Dear Devotees and Friends,

Please accept my humble obeisances. All glories to Srila Prabhupada. This eventful year is quickly coming to a close. But every end is a signal of a new beginning.

There is a verse in the Sri Upadesamtra which says, “There are six principles favorable to the execution of devotional service: (1) being enthusiastic, (2) endeavoring with confidence, (3) being patient, (4) acting according to the regulative principles (such as hearing, chanting and remembering Krishna), (5) abandoning the association of nondevotees, (6) following in the footsteps of previous acaryas. These six principles assure the complete success of pure devotional service.” This verse is useful advice on how to make tangible and steady advancement through practical activity.

From our acaryas we learn to accept that everything in life such as thoughts, actions and resources are dependent on Lord Krishna. Thus everything we do should be dovetailed for the service of Krishna. Real education is learning how to use everything in the service of the Lord. Srila Prabhupada and the previous Vaisnava acaryas have emphasized this point: “The devotees find the correct means by which everything can be utilized in the service of the Lord.” (Nectar of Instruction – page 32) By this knowledge and practice we avoid becoming a victim of material consciousness.

Rupa Goswami, one of the intimate devotees of Lord Caitainya has said: “When one is not attached to anything, but at the same time accepts everything in relation to Krishna, one is rightly situated above possessiveness.”

Utsaha means enthusiasm in Sanskrit. It is defined as endeavor executed with intelligence in Krishna consciousness. When we make the right decision to use our knowledge and assets in the service of Krishna, we become more and more enthusiastic. Devotees do not engage in idle meditation. Their life is practical action in Krishna consciousness. Srila Prabhupada has written

"There is a proverb in Sanskrit literature that enthusiastic persons achieve the favor of the Goddess of Fortune. In the Western part of the world there is tangible example of this slogan. People in this part of the world are very much enthusiastic in material advancement and they have got it. Similarly, according to the instructions of Srila Rupa Goswami, if we become enthusiastic in spiritual matters, then we also get success in that way. Take for example, I came to your country in ripe old age, but I had one asset: enthusiasm and faith in my Spiritual Master. I think these assets only are giving me some lights of hope, whatever I have achieved so far with your cooperation." (Srila Prabhupada Letter, October 15, 1969)

The devotee learns to be patient by depending on the mercy of guru and Krishna. He receives constant instruction from the spiritual masters (siksa and diksa gurus) and patiently continues devotional service with the confidence that Krishna will surely protect and help him. Success or failure are in the hands of Krishna. The devotee's duty is to follow strictly the regulative principles of Krishna consciousness and perform the daily duties to the best of his abilities, all the while associating with sincere devotees similarly engaged in practical devotional service.

Srila Prabhupada defines what he means by practical activity in Krishna consciousness: "In this Krishna consciousness movement we require everyone to rise early in the morning, by 4 A.M., and attend mangala arati, or morning worship, then read Srimad Bhagavatam, perform kirtana, and so forth. Thus we hold continuous activities in devotional service twenty-four hours daily. This is called following in the footsteps of the previous acaryas who expertly filled every moment of time with Krishna conscious activities. If one strictly follows the advice given in this verse by Srila Rupa Goswami – namely, being enthusiastic, being confident, being patient, giving up the association of unwanted persons, following the regulative principles and remaining in the association of devotees – one is sure to advance in devotional service." (NOI page 34)

The temple's purpose is to invite people to associate with devotees and practice the regulative principles of spiritual life especially chanting the Hare Krishna Mahamantra and engage in practical devotional service. By chanting and service in the association of sincere devotees one rises above the influence of the three modes of nature and attains the transcendental platform of pure devotional service.

All the temple staff wish everyone a very happy New Year replete with transcendental devotional service and constant hearing, chanting and remembering of Lord Krishna. If we do this properly then we will be able to do all our others duties in life to family, relatives, work, etc., in an exemplary way.

Please keep in mind the temple at this closure of 2016. Please help us meet our financial requirements so that we can maintain all the temple activities and outreach programs in the New Year. We would like to make a significant payment to our mortgage debt. We paid $ 100,000 earlier in 2016 to reduce the principle of the temple's mortgage from $ 600,000 to $ 500,000. If we can reduce it another $ 100,000 it will secure the temple's standing with our bank. Please consider a generous donation for the end of the year.

Your humble servant,
Harivilas das

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