

ELECTRONIC BOOK

By Satsvarupa Dasa Goswami

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Also by Satsvarupa dasa Goswami

Srila Prabhupada Lilamrita

Handbook for Krishna Consciousness

Readings in Vedic Literature: The Tradition Speaks for Itself

Your Ever Well-Wisher

Prabhupada Nectar v. 1-5

Japa Reform Notebook

Qualities of Sri Krishna

Vaisnava Behavior/ The Twenty-Six Qualities of a Devotee

Japa Walks/Japa Talks

Japa Transformations

September 1, 1998, 12:02 a.m.

Reading from *The Quest For Enlightenment*, a collection of articles by Srila Prabhupada that appeared in *Back to Godhead* magazine. Why read such old stuff? Because it's not dead. I find what I need in it. I bring my love to it, and my attention. Here's a lecture he gave at Boston University's Marsh Chapel. I booked it for him. We received a small honorarium. Srila Prabhupada was not so well known then. Few students attended, although other engagements at that same time "at MIT, Northeastern University, Harvard, etc." were well attended. Yeah, I remember, we were burnt out by the poor attendance of this one. Brahmananda reprimanded me. Prabhupada didn't even go to the Harvard one at first. rather, he told us to phone him when the classroom filled up. Only then did he start from the house in Allston.

At BU he sankirtana that I remember to this day. Now it's here thirty years later, and his words are undiminished by the fact that the rows of chapel were empty except for about a dozen seats and Swamiji's own little flock.

Krishna consciousness is important, because it teaches us our relationship with God. "Without a background of pious activities, a person will not be interested in the science of God." Srila Prabhupada speaks of consciousness. The *Bhagavad-gita* says *avinaSi tu tad vidhi, yena sarvam idam tatam*: "Consciousness is that which is spread all over your body, and it is eternal." Pinch yourself. If you feel pain, that means your consciousness has pervaded your body.

I'm conscious now as I write this, and I'm identifying with physical and mental pain and pleasure. Here Swamiji assures me that this awareness doesn't die when the body dies. We should dedicate ourselves to Krishna. I was twenty-eight when he gave this lecture. Srila Prabhupada has moved on. I hope to go to him, I say, but not exactly as I am now, or even as he was. I don't know what we will both be or even completely what I mean by that. "There will be no fear of the draft board in the spiritual world," he told us, no *guru-aparadha*, no doubt in Krishna. But only if you are ready, if you are thinking of him at the end of life, Krishna will award you an appropriate body.

How can we prove that consciousness is eternal? (The editors have titled this article, "The You That Doesn't Change.") Our body is changing, but our consciousness remains unchanged. It's true, I was conscious in 1968 when he gave this lecture, conscious before I met him, and I'm conscious now, breathing and alive. But how does this prove I'll be conscious after death? He quotes *na hanyate hanyamane sarire*: "Consciousness is eternal. It is not vanquished with the destruction of the temporary body." In other words, the example of the person growing old and remaining conscious supports the *Bhagavad-gita's* statement. But the real proof is *Sruti*. We learn by hearing from Krishna. Srila Prabhupada says that individual consciousness is a symptom of the soul.

Are my days of lecturing like this to uninitiated audiences over? It seems so. Swamiji was still going strong at seventy-two, and he continued lecturing to outsiders, at least occasionally, through 1977. I've already stopped due to the daily chronic headaches, and because with the headaches has come a change in temperament and mission. It's a different ISKCON now too "not so confident as it was in those days.

But we're still confident of the doctrine of transmigration, right? Even though we can't see it happening exactly? Yes, because we have heard from authority.

* * *

4:15 a.m.

We leave in fifteen minutes to travel the almost three hours south on the narrow Irish roads. The headlights will be on, and M. will speed. I'll probably lie down, but we'll talk too. Our breakfast will be taken into bumpy stomachs over the laps. I feel good about what life is at present and what's immediately ahead. September song again:

*And the days dwindle down
to a precious few, November,
December . . . And these few
precious days I'll spend with you.*

Sing the song of a tightening chest. Does one refuse to notice? roar on, Ford Econoline. He's getting less sharp pains but taking more meds. How does that figure out?

I like that *Quest* collection and to remember my quest for Prabhupada and Krishna consciousness through it. read and write. Write to the rain tinkling on the skylight in that room in Wicklow. I know I can't live forever, but I can still live while I'm alive "hearing about eternal life, writing in this life.

I prepared Radha and Govinda for travel. They seemed willing to be handled and to get on the road. Hare Krishna.

* * *

10:40 a.m.

Back in Wicklow. Immediate headache after the trip. Took an Esgic and rested in the peaceful dark. It went down within twenty minutes. Then I got up and joined the mad flurry to move everything back into its place in my rooms. For hours I couldn't find a completed letters tape. I looked again and again through the same bags. Finally found it.

My heart "pain" was noticeable during the entire drive here. Does it happen more in the morning? I'd like to ignore it. Think of it as a muscle ache and hope it will go away. Why don't you go away, pain? Well, while it's here, I'll write about it. Why should I be ashamed to do that? It's telling me that I'm going to die, perhaps sooner than I expected.

Just looked up and saw that Krishna had no flute or turban.

* * *

1:26 p.m.

The body is a repository of ills. The soul is the only thing that can surpass the blues. Otherwise, we won't make it.

Any welcome home? No, no. I heard that the water main was hit by a tractor.

I can't see clear to the hills out the screen window like I used to. Wonder why. Anyway, it doesn't matter. All that matters is pleasing Krishna

in B minor
in all flats and sharps
on this violin of a desk.
O Krishna, O
master,

you have trained me sufficiently
and I feel your separation.

Krishna

on a strong afternoon of diminishings.

O blessed September where I can get back into my routine in this house. M. went out to fix a petrol leak. The sky is bright for a change. New plants in the yard since we've been gone, and the art room looks inviting. But let me rest awhile first.

The particulars . . . I have no theme right now. Looking for the trail to the heart. While another man is in crisis, I say I'll accept any reduction in my status; I'm not attached to the externals, I ask only a roof over my head and food in my mouth.

For that I may have to beg.

I talk big, I know, but let's see what I actually do.

Hare Krishna. A bright blue sky in Southern Ireland. Who would have thought? But a beautiful September first.

* * *

3:40 p.m.

All day I've been on the verge of a right-eye twinge. The Esgic subdued it around 7:40 a.m., but it keeps blazing up like a fire that won't go out. I can't read or write much when I feel like this. I don't want it to get worse. To take two meds in one day doesn't seem right, but the pain is escalating. Madhu has a theory that we are allotted a certain amount of pain, and it has to come out in one way or another. That's karma. Maybe. I have changed my attitude toward my own pain in recent months. I want to take more control of my life, and not be constantly sidelined by pain. I presume there is no moral superiority in suffering but that an hour of practical devotional service is worth much more. Still, I can't medicate every headache. Pain is inevitable no matter what my attitude.

I'm screamish I'm
squeamish

I don't like to face pain.

One devotee expressed a more flexible or "liquid" attitude toward time, where you stop when you're in pain, and start when it's gone, and you don't think about the time you're losing. Everything gets done in its own time. That's another attitude.

* * *

4:07 p.m.

You had better not be forgetting Krishna. At any moment, the old ticker . . . Even Sonny rollins moved on. He was old, white-haired, and there was nothing left but bones and his old records (now CDs), nothing. His soul moved on to another body. Was he absorbed in improvising even as death arrived?

Smoky room, rainy day, in the van, the rain drops look like tear streaks. I sing inside, rain or shine.

Those old days when I would go to an eating and drinking place to hear the jazz on the juke. It could turn ugly. My toes were tapping, but the red-hot trumpet didn't guarantee . . . O Krishna, You allowed me to seek You, the Supreme.

September 2, 12:10 a.m.

From Srila Prabhupada's 1968 Boston lecture in *Quest*: he introduced consciousness as the symptom of the soul. Until we inquire into this, our lives are a waste of time.

