Prabhupada, Prabhupada's friend. Prabhupada was not there for long time as we know. As he was grihasta and his Prayag Pharmacy in Allahabad.

Well, talking about myself, we continued our travelling. We had a travelling party called **"Narada Muni Travelling Sankirtan Party"**. So we went north and travelling and distributing Srila Prabhupada's books, we went all the way to Badrikashram. For some time we had no news from Srila prabhupada. There were no mobile phones. Even regular phones wouldn't work there. So we were in anxiety, so we rushed back we came to Vrndavana. This was like a one week before 14 th of November. So Srila Prabhupada was very kind to let us in, whole party. All the devotees of our party went in Srila Prabhupada's quarters. Srila Prabhupada was on the bed lying down. But if you read more Lilamrita, then here other devotees, they will tell you so many other activities of Prabhupada. How he managed even, translating and giving dictations of his purports during those times.

Srila Prabhupada 10th canto, chapter 13th, it was compiled during that last visit of Srila Prabhupada. Jayadvaita Maharaj holding a microphone very close to his mouth. And Pradyumna

prabhu would read different commentaries, Sanskrit commentaries. After hearing those commentaries, Srila Prabhupada would give his comments in English. They were getting transcribed and that's how he continued his activities. So as we arrived, we sat down around Srila Prabhupada, very close to his bed. His voice was very low. To hear him, you had to put your ear very close to his mouth. So we were giving reports of our traveling and book distribution.

You know the book distribution score reports were Prabhupada would always look forward to wherever the reports came from. He said that made him young, **"I would never die"** so far his books are being distributed. He would take lots of interest in hearing book distribution, especially book distribution scores and reports and some other reports. He was questioning, **"Which book is being distributed the most?"** He was lying on the bed and he was keen interested in book distribution. What are the prices of this book, that book? So we were responding. We talked of the Badrikashram visit. I was representing one party, so I reported to Prabhupada that we visited Srila Vyasadeva's cave which we had done. And I said, "We showed your Bhagavad Gita to Srila Vyasadeva, Prabhupada". That was in a humorous way of presenting it by thought. We were telling Srila Prabhupada the cave of Srila Vyasadeva. He is very much present there; for sure he had seen Prabhupada's Bhagavad Gita. Prabhupada was pleased to hear that.

Part of the reporting also was of our visit of the spot called 'Bhima Ka Pul'. There is a bridge over Saraswati, a stone bridge; this is where Bhima left his body. One brother left and they walked down the road, another brother and another like that and they were going towards north. So that was the place where Bhima left his body. That was part of the reporting. Later on, as I was mentioning now, it was not appreciated by one of my God brothers. For that reporting, I was rebuked, I was mildly chastised for such a report; why should I be talking of someone dying and death and giving some

ideas to Prabhupada, I didn't think in those terms. So it was too late, already reporting was done.

So then we were leaving Prabhupada's quarters. All the members of my party, they were out of the room, I was the last one. Then I was just taking one last look at Prabhupada. And Prabhupada signaled me, "Come here, come back". So I went back to Prabhupada, close to him. And he questioned me, "I would like to see you. What time suits you?" He could order me, come at such and such time! But different approach, amazing. "What time suits you?" And then my response of course, "Anytime Prabhupada, anytime". Then he said, "Is four o'clock okay?"

So it was settled that we would meet at four o'clock in the afternoon. I didn't know, the way he was so grave when he was talking to me or asking is four o'clock is okay, I want to see you. All day I was trying to figure it out. What was Prabhupada is going to talk to me about at four o'clock in the afternoon. I could not come to any conclusion. So I was looking at the watch and counting hours and minutes. So finally it was four o'clock and I went. I was not allowed inside Prabhupada's quarters. I was directed to the Krsna Balaram guest house reception. As I arrived there, just around the corner from Srila Prabhupada's front entrance of his quarter, I found all the senior members sitting there. They were kind of waiting for me also. So what I found out was what Prabhupada wanted to talk to me about at four o'clock. He had already spoken to Tamal Krsna Maharaj and Bhavananda prabhu, Bhakti Caru Maharaj, like that. I met everyone else. They said, **"Prabhupada would like you to go and organize the bullock cart for him"**.