"Oh, come on," one wants to say. Banish plump Jack and banish the world. Surely one can have fun regardless of whether or not he knows he's a soul? What about soul food, soul kissing, soul music?

But that "soul" traffic is focused on the temporary body. I *am* saying this; I'm repeating what Prabhupada and the *sastra* say. I accept it.

I wish I could be deeply absorbed in preaching to nondevotees. I seem to require to be personally nourished by reading, not only by presenting what the philosophy teaches.

Human life means answering the question, "Who am I?"

Let's go deeper. Not just zany, but that might help. Do something you haven't done before "not quite. At least don't imitate yourself.

We must ask who we are and why death and disease are forced upon us. When we get ill we think, "All right, I am diseased. Let me go to a doctor and get medicine." But from the innermost depths of the heart, we don't ever want to be diseased, We don't want to be dead. Why? Because we are eternal.

Prabhupada, you're right. We can't face the inevitability of our own deaths. We hope to prevent it from happening to us. Or we don't think about death at all. It's too abstract. *Why* do we have to die? *Why* is it forced upon us?"

Srila Prabhupada says, "If you purify your consciousness, you will end the process of transmigration from body to body." This present life is only a flash, a moment in our journey through the species. Srila Prabhupada is giving a lecture, so he moves quickly to his conclusion: Take to Krishna consciousness by the simple method of chanting the sixteen words of the Hare Krishna mantra. "Why don't you make an experiment?"

This was 1968, and the message was aimed at the students at BU, but only a dozen were present even while thousands teemed around campus. The message went unheard. So often when they see us, or when devotees chant or distribute books on campus, the students treat us as a nuisance.

When the consciousness becomes cleansed by chanting, we'll become joyful. I was rooting tremendously or terrifically, what's the word? Earnestly. I wanted Srila Prabhupada to convince them, I wanted to please him, and I wanted Krishna consciousness to win. At least our band of devotees had somehow become convinced.

Srila Prabhupada ended his talk and asked for questions. I remember a male student standing up in the cavernous chapel and asking, "How does Krishna consciousness relate to *advaita* philosophy?" He had come to hear the Swami's talk because he was a budding Mayavadi. Srila Prabhupada explained at length that Brahman realization is not the final understanding. Service to Krishna is essential. If we don't serve now, we'll have to come back, even from Brahman realization, because we won't have fulfilled ourselves. rivers

may appear to enter the ocean and become one, but the water gets thrown back on land. Srila Prabhupada defeated him.

Maybe I'll read *Quest* every day at midnight. We'll see. Whatever I do, time will fly. I'll answer letters, do my rumba shaking, and all that. Maybe I won't have to spend every day stunned by pain, dull as a potato. I plan to go out while it's still dark in the mornings to walk around the house on those boards while I chant. Prabhupada said if we cleanse the mind, we will become *brahma-bhuta prasannatma*. It's possible for me too. Live as if you live in Vrndavana. Be always on *parikrama*. Be helpful to others on the same path.

* * *

I dreamt I was visiting a Godbrother, who lived in Vrndavana. He was a painter and writer. He did beautiful work. I looked at one of his poems and saw a small grammatical mistake. I pointed it out to him, but he was offended. I realized immediately that I shouldn't have said anything. I had gone to see him, wanting to praise his work, but I had said the wrong thing. Then I said, "I think you're in a wonderful position living here in Vrndavana. It's so sensual with these *kadamba* trees, yet it engages only the spiritual senses. And you're writing and painting beautifully. If I've said something that disturbed your mind, please excuse me. I was just pointing out some nit-picky point to improve the presentation." My Godbrother, however, was still upset, and he became more aggressive. I couldn't hear everything he said, but it got as loud as a passing train, and I felt I had to scream over the noise. Then I began to yelp. I thought of Whitman's barbaric yelp. I realized that my writing was just a barbaric help, and I don't know grammar either. I know I don't.

I woke from the dream taking the lesson to mind my own business and not to criticize others. At the same time, I felt confident in my own barbaric yelp.

* * *

4:20 a.m.

Thinking how fine it was to be able to lecture to such a big audience on Radhastami, the same day Madhu sang in a hall of four hundred people and the judges deemed him the best Sean-nos singer in Ireland. Good times. Now move on. Hare Krishna. Hare Krishna. What have I got to say?

Slow-moving me has to be happy when the good feeling passes through his body. Prabhupada says, "You can't do anything," to those who say they are materially responsible. The only responsible thing is to surrender to Krishna and to execute devotional service.

In this house we have no mice. In this house we have no hot water. In this house I have come for peace, even while I'm in pain. This is the best place right now for a solitary man.

This is what I want: To be a Krishna conscious person who knows what is best for himself and who has a desire and knack for giving it to others. This way the words and thoughts can come and I don't have to be ashamed of them. Touch the miraculous medal.

Thought today of Margaret and Mr. Roland, my father's friends from the Navy. She was a big woman, and she bent down to be affectionate to little me but overwhelmed me.

She invaded my child's space. It was too much. Leave him alone, my father would say. He's shy.

Then I recalled the Halls, our next door neighbors on 76th Street in Queens. They moved back to Maine after the war. We visited them there once. I still remember climbing a hill while my mother walked back and forth in the yard carrying a white flag, so we could see where the Hall's house was from the hilltop.

Now remember Sidney Bechet blowing his horn. He was a happy swinger, although so troubled in other ways. Hail Sidney, the best of Sidneys and Chets and Cachets and bombs and palms
and think of the rivers of blood
flowing through mighty Vedic wars.

We can't figure it out, but Prabhupada says this life, of which we make so much, is just a flash on a long journey for the soul. Where does it end? Where is liberation? When will we be able to transcend the human self and reach the *prayojana* of Krishna consciousness? Don't abandon old ISKCON, at least not now.

* * *

These hours in the morning may be all you'll get scot free. Hare Krishna. I'll be back though, want to hear what Narada said to Dhruva and how I may apply it. We heard some more of *The Love Locket* by Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura, the ultimate secrets of Radha's love revealed to the demigoddess who is actually Krishna in disguise. I can't repeat it here.

Krishna conscious franchise, practice it at home. You get permission from the guru and from the Lord in your heart. read those scriptures, keep imbibing. Ah, I'm happy about that. I scratch only the surface but I don't give up. Then you'll get some reward. Learn to live with the body and the mind. Life is interesting, isn't it? You wonder what will happen next.

The blessing hand of Radharani and of Lord Caitanya, of Laksmi and Sita. Great sages can also bless. I showed them the *mudra* for knowledge-giving and blessing. We can receive Srimati Radharani's benediction, "but," I said, "we ourselves cannot give anyone blessings. Radha's blessing . . ." I said that especially for the guests. I wanted them to look at the *murtis* of Krishna and Radha and not be dull or think They were only decorated statues. Radha holds a *tulasi* garland and stands close to Her Lord because She is the best. Learn from Her and become a devotee of Her devotee.

Once there was a man who ate sixty bananas because he was an incarnation of Hanuman.

Once there was a fellow who had a Band-aid in his pocket.

Once a man played a Jew's harp.

Once a fellow adumbrated his own version. He said the only responsibility one has is to be Krishna conscious, and for this we may take on all related duties, such as travel or caring for children.

But there's a limit. Some things are forbidden.

But you get my point "there can be Krishna conscious things.

Now I want to go check on the *Pada-yatra* book with its two-week fictional theme. EJW doesn't have anything like that but will presumably go on for as long as I live. Not every day for eternity or in Brahma's life, don't worry. Still, I hope the one big book of my life can be continued by others, because it is a footnote to the super-comprehensive experience of trying to apply the *Bhagavatam's* teachings in this age. After all, language is for praising Lord Hari and for helping ourselves understand who we are and why we are suffering.

Then finding the solution.

It's consciousness and
cleaning the mind by
chanting God's names.

It's relationship with the Supreme,
a *jiva's* true fulfillment.

The Lord promises that He is available in the simple chanting of His names. He will reveal that truth more when we chant with attention and love.

* * *

5:35 a.m.

I was out walking in night-dark at 5:10 a.m. "walked around the house, which is not quite as good as swinging my arms down the main road to Dublin under a sky embracing the hills, over the little bridge, and past the creek. Not that same rhythm. This felt more like the kind of walking they do in a prison yard, round and round a small space. It can make you just as tired, however.

New flowers, and I can't assimilate all their names, although Hare Krishna dasi has labeled each one and given me their descriptions on index cards alphabetized and in a box.

Here is saxifrage, here asphodel, that "greeny flower," and look, here's a bamboo sapling and some marigolds.

And here's the same old, the new scandal, the riot. Another man's shadow broke out from hiding. We yearn to be with God. Like busy bees, we wish to become intoxicated by the pollen-rich flower of Krishna consciousness.

No, this is not a *pada-yatra* but a settling in. I've already been away and have now returned to rediscover my beloved routine. That's the story "that and trying to find Krishna consciousness in this world, small as it is.

"Wow, I'm tired," said big Sid. He wanted to rest, because he'd been up since midnight shucking corn for the elephant Kula, who would now die by Krishna's hand. Better believe it. That elephant and his keep were fortunate that they weren't killed by Kamsa but by Krishna, and saved.

* * *

9:20 a.m.

The dull ache over the top of my head needn't prevent me from having a cheerful, grateful heart and moving my pen. But it takes so much effort to crack through that dull

pain. I'll have to get serious to do it. What do I have to say that is my own impression of struggle in Krishna consciousness?

I'd like to be reading *Bhagavatam* now, sitting upright in this chair and making free-association notes as I read. But I'm moments away from right-eye pain. Or I could read the *Pada-yatra* manuscript, Pilot pen poised to enter any correction or change. I read, alert, and appreciate the writing. I don't want to be disappointed by it. I'm more than halfway through now, so it would be nice to finish it. But perhaps it too will act as a pain trigger.

* * *

I heard that a Godbrother is suing the BBT. Another Godbrother is going through changes from worse to better (they say). The woods resound with the holy name. The conference hall . . . Do you see why I write about myself? Because: (1) it's too much to write about the others in my life (they'd freak out); and (2) I have a vocation to write.

Why don't I write about Krishna, you ask? He won't object to praise, and He certainly should be the object of all my endeavors.

Yes, well, that's what I'm doing
but in this way
in sickness and in health.

And I feel I have to read scripture to engage in direct *hari-katha*. Krishna is the source of everything. When you've gone down the drain, you can still think of Krishna, but it may be harder. Or your thoughts might be as directly related to Vrndavana. Instead, you make a list of survival techniques and escape routes, then add Krishna on as a prefix or an affix. But high-grade *hari-katha* is in the spiritual energy, and for that you need to be up.

Anyway, start a list with this in mind "just phrases "

- (1) From the tip of your pen (and now completed) came a mesmerized ant.
- (2) On the Eve of Hallow, Bhaktivinoda Thakura's day was recalled by the *sannyasi*.
- (3) Underwear, outer wear, Gap and Fruit-of-the-Loom, all merged and weathered.
- (4) Spot-life in soul's journal was offered for breakfast.
- (5) Zing-a-ling. With trepidation he ordered.
- (6) The lecturer spoke on Christianity and Buddhism and you said, "What about Krishna?" But better they not discuss Him in their relative and "abyss-of-silence" way.
- (7) Down, down into the well. Please save me.
- (8) Zinc and alloys. We have unalloyed love of God.
- (9) If *Pada-yatra* has a tight but brief theme, and EJW has a theme and structure for as long as you live, and if everything fits nicely within this book, then?
- (10) You self-advertise. And shout.

* * *

12:17 p.m.

Another list of things related to Krishna by affix or prefix ("These too reside in Him for better or worse as we humans see it") "

- (1) Perimeter and tired of words like paradigm shift.

(2) Quest for rice. "rice bags and clothes hangers" "bum monks, the criminals of the religion.

(3) What you read, your head aches.

(4) Three little words, "I love you."

(5) Srila Prabhupada said responsibility is summed up like this: "You have the human life, so use it to know your relationship with God." YogeSvara dasa repeated this sentence on a walk in Paris in 1975.

(6) We repeat what the master says. So many things to say and do. Tired of it sometimes. But we have to *hang in there*.

(7) Ten more minutes before lunch, but lunch is usually fifteen minutes late.

(8) Today is EkadaSi.

(9) Achin' and moanin' and reaching for the words to honor my Lord.

(10) The strict Krishna conscious *sampradaya* is not going to appear in a "Sounds True" catalogue or a New Age bookstore. Doesn't seem so, anyway. All right, distribute the mercy wherever you can "the Krishna conscious congregation. Bless the preachers for expanding it.

(11) They read Srila Prabhupada's books. I do too "not that I read them only in the past.

(12) Today may be my last. Gladiolas in yard won't last long, but some of those new saplings "bamboo, evergreen, etc. "could outlast me. No, I don't die "this present combination, Steve is just a flash on an onward journey.

(13) "You devotees die too," someone said to Prabhupada. He replied, "We die for the last time, then go to Krishna for eternal life."

* * *

2:40 p.m.

There are things I'd do if I were clear now. I'd jump into my jumpsuit and paint in the art room, I'd play a Prabhupada *bhajana* and make wide strokes with my arm. Maybe the clouds will break. Can I read just a little and see how it goes?

The 1977 edition of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, Fourth Canto, Part One, eighth chapter is called, "Dhruva Maharaja Leaves Home." I have a volume with gold-gilt pages, now faded and dusty. It also has a yellow ribbon to serve as a place marker. I got this privilege copy because I was on the Library party and had an inside contact at the Los Angeles BBT. They knew I liked Prabhupada's books.

Dhruva and his mother, Suniti, lamented. "But mere lamentation is useless "one should find out the means to mitigate one's lamentation." (*Bhag.* 4.8.24, purport) Suniti instructed her five-year-old son to worship Adhoksaja, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. To be successful in any attempt, we have to undergo austerity while remaining dependent on the Lord's mercy. Suniti gave as examples Brahma and Svayambhuva Manu, who both succeeded by worshiping and satisfying the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Go on doing your duty and think of Krishna. Serve Him by your occupation. Srila Prabhupada paraphrases Krishna's instruction to Arjuna: "Go on fighting, but keep Me in your mind," and queen Suniti's advice to her son: I am not able to do anything for you,

"but Krishna is so kind to His devotees that if you go to Him, then the combined kindness of millions of mothers like me will be surpassed by His affectionate and tender dealings." (*Bhag.* 4.8.22, purport)

* * *

4:45 p.m.

Despite the head vise, I painted six large paintings full of splash and dab. I layered all kinds of colors from pink to brown to bright blue to yellow, and gradually forms appeared. I then recorded a purport from our straight and narrow way, asserting it as the best and most necessary yearning for Krishna consciousness while hoping to catch someone's attention.

Now what? How to push on for two more hours of cat and mouse? Heard patter. It sounded like small feet running on a floor or the roof. Raindrops on the skylight. Alone in the house.

* * *

5:55 p.m.

Choose what clothes They'll wear tomorrow and ignore the pain. Imagine you're in bed dreaming you'll go to Goloka. Imagine you got some insight. Then you live it out through a wonderfully ordinary routine. Imagine we were all doing that and making mutual progress. Hare Krishna.

There was a funeral in the family, so Desmond Fox, the farmer who owns the adjoining land, stopped his digging. Maybe he'll start again tomorrow. There's a big drain pipe parked against our wall along with two tractors. They have to fix the broken water main. Just thought I'd tell you.

Krishna in "Heaven" and we here serving Him. But if we do it right, then being here is the same as being there; we are in Vrndavana consciousness.

September 3, 12:05 a.m.

Here's a lecture from *Quest*. This one's in Philadelphia, July 1975 on the first chapter of the Sixth Canto. It's about the Visnudutas arriving upon hearing Ajamila chant the holy name. He "had certainly chanted without offense because he chanted in complete anxiety."