He wants to go to Govardhan on Govardhan puja day. Next day was Govardhan puja. So you could imagine, a day before, whole thing was being planned. So just myself and Trivikrama Maharaj, two of us went to Mathura. It was very difficult because on Govardhan puja, the farmers, they do puja of their

cows and bulls. They don't employ them. So we had a hard time hiring bullock cart. But we managed and two bullock carts were arranged to come over to Krsna Balaram temple. So they did come and they were parked in front of Krsna Balaram temple. And plan was next morning Prabhupada would travel to Govardhan.

And then there were more talks that evening after I came back from Mathura. I was also born in a farmer's family, we also had bullock cart and bullock cart sankirtan That was Prabhupada project. So I was chosen for this task. Then during the night, there were lots of discussions on this proposed travel of Srila Prabhupada, Prabhupada travelling on a bullock cart, oxen cart on the Vrndavana roads. These days roads are little better. You could imagine, this is 31 years ago, they were far worst. So the whole debate going on, Prabhupada had the desire to go. He always talked about when battling with maya, fighting with maya. Preaching is fighting, that spirit he had. He was lying on bed for long long time, months and months. He was feeling uneasy in that way, we say this. So he wanted to be out there. That was just a trial going to Govardhan. If that works then travel more all over. That was during the night. It was very difficult for lots of devotees to accommodate this idea, Prabhupada going on bullock cart, travelling to Govardhan. So he was appealed by several devotees. Krsnadasa Babaji from Gaudiya Matha, a senior Prabhupada's godbrother was invited. Devotees, disciples made Krsnadasa Babaji to speak to Prabhupada on their behalf, trying to convince him not to go, not to go.

So finally, there are many details and dialogues. You could read them on folio also word for word. Tamala Krsna Maharaj wrote a whole play called 'Final pastimes of Prabhupada'. Tamal Krsna Goswami Maharaj was involved, so he had written a book and he is drawing lots of his dialogues from the folio, the conversation. So that idea of going to Govardhan on bullock cart was dropped.

Then another day passed and Prabhupada's room was filled with his only disciples. There were no other Jayapataka Maharajas disciples, there were only Prabhupada's disciples that time, right? You could imagine. And Prabhupada again brought up the topic of travelling. But this time he proposed travelling with the buses. Idea was kind of welcomed, but condition was that when he gets better, he will take this journey travelling all over. One thing, Prabhupada wanted to go to holy places, during his very extensive, busy travelling schedule he had no opportunity going to holy places. This was his final wish. He wanted to travel to the holy places and other places, town and cities. So this time, devotees also, it was welcomed for another reason, because devotees were thinking, Prabhupada is wanting to travel, that means he wants to be with us longer. If he is dropping or postponing his plans of going back to Krsna , joining Krsna, he is going to be with us longer. So this was kind of cause for a joy, happiness, Prabhupada is going to stay on long.

The delegates would go to Prabhupada from time to time headed by those days, Kirtananda Maharaj was the senior sannyasi, he would go and appeal on behalf of the disciples. **"Prabhupada, please stay on, Prabhupada we want you, we are just babies, just children, newly born. How will we survive without you, please"**. We would always take it up to Prabhupada whether to live or die. It was up to Prabhupada. We were always thinking like that, so we would appeal to Prabhupada, "Prabhupada please stay on please". So when he was planning his travelling, especially the buses, devotees were kind of relieved that he is going to stay on longer with us. So those who were in the room, Prabhupada in the middle sleeping, lying down position and whole room is filled. Then different devotees were proposing to Prabhupada. I remember Giriraj, I know him being disciple from Bombay temple president. He said to Prabhupada, "Whenever you go to the big cities, there will be some big rich people, industrialist; if I go I could make some life members. Could I go Prabhupada with you?" And

Prabhupada said, "Hmm, you could go".

Then there was Bhakti Svarupa Damodara Maharaj. He took his turn, "Whenever you'll go, there will always be some scientists. I could organize some conference, scientific, you could address. Could I go Srila Prabhupada?" Prabhupada said "Hmm" (Laughter).

So like that, different disciples were proposing to be with Prabhupada, travel with Prabhupada. There was Bhakti Caitanya from Chandigarh. He was a good driver. "I could drive your car Prabhupada, (Laughter). Could I go?" Prabhupada said, "Hmm, you could go."