We hear this and think of ourselves. We are not as sinful as Ajamila, at least not in the way we are living now, but perhaps we don't chant as offenselessly as he did. He chanted at the very end of his life. If one is a religious man but somehow can't call out to God . . . Srila Prabhupada assures us, "If you practice chanting Hare Krishna during your lifetime, naturally at the last moment of your life you will be inclined to chant Hare Krishna."

What is chanting and what does it do? When we recite God's names, it cleanses the core of our hearts so that we can understand who we are, what our duty is, and who and what is God. Srila Prabhupada says the conditioned soul is absorbed in maintaining his body or studying its make-up, but right vision means to know that we are not the body.

Instead of studying the body, we should use the body to achieve self-realization. It is a vehicle we can use to reach a particular destination, just as we would use a car.

My vehicle has grown old. When that happens to us, it's natural to worry a little more about them. What if they break down? What if they never recover? When we are not grounded completely in the body, we attach ourselves to each passing thought.

As devotees, we have the duty to consume all experience in the fire of Krishna consciousness. Nature is God's agent. She made these vehicles because we wanted them and we had the karma to fulfill. "The human body is a very good machine, and it is very rare," Srila Prabhupada lectured to a packed temple room. Ravindra-svarupa Prabhu was the temple president at that time. I wasn't there.

What do I want to say? Am I using my human body properly? We have to ask ourselves that question.

I heard Madhu return with the van around 10:30 last night. He came in briefly, then went to his annex. Maybe he left the mail downstairs, but so far I have refrained from going down to see, because this hour is special. But I know I can only stay for so long thinking and writing and reading about how my human body is meant to be my vehicle. It's a human boat. Take advantage of the breeze. "The guru is the good captain who can steer the boat. He is giving instructions, 'Sail like this, turn quickly this way, now that way.'"

Prabhupada attacks scientists who study the human machine but don't know how to use it to stop death. Most of us live with the body and try to enjoy it. It breaks at death and nature gives us a new machine. "So your problem is to stop this repetition of birth, old age, disease and death." This is the all-important Vedic message. It's revolutionary. But it's rejected by most people these days. We Krishna conscious people have to keep it alive in us.

* * *

4:24 a.m.

A BTG magazine in the mail. Many good articles by my Godbrothers on lively topics and ways of presenting Krishna consciousness. I usually like to rush through the magazine so I can get back to work. It will be harder to do so with these articles.

So many goodies and items to contend with in life. My *japa* time today was a holding back from doing things that seemed more interesting or important than chanting. I held back from doing them physically, but didn't give my heart to praying the holy name. Is there some devout person who can help me?

It was wonderful to be dressing Radha-Govinda just now while listening to our reading of *Lock Locket*. Radha told secrets about Her love for Krishna and how They are ultimately always happy and never separated because They are one soul.

Then the *devi* asked that Radha make Krishna appear immediately before her. Radha obliged the *devi* by meditating upon Him. Then prankish Krishna appeared and was reprimanded by Lalita for His antics. Yes, it was nice dressing Them in that cream outfit brought from Vrndavana and placing necklaces on Radha's neck.

Anyway, now let me get back to BTG, then tackle the mail.

One article says nuclear wars are boring. But hell, if we were *in* one of them, I doubt we'd be able to say, "Oh, materially it means nothing, because the body is just a pile of chemicals. There's nothing to fear spiritually because we never die. I'm tired of this world anyway." Yeah, we can say that now "quite easily" but when our skin was being scorched, us and millions of others, we would probably sing a different tune.

That old jazz man didn't know nothin' about nothin'. He was just an ordinary man. So I can't enlist him in the cause of the Absolute. When he tooted his horn, it seemed he was "channeling." Now I realize that we are *all* channeling from God in the heart, and the artists who pour forth the beauty and pathos, the feeling "if only they could have been linked to Krishna. If only I could be linked to Krishna.

* * *

This is the day after EkadaSi, so I'm going to cut my hair. I dreamt of something last night, but no longer remember what. Saw a picture of someone with longer hair than I would have expected. I thought *sannyasis* shaved their heads. Well, at least I do. And I wear a rough *khadi dhoti* and unpolished fingers, determined to keep simple and to hear as many *Bhagavatam* lectures as possible.

A friend wrote to say he'd like to buy M. a Celtic harp, but not if M. is going to get one on his own. Okay, I'll let you know. I have a little life and I open it. It's no *Love Locket* like the one Srimati Radhika has. It's just a trapped door. Hare Krishna. Puff and sigh.

How did it go with you last night, man?

Oh, okay. While the world was doing its thing, I bowed out from seven to midnight. I couldn't sleep the whole time, but remained more or less peaceful in bed while the stars sailed by in their orbits. I fell in and out of the dream state.

I wrote to a friend that I was doing all right in this house and my attempt for seclusion, but that there have been "some breaches in the privacy." He wrote back asking why I don't post a No Trespassing sign on my door. He tried it at his place and he said it helped. But I don't want to do anything like that. It would be too aggressive a stance in an area like this. They'll think I'm a misanthrope. Anyway, it's not the nondevotees who are breaching my privacy but the devotees. Devotees would either ignore such a sign or be put off by it.

Where is that young fellow who received so many letters from Srila Prabhupada? He seemed so eager to serve and preach. Srila Prabhupada says the preacher is very dear to Krishna because he takes risks. He's the most responsible person to give the world what it desperately needs. But Srila Prabhupada also said people have no intelligence to understand God. He felt this in his own preaching. The teacher's task is thankless. He simply has to go on trying.

* * *

5:45 a.m.

I haven't been going outside the wall that stands around this house. Instead, I've been walking around the house on the wooden boards, swinging my right arm and flashing a light in my left.

Bach often improvised when he wrote. He explored the range of the cello in his solo cello suites, letting the music run up and down. And what did they do with his music? Was it played only as background to people's chatter? Did they dance to it? He glanced at his composed pieces, then played them as he liked at any given time. Not so unlike Thelonius Monk in that respect.

Just imagine you own a bookstore or a coffee shop and are playing stately cello solos over the system. Imagine you go out on the street and get mugged. The mugger leaves you unconscious on the ground. You think of Krishna as the muggers footsteps fade.

Imagine that BTG's writers all started writing their articles by springboarding off something in a nondevotee magazine? Imagine no one ever saying what they actually think "what they actually go through? Who will we help? We want only to hear the clever stuff told from whatever persona is apropos. But where is the small voice of truth? I am tired of this bobby-socks channeling of hungry ghosts, thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

Play the cello
Rocky Marciano's hairy chest
sweating, boxing trunks slung
low. He got punched but
won anyway and we were glad
so glad watching
in our home "a white man champ.

* * *

O rockie, O Dad, you were
like rockie. Good-bye and Hare
Krishna chanted fist over
marbled mouth.
No soul detectable anywhere..

* * *

They have a column called "Departures"
where the recent dead are
mentioned against a gray background design.
I won't let the jargon get worse "I won't *let* it.

Just be whoever you are and analyze your own symptoms. Read your master's books and chant Hare Krishna. The marigolds are still blooming, and that farmer has a dead heart.

* * *

8:37 a.m.

Suniti repeatedly advised her young son to take shelter of the Supreme Lord through devotional service. Dhruva was determined to reach his objective through Lord Visnu, so he left his father's house and went to find the Supreme Lord in the forest. "To the

Gaudiya Vaisnava this forest is the forest of Vrnda, or Vrndavana. If one takes shelter of Vrndavana under VrndavaneSvari, Srimati radharani, certainly all the problems of his life are solved very easily." (*Bhag.* 4.8.24, purport)

Am I lonely? I tell myself that some loneliness is all right; it's an indication of the serious desert practice of seeking God. Even if any loneliness I may feel is less than that, it's the price I pay for the life I lead. I tolerate it and don't seek to rid myself of it. I especially don't want a woman, or even a male secretary who is not in tune with me. Ultimately, I'd prefer to dovetail any loneliness in writing. That's positive creation. For example, I like to paint when the house is empty. It's a such a private celebration that I don't seem inclined to do it when M. is coming in and out.

Sometimes devotees wonder why I turn to *Srimad-Bhagavatam* when I could be working on relationships. Am I hiding from reality by sticking my head in an ancient scripture? Even if I am, no loss.

The great sage Narada "overheard all this news" and was struck with wonder. He approached Dhruva and touched his head. Srila Prabhupada states, "Because of Dhruva Maharaja's determination, Krishna, the Supersoul, immediately sent His representative, Narada, to initiate him." (*Bhag.* 4.8.25, purport) At first Narada advised the boy to return home and not to feel insulted by what his stepmother had said. He spoke to him as one would speak to a child. But if the five-year-old Dhruva was so emotionally developed to have taken such offense at the insult, Narada told him that he should also be accept that honor and dishonor come from our past activities. "The process of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very wonderful. One who is intelligent should accept that process and be satisfied with whatever comes, favorable or unfavorable, by His supreme will." (*Bhag.* 4.8.29) Always be satisfied, and depend on the Lord's mercy.

* * *

10:10 a.m.

A Godbrother writes that "like a dog in China who feels something in his body before an earthquake occurs," he feels big changes are about to happen in the outer world. Things are already cracking and changing in ISKCON, but we are always assured that we may think of Krishna, find like-minded association, and ultimately, look forward to eternal life. But what if the outer world suddenly were to slam down on us? He said he's building a temple in his heart to prepare for such an eventuality.

I don't have the oomph to answer the mail right now. I'll do them one by one throughout the day. I don't like to go ahead and answer it when my energy is low; I find myself saying things that are not my best.

What did that other brother write about? Oh, about *guru-tattva*, ISKCON, the GBC, etc. He calls me a "regular guru guy . . . ne'er a pretender nor a proxy be." He favors something like what he says exists in Udupi, South India, where all Madhvitites accept Madhvacarya as their founder and *Siksa-guru*. "If a guru has problems, the disciples' *Sraddha* remains intact because its foundation lies in the *Siksa* of the *uttama-adhikari* founder-*acarya*. That Prabhupada is our founder-*acarya* is written on all ISKCON's books, and if were also in everyone's heart, how much grief we could spare our members."

What road am I wandering down? How long does it go and how did I get here? I know I didn't choose it alone. I went along with others. We made group mistakes. Since finding myself on that road, I have sat down alone and tried to figure things out.

He says I'm a regular guru, as Srila Prabhupada said. What about *uttama*? What about all the falldowns our society has suffered? I say, "You guys (and women) decide what you want to do and I'll adjust to it. I have all these disciples and friends, and if you want to redefine who we are together, go ahead. I'm not in a mood to debate. I don't know how much we can change anyway."

* * *

3:32 p.m.

I say I'd like to write more, find more the feeling of being inside a book rather than writing a part-time collection of jottings throughout the day, but there seem to be so many interruptions "pain, mail, ISKCON's crises and rumors, the state of the world, what M. and others do and how it enters or interferes in my life. But maybe the interruptions are part of my writing. I can't stop them. Therefore, the more I write and absorb or flow with the so-called interruptions, the better it will be. It requires more commitment and less annoyance. Let me become tolerant and mellow.

Feeling attacked by the gremlin, because I just read John Hollander's editor's introduction to *The Best American Poetry 1998*. Hollander is a Yale professor, and I found most of what he said high-falutin' "and a personal threat. He put down easy-going free-verse by those who write of themselves and not with a fictive persona. He says that fictive persona is necessary for the best poetry. He also said that poetry should never serve a canon, like a religion.

Canonical bad poetry of the past forty years has included a good deal of naively literal first-person narrative vignette that seem to derive from the misconstruction of this fundamental trope. It is as if the contemporary equivalent of rhymed jingle were sit-down comic routines for the benefit of friends. The speakers of these hopelessly sincere but rarely authentic poems were always the poets themselves, rather than some fictional personae. The out-moded fashion of "confessional" poetry depended for its somewhat sensational appeal on a kind of prurient interest, particularly among readers who knew little of the devious ways by which poetry manages to get straight to its points . . . A travesty of poetry can occur when the immediate interest or any institutionalized moral, political, or sentimental agenda make their unrelenting claims on the poetry's fictiveness.

(Introduction, pp. 16 - 17)

I'm not even sure who he's talking about here, but it seems clear that he would see a Hare Krishna monk as a writer of naive, dogmatic jingles. Let me throw off his words. I don't count in their world, but they needn't count in mine either.

Interruptions. Threats. (There are threats and rumors of demons even in the spiritual world.) I'm trying to trick the reader into accepting why I write without a more noble structure and story line, without the absolute always in front of me, and without more hard work on my part "is that what I'm trying to do?

O Krishna, you have saved me from having to beg professors for A's or publishers for mercy. Hare Krishna.

M. is supposed to leave at 4:00. I subdued a twinge with feverfew. I may go down and swim in the art room when the house empties out. That's another naive realm, with only me and the artifacts of myself, my right arm and the Krishna conscious tag-ons, but I have given myself permission to do it in service.

* * *

5:30 p.m.

After one day of writing, you find you can write for another one.

Oh boy, oh man,
you gotta be
kidding.

When you fade out they'll know
what a treasure house of tribulations
this body was
and how easily you forgot it,
a monk in a gray-cement house
surrounded by a hall wall "prison wall?
The arch is cracked
and I can always do
better than that.

What fictive persona to write my poems?
Be sober with those candles, and feel your guts
spill on the page
a real
Religious
man.

Bobby Timmons "remember him? He's from the old days, when we were young and hung out in the streets or the bookstores. Timid even then, we were cowards walking from street lamp to street lamp, little money in our pockets.

Or was I someone else? A fictive person who took little women to movies, a man without headaches, an early heart attack instead?

Did I need first-aid, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation? Did Amos and Andy save me? Give me some of that old-time religion.

The washing machine just broke my reverie, but it won't distract me from getting to the bottom of this page.

I talked it over with a friend and decided to work with two meds instead of three. Three is too many. It's complicated. But at least I can let myself be a little more open to natural pain. I've lost my will to face it. Anyway, it won't kill me. And if I get less time to write or paint, still, I'll find a way. It is Krishna who gives time.

September 4, 12:03 a.m.

There are innumerable living beings and I am one of them. (A humbling thought. It's mad to believe we're the best.) "But above these innumerable living entities is one prime living entity, God." (Lecture, Philadelphia., July 1975, recorded in *The Quest For Liberation*, p. 23)

Srila Prabhupada proves why God has a form. "We are all children, and the supreme Father maintains us." I'd like to develop my relationship with this supreme Father. We are like children who want toys. God is supplying. "But He doesn't want to do that." He wants us to grow up and use our human bodies to inquire into the Absolute Truth.

We've been misled by material education into studying the body as the all-in-all, but "God very much appreciates it when we use our tongue and mouth to chant His holy name . . . Because the name of God is not different from God Himself, as soon as you chant Hare Krishna you are in touch with Him."

Srila Prabhupada says that Ajamila chanted out of fear or "good luck." Maybe my motive is mixed with fear. It's not yet pure love, that I know, because I still chant without pure attention, which is one of the offenses. Because of indifference, laziness, I am still attracted to material things. On my own terms I ask Krishna to please increase my attraction for chanting. To do so, He will probably have to smash my material attachments. I ask Him to be gentle. That's a sign that I'm not really ready to undergo the effort to tear them up myself. Still, I ask for His mercy. Sounds like I want spiritual sense gratification.

O Krishna, please find whatever sincerity exists in me and help me to magnify it. I'm one of innumerable beings, and I'll spread the glories of Your name even now.

Looking at another lecture in *Quest*. It's called "The Sense to Know God." This is a book of articles on God realization. Let's hope people take to it. It's not Western, Christian, or Islam, yet it's written for all those who see themselves by those designations "for anyone who can hear with an open mind. This lecture was given in Hamburg, Germany, in 1969, when I was in Boston. He began by quoting a verse from *Visnu Purana: visnu Sakti parah proktah*. Suddenly, my mind went blank. It refuses to read on, because I've heard this so many times. I tried a second time, but again my mind glanced off to something else. Then a third attempt and I stick. There's one spiritual energy, but it divides into three: internal, *jivas*, and matter.