So many devotees were making proposals how could they fit into this travelling program, whether they could go and Prabhupada, "Hmm, Hmm" meaning "Yes", they could go. Then I also took my turn (Laughter). Why not? There were lots of discussions about this travelling. Prabhupada's advance party, and main party and Prabhupada would be part of the main party. The advance party making all the arrangements, bookings and facilities. And main party arrives there. Advance party goes in advance further. These being a whole, everything was planning. So when I said whether I could go, Prabhupada, he also said I could go. He said, "You will be our leader of the Travelling Party." Haribol!!! With the experience I had with the Narada Muni Sankirtan Travelling Party and other Travelling parties. So that must be on 11th or 12th of November this dialogue took place. So we all got kind of busy making preparations for Prabhupada's travels on buses. We got a huge big map of India. We wanted to make a schedule for Prabhupada's travelling. Where to get buses and drivers this and that. Tamal Krsna Maharaj, Bhavananda and other disciples also around involved. The Kaviraj, Prabhupada's doctor was keeping track of Srila Prabhupada was taking more milk or whatever. So we were hopeful that Prabhupada would get better and would have this travel all over India which Srila Prabhupada was all looking forward to and preparing all the arrangements. Srila

Prabhupada, those days would lie down, eyes closed but not fully awake, he was thinking of Krsna. And he would get his disciples, devotees to read from Caitanya Caritamrita, Krsna book or doing kirtan. Kirtan with small tiny kartals, very small kartal, no mridanga nothing just small kartal. Only one devotee would be sitting and doing kirtan. And this would go on 24 hours. Either there was some reading or doing kirtan. His attraction and attachment to the Holy name and the pastimes of the Lord, he insisted that goes on.

This was also going on in Mumbai before he came to Vrndavana after London. So there I also had been taking turns singing for Srila Prabhupada. One day I asked Srila Prabhupada, "Is there anything more we could do, so that you could get better?" Just before another devotee taking over kirtan. There was just a little break and I said, "Is there anything that we are not doing, we should do Prabhupada so that you get cured, you get better?" And Prabhupada said, "Chant Hare Krsna". That was the cure, medicine. Of course he had standing instructions to all of us that, "Don't take me to the hospital and keep on chanting that was the medicine" he said that few times. I remembered Bhakti Svarupa Damodara Maharaj, he had his night shift. On the 13th night, he was with Prabhupada chanting. And then on that day, 14th while we were still kind of busy making plans for Prabhupada's travel. Kaviraj was keeping an eye on Prabhupada's health. He started going on all over property, gets alert here and there, asking all of us to rush into Prabhupada's quarters. So we were all there, room full inside and more from outside. Hundreds of devotees were kind of stationed in Vrndavana. It was also Kartik, like tomorrow 14th November, we were in Prabhupada's quarters. I was there when Prabhupada went. So many others all around him. Last time we could hear, he was only opening mouth and 'Hare Krsna', 'Hm, Hm'. That was it. **Srila Prabhupada ki jai!!**

He considered Vrndavan as his home, Mayapur his place of pilgrimage where he worshiped the Personality of Godhead.

Bombay was his office. He stayed here in Vrndavana. We took Prabhupada in a kirtan procession to all the six goswamis temples, a huge procession. Srila Prabhupada was placed in Samadhi. And then kind of brass murti of Srila Prabhupada. Not same day, but after some days we all knew, going to Govardhan this was his last wish. So everybody, we all went first to Radha kunda, bathe Srila Prabhupada murti form in Radha kunda's water. We had palanquin; we took Prabhupada all around Govardhan. Hundreds must be close to thousands followers, devotees of Srila Prabhupada going all around Govardhan. And finally came to Kusum Sarovar and we stopped there. And his other desire, he wanted to go by bus all over India visiting the places of pilgrimage. That was another wish. So when we had to celebrate 500 anniversary of Caitanya Mahaprabhu's appearance, it was in '86. So the Governing Body Commission, they resolved that we organize procession, walk, padayatra and take Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Srila Prabhupada on pilgrimage. So we started in Dwarka on Radhasthami of '84. Then the remaining months of '84 and twelve months of '85 and then we had to arrive in '86 in Mayapur for Caitanya Mahaprabhu's 500 anniversary. 7000 miles walk, so this planned as part of celebrating Caitanya Mahaprabhu's 500 years anniversary. At the same time fulfilling Prabhupada's desire of travelling or going to places of pilgrimage.

So that was organized on very big scale, international participation for the pleasure of Prabhupada, for glorification of Srila Prabhupada.

Jai Srila Prabhupada