I seem more distracted this morning than usual. Lectures seem harder to read than pages of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, which are divided into verses and purports and thus provide the reader with natural breaks.

Tried again. Prabhupada is giving the example of the sun and the sunshine to prove *acintya-bedabeda*. The point is simple enough: We are spiritually one in quality with God, although God is infinite and we are tiny. We can't know God by ordinary sense perception. *Atah Sri Krishna namadi, na bhaved grahyam indriyaih*. Can't understand His name or form with our senses. Then how? *Sevon mukhi hi jivadau*: "When we render transcendental loving service to the Lord with our senses, beginning with the tongue, the Lord gradually reveals Himself." .

You also control the tongue by not eating meat. "So much suffering is caused by the uncontrolled tongue."

Mudhas deride Krishna as an ordinary man, but He is absolute. "Therefore, as soon as your tongue touches the holy name of Krishna, you are associating with Krishna. . . . just imagine how purified you will become simply by this chanting process."

* * *

4:33 a.m.

I am serious, and you had better believe it too. It's the way they go at it, those stomping blues people way back in the 1930s. They knew something. Where was Krishna consciousness then? It was on the way to these shores. I am from the transcendental land. I sometimes doubt if I'm a devotee at all. Do I really believe in the tenets of the philosophy? If not, what am I doing here pretending? It's seem I have . . .

Come on, don't just stand there, say something.

I'd hang on anyway, for the sake of my disciples.

You mean even if you (like Matthew Fox) had moved on beyond not only the institution but the *sampradaya*?

Yes, I would stand like a scarecrow and chase away birds. I wouldn't want to be a traitor. I wouldn't want to be another dead guru before I actually died. In fact, Krishna might kill me off so it wouldn't happen. But rather than make myself a target, I had better go digging and scraping for His mercy. We heard how Akrura reached Vrndavana's border and fell from his chariot to the ground. I would do something like that. I would read the books and do whatever is needed to get back my original consciousness as the Swami revived it. I would beg, "Lord, give me the taste of the faith I once knew." It would come to me, because Krishna is kind.

Some might say that the best way to do this is to never hear or read anything other than my spiritual master's books. They would say that all contamination is coming from outside. Therefore, one should fix oneself in his books. I don't think, however, that I can blame anyone else. I have to touch the world because I'm still part of it, and it is up to me to dovetail it.

The morning is still black out there. I have to find a way to keep alive. The rain won't stop me from going out into the dark. The cold won't stop me either. It's September and I have my songs. I may not know assonance from dissonance, but I am still writing. The water is not dirty, he said. It's just air getting into it.

And she handed me some data on what it might mean if I have pain in my chest. It might be a heart attack, in which case I had better get a move on to the hospital. Or, it could be gas caused by the meds. It could be *many* things. An actual heart attack is caused by not enough oxygen getting to the heart, and that is due to the arteries closing. If it feels like an elephant sitting on your heart, that's the symptom of a heart attack. If it gets worse, or if when I exercise it hurts, and so on, I should face the fact that I have a mortal disease.

I already knew that. It's called a material body. I *know*.

Still, I'm trying to get as much out of this body as possible. I realize I think I might outlive my *anarthas* and make solid progress toward the spiritual world, but as I already mentioned, Krishna is in control. He might want to get me out of here as soon as possible, before I cause trouble. I have no *plans* to cause trouble, but who knows? And

who knows? Perhaps it's not me that will be causing trouble. Perhaps He wants to spare me from worse goings-on than we have already experienced.

I'm attached to my life because it's all I know, all I remember. How to become truly attached to Krishna? How to know only Him?

* * *

Blessed are those who have been allowed to serve Prabhupada in this movement. Yes, the movement is falling apart, but blessed are those who try to save it, whether they be conservative or liberal. We're interested in love.

Daddy Warbucks held his cigar
and Orphan Annie quoted Pindar the Elder
and Mao Tse Tung tried
to wipe out Buddhism but
in the mountains monks
hid the jewels of scripture. Now
in Kali-yuga, Krishna consciousness
is being spread widely and even
though some may criticize
somehow it goes on
and people learn to chant the name.
We want them to chant and to understand
what our spiritual master gave, his presentation
which helped us come close to the truth
of the personal Krishna.
Our founder-*acarya*. Yes, I am for him
but to make it true, I must personally go "
and I'm doing it "to hear from him
and his followers.
Lay that pistol down, man.
Lay that pistol down.

* * *

5:40 a.m.

Before you fall plumb asleep, please tell us how the walk went.

Okay, I was out walking around the house, chanting Cheerio mantras. The sky filled with first the faintest sign of the end of night, then lighter. I saw headlights in the distance.

Dreamt a Godbrother grew out his hair and preached by traveling with a circus. I was afraid his animals might stay behind after he left. Gorillas were dotting the landscape, and there was plenty of dung in the fields from the other animals. What would the neighbors think?

Oh boy, I could lie on the floor and fall asleep in a minute. Then I'd see tigers and little boys and channeling and tunneling and quartering. I'd see dark, then wake up.

* * *

8:47 a.m.

Narada was testing Dhruva's determination. Srila Prabhupada writes that for a sincere person, devotional service is easy. It may also be easier to barely hang on than to execute *bhakti* with great determination aimed at achieving the goal.

Narada speaks and I look on patiently. It happened long, long ago "a true story about a great hero. What tidbit can I apply? As Dhruva was determined, I must be determined.

Yes, but what's my reality? If Narada were to tell me, "My dear boy, better you go home. What you are trying is too difficult. Just accept whatever has happened," I may say, "Okay, I *thought* it was too hard. Now you've confirmed it."

Rain tinkling and the wind so strong I can hear it buffeting against the house. A rough day for the plants. Determined? What if the pain increased?

At first, Dhruva thought that if he had material desires, he was excluded from following spiritual instructions. Actually, everyone is allowed to worship the Lord. "This is the essential instruction from the life of Dhruva Maharaja." (*Bhag.* 6.8.35, purport)

Today we will fast until lunch for Bhaktivinoda Thakura's appearance. I was married on this day in 1968. Bhaktivinoda Thakura was a liberal teacher. He was determined and had great capacity. He wanted Lord Caitanya's pure message distributed widely. In his day, he had to overcome the prejudice that Vaisnavism was an excuse for having sex in the name of religion.

Dhruva admitted that his main desire was to become king and thus overcome the sharp words of his stepmother, who had said he was unworthy. That was why he had come to the forest to seek God. If Narada couldn't teach how to reach his goal, Dhruva wasn't interested in any other practice he might prescribe. Dhruva's desire for a kingdom greater than Brahma's was extraordinary, but he was confident that Narada could fulfill his desire. Our desire "to go back to Godhead" is a better and more rare desire than Dhruva's material one, but we can have faith that Prabhupada is able to direct us toward its fulfillment. Still, we lack Dhruva's incredible determination. We are weak and slow in this age. How can we expect to go where we want to go?

Narada told Dhruva, "The instruction given by your mother, Suniti, to follow the path of devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is just suitable for you. You should therefore completely absorb yourself in the devotional service of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 4.8.40) Narada did not merely hand over the benediction to Dhruva, although he could have. rather, he engaged him in proper devotional service. The disciple has to undergo devotional discipline in order to get the desired result.

* * *

9:54 a.m.

Do you remember this typing machine? You left it behind when you went on your holidays. You used to pound it when you were here last time, typing up to twenty pages a day. I no longer aspire for that. I'm spending more time painting now.

And I'm frustrated that Madhu doesn't do the little chores I ask of him. I have to ask for everything several times, and even then they don't always get done. I realize my

thinking is petty. Better not to get worked up about this. Also, it's probably better not to discuss it with him. I have already discussed it with him many times. What would be the value in discussing it again? He's simply acting according to his own desire. Yet I can't really accept it, since our relationship is based on a pact. His behavior has become an irritation, like a pebble in my shoe. It makes me feel dissatisfied with him, and I have withdrawn from him. That's what is making me feel lonely.

All right, then turn to writing and don't expect that things will improve. Don't expect anything from him. Perhaps this is a seed to change beginning to sprout. It may be Krishna's way of not letting me become too attached to living with this one person.

Krishna is always working somehow. The main thing is to keep serving.

Let me not waste time. I am not allowed to write poems, the professor said, unless I enter the discipline of learning how cunning and indirect they should be. Poems are not (I mean good and noble poems) just talking to friends. Hare Krishna.

Then I don't write poems, or at least I won't call them such. I'll call them simply "divided lines." I toss them off while being carried on the current of life. Anyway, I like some of them.

Yeah, it's 10 a.m. and in an hour, things will pick up where I have one duty after another up until lunch. I feel pain because my sonnet is empty-hearted. I want to feel love. In the *Philokalia*, they speak about a burning sensation in the heart as a result of chanting the Jesus prayer. Hey, maybe that's what's happening to me with my chest pain! If someone praises me as stalwart, as enduring for all these years, as a good fellow for not falling down "I know my own version "I can't claim that these qualities are mine. rather, I float along like a Popsicle stick in the gutter. Only my spiritual master's instructions hold me up. Me and Stuart Little riding the raft.

I read in a dream record in an EJW that I should not claim that I am the only voice who knows the truth from God. Make your singular contribution within the association of devotees. Stay friendly if they will let you remain at a distance. Hare Krishna. I cannot bite any hard fruits. I have to have them cut up for me. That's old age, for you.

Oh, you comic. We don't believe you are so soft. You just have it so easy. You can't even crank out a few letters. They bleed your consciousness. You think about answering them and eventually work up the determination to actually say something. Just when I empty the file, a new batch of mail floats in. Much of what they say to me needn't really be said. So many extra words. I wish we could get down to the bare-bones essential.

Crank out, master gear shift crankcase. The mechanic talks jargon and so does a Hare Krishna. He says "*bhava*" and "down-shift." He says "mission statement" and "barbecue." (Barbecue?) He says he has to serve his spiritual master in the right *bhava*, and uses words like *vaidhi* and *tapasya*. What do all these foreign words mean? What is a spiritual master and what is *tapasya*? What is *Bhagavad-gita*, and any way, how do you pronounce it?

* * *

5:50 p.m., Night Notes

I pushed myself to paint this afternoon despite the twinge. Had taken two feverfews in the morning, but the twinge returned. After painting, it flared up again. I took an Esgic

and lay back, let my limbs get heavy, and listened to the silence. I gave those paintings my love. I don't mind having to pay the pain price now for an hour in the art room.

September 5, 12:05 a.m.

Perfection can come from two simple things if we make this determined vow: "I shall not allow my tongue to taste anything not offered to Krishna and shall always engage my tongue in chanting Hare Krishna." (Lecture, Hamburg, 1969, from *Quest*, p. 29)

Oh, it's easy enough to say a prayer before we eat, but we wonder how effective it is, since we still eat in a ravenous sort of way, not meditating on God with every bite. And we don't *always* chant. We chant sixteen rounds a day, but that's all. It sounds like we're at the minimum end of these two great, simple acts.

Srila Prabhupada quotes Lord Caitanya, *anandam buddhi vardanam*: "Chanting Hare Krishna increases the ocean of transcendental bliss." Someone please help me, whether you be Christian or Jew or some other theist or even devout Buddhist. Let me know how your ocean of bliss is increasing and how I with my mantra-chanting can enter prayer as more than ritual. It is the everyday blessing of life. I have *Every Day, Just Write*, and a desire to every day just offer myself to God in prayer. I'm not seeking it as a conqueror after *buddhi*, but pray to serve and give myself to Krishna. I want to feel His acceptance and embrace, always in line with my spiritual master's blessings.

Srila Prabhupada is aware that "at present . . . we cannot know how relishable the name of Krishna is (*atah Sri-Krishna-namadi no bhaved grahyam indriyaih*). With our present senses we cannot understand the name, form and qualities of Krishna." He says, therefore, that we are ineligible to understand radha and Krishna, and if we look at Their picture, we will take them as an ordinary man and woman. Don't even try for that. Just chant Their holy names. "Then, when the dust on the mirror of your heart is cleansed away, you will understand everything."

I can't picture myself only chanting and only eating *prasadam*. I mean, I need to do some other service too, such as reading and writing. One Godbrother told me that he occasionally takes a *nama-vrata* to increase his rounds. He will go for a certain time with a big increase. But I so much need to do the preaching and self-discovery of writing that I tend not to take similar vows. Plus I struggle through each day with headaches and the medication. Anyway, I asked my brother how he does his *nama-vratas*. He said each one is different, but the underlying principle is to chant with affection for Krishna.

"Otherwise it is not really pleasurable to the Lord." He says one can chant, no matter what, but it helps him to study *Slokas* and think about them deeply, as in Bhaktivinoda Thakura's *Bhajana-rahasya*. He also passed on a statement by Prabhupada: "My dear Lord Krishna, please remind me to always chant Your holy name. Please do not put me into forgetfulness. You are sitting within me as the Supersoul, so You can either put me into forgetfulness or cause me to remember You. Please do not put me into forgetfulness. Please always remind me to chant. Even if you send me to hell, it does not matter, just as long as I'm always chanting Hare Krishna."

Well, at least let me try to hear better and with attention when I chant. Let me bring the mind back gently from other thoughts. And not only when I chant but when I read.

Now starting another lecture, which the editors have titled, "From Folly to Defeat." I'm aware it's an edited version of what he actually spoke. The grammar has been corrected, his spoken sentences turned into prose. Still, it's Prabhupada.

In this lecture, he begins by quoting *Bhag.* 5.5.5. As long as one is absorbed in fruitive activity, one has to accept a material body. These are the teachings of Rsabhadeva to his sons. As long as I have to accept a material body, my miseries will continue.

* * *

4:34 a.m.

Water spilled on some of the Deity paraphernalia, but everything got rescued. My simple life is filled with joy, especially from midnight to six in the morning. I have such a power-packed yet gentle program of reading and writing, chanting *japa* hopelessly but on time. One step at a time.

Be grateful for what you have. If while doing your service you don't think of Krishna, stop and think of Him now. Dear Lord Krishna, please help us get beyond sentiment to actual love. Please don't let me betray You by being pretentious. If I'm dishonest, I will push You away even as I say I want You to come closer. Please teach me how to attain my ideals. Please help me to improve.

* * *

Improvisation: stomp and wilt and lilt and climb up and cry out. The manhole cover has been pried off. The piano thumps and the bass bump-bumps, and I wrote until I wanted to go back to hearing the sound of the rain. Prabhupada said that they have sex even on the street or on the beach these days, and this is what Ajamila saw. In those days it was rare, but these days it's quite common. He warned his students, even though he was speaking in Vrndavana.

Birds chirping perfectly. They have no grammar and no philosophy, so we can't praise them. But I have to say they were chirping like stones, like the air. And Swamiji was speaking stern and old and dignified and his English wasn't perfect. But neither is mine. Swamiji's dedication was fixed on Krishna, and he told us to keep our minds in Krishna consciousness and not to fall down as Ajamila did. It's not enough to be in the mode of goodness; we have to be transcendental.

I answered some mail. I wrote, "Yes, brothers, keep it up. Even if someone falls down, he can be like the phoenix in Egyptian mythology that sets itself alight, then rises out of the flames and lives a long life."

* * *

I was sad about my *japa*, but I couldn't just dwell on it and say, "Oh, I'm no good." I can only sing anyway, I suppose.

Man, the mind is the source of woes. I wish I could be with the Lord in Vaikuntha, but I have a mind that takes me where it wants. I am unredeemed. I have no friend. I have the best guru, but if I don't follow him, then who can help me? The Lord comes in

His own name, but I turn away from Him, so what can I say? Lord Caitanya introduced it so nicely . . . This is the real blues. The *acaryas* sing like that. Krishnadasa Kaviraja wrote books that would melt rock, "but when I hear them, I must be harder than stone because they don't change me. I don't think even for moment of the great souls." This is the real blues.

* * *

He didn't know what better to do, so he wiped up that water. Now when he wakes up for even an instant, if he can see the mind, why doesn't he bring it to hearing about Krishna?

Is it because he doesn't find it interesting. It's just the construct of those names. He has nothing against Them, but he doesn't have any taste for God's names. He's not unchaste, not going to Christianity or Buddhism, but still not allowed entrance into the names and that's the way it is. The Lord doesn't allow me entrance. He might complain about that and be surly and smug, but he doesn't think he is. However, since he is denied, he does have to go somewhere "down to the firehouse at the foot of Nelson Avenue and Hylan Blvd. where my Dad worked? No, no.

Let's hear from *sastra*. It emanates like nectar from the lotus flower of Vyasa's mouth. Sukadeva caught the nectar. Give us a *Bhagavatam* class. Take on a persona to present it. We seem to care more for that than who is really presenting the scripture "that naked body and heart underneath all those clothes. Nothing craven, nothing real; just the absolutes.

Yep, that's what we want, or so I've been told. I try to comply. Krishna says in *Bhagavad-gita* that He's the goal of *Vedanta* study and the one who knows everything. So let's be Krishna conscious. Stick your nose into *this* kind of study. Why don't you give a seminar on it?

No, no, I have a medical excuse
I have a poem
on how we all suffer
a lot
how some of us prefer the ash can
to the *aSrama*
or the house at the end of a lane lined with rocks,
no phone, and to chant
the Lord's names
every day, saluting the hierarchy and Krishna
Krishna Krishna
Krishna.

* * *

5:40 a.m.

We're alone in that bookstore hearing the piped in classical music. It's another Bach cello solo. I work here, and I'm not alone. There are other workers and some shoppers. I

can't help but think that this music is high-class intellectual stuff. Culture. But it is a distraction. I can't appreciate everything in life. I need to stay fixed.

And anyway, it's not so playful "the cello.

What?

Don't worry, we're now going to leap to Krishna consciousness. Prabhupada told us not to leap like that to the *rasa* dance, but we can leap to Vrndavana.

Hare Krishna. Herbal antics. S. is med-seeking. He's seeking pain relief. He had pain yesterday, so he sat in a chair and said to himself, "Why don't I go down to the art room anyway and try? Maybe the pain will disappear and I will be able to declare a miracle." No such luck, although I painted okay.

* * *

Wee

Wee Willy likes freedom of free-verse versts
are Russian he's a free
mix Tom mix don't mix men
and women in *this aSrama*. Good-bye
to Kowit protect the cow it is right
and even the ant.

* * *

Aunt Mary and Uncle Sal godfather "
mine, Aunt Madeline, she shrugged
because it didn't matter, doesn't matter
all gone from a life that was a joke or an
illusion but real too because
it came from Krishna full of opportunity
to know Him and serve Him.

* * *

Harry Herbil made no bluff
and chanted Krishna extras like a
boy kept in from play
to write one thousand lines, "I
will not forget that
Krishna is my Lord."
Bored old student refrains
get worse and with dentures in
he's singing in the upper register
while his secretary wins
the all-Ireland contest and he wins
a place to write unpaid
his voice.

* * *

9:06 a.m.

Don't gloat when Godbrothers fall. Don't see everything they have done as wrong. Don't reveal your mind to others. Don't write only about yourself. Please show us that you have a big heart and can care for others and sacrifice your interests to spread the holy name. But especially be honest and never pretend.

I hear a plane up in the sky. It could be me sitting in one of those aircraft rows, talking to the devotee beside me or looking out the window at nothing. Freckled face, freckled hand, the faint ropes of blue beneath the brown, arteries under the skin. If they should burst loose, I'd be in trouble.

This world is no place for a gentleman. I've just wasted an hour but tell myself there was nothing I could do but rest. Now I may look at Dhruva Maharaja's meeting with Narada, and hope to have more than a casual disinterest in the subject.

"When Krishna offers anything, it is beyond the expectation of the devotee." (*Bhag.* 4.8.40, purport) First, Narada asked Dhruva to undergo devotional discipline. Even if we are after material desires, we should worship the Supreme Lord. "If he wants to satisfy his senses, Krishna fulfills that desire." Devotees are automatically liberated; they don't need to make separate effort to attain salvation.

Narada Muni advised Dhruva to go to the bank of the Yamuna in Madhuvana. Srila Prabhupada states that Krishna lives everywhere, but He's easy to approach at *tirthas* because of the great sages living there. What if you can't find them? What if they're not available in Kali-yuga? Are they available in *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and *Caitanya-caritamrta*? Among Srila Prabhupada's disciples? I'm trying to ease my heart since another Karttika is approaching and I have no plan to go to Vrndavana.

Narada advised Dhruva to practice *astanga-yoga* to fix his mind on the form of Lord Visnu. As part of his practice, he was to bathe himself in the Yamuna three times a day and practice the three kinds of breathing exercises. My own mind is thinking "*Foreign, foreign,*" as I read this. Prabhupada comes to my rescue and states, "This process of controlling the mind might have been possible in those days millions of years ago . . . but at the present moment the mind has to be fixed directly on the lotus feet of the Lord by the chanting process." (*Bhag.* 4.8.44, purport) Chanting and hearing allow the practitioner to quickly attain *samadhi*. The mind becomes naturally absorbed in thoughts of the Lord.

Someone might ask me whether I have attained *samadhi*, and if not, why not. I swallow my pride and say something like, "It's difficult. I have found it very difficult." O spiritual master, Lord Krishna in my heart, O Srila Prabhupada, my *Siksa* and *diksa* guide, please see my embarrassed and impoverished condition and give me aid. I know you could give me your mercy outright, but you want me to engage in devotional discipline. What else do you require of me?

Imagine living in Vrndavana, going to the bank of the Kalindi, and constantly chanting the names of the Lord. What would happen?

Narada then described the form of the Lord Dhruva might expect to see if he were able to please Him. This would be *very* foreign for modern practitioners. They are all more or less impersonalists.

"He is always prepared to give shelter to the surrendered soul, and anyone so fortunate as to look upon Him feels all satisfaction. The Lord is always worthy to be the master of the surrendered soul, for He is the ocean of mercy." (*Bhag.* 4.8.46)

Prabhupada recommends the process of voluntary surrender. He says it occurs automatically "as soon as he sees the beautiful youthful nature of the Lord." Srila Prabhupada mentions that he instructs his disciples how to paint the Lord according to *parampara* instructions, "and if They are painted, that is not 'imaginative painting.'" The word imaginative is used here to mean concocted. In other words, the Lord's form is real, not imaginary. He looks as He is described. But can the artist capture any of the beauty of His actual *darSana*? And is it wrong if an untrained artist makes a crude rendition? Can a child make a rendition in *parampara*? Is the tradition of Brijbasi calendar art the epitome of devotional expression? Is there room for alternatives?

* * *

11:55 a.m.

You still with us? I have to keep writing to keep alive in it. Maybe I need a timed session. Strap down your arm with the blood pressure belt and see how you are doing.

I'm trying for a pain-free, com-free day.

Okay, but just pass a little ink through your heart first.

"Hare Krishna," he said, and forgot himself! That was the best. Let me stop my petty complaining about Madhu's so-called failure to win the best servant of the month award. He won the singing prize, but I wouldn't give him the butler's prize. What do I expect? The situation is not so bad, because (1) I don't want a lot of personal attention; (2) we both so much know what needs to get done in a day that much of it happens on automatic pilot; (3) we have a long-standing friendship; and (4) I need to overlook resentment and be bigger than a petty "master" who is miffed if his muffins arrive late.

Then what loftier topic? Mount Mount Meru? Climb to Vaikuntha on a sky-lift? Heart or chest pains needn't be indicators of serious coronary problems. Sixty-year-old men have been known to both live and die. Some worthies leave early, while some rascals live into old age. It's up to me to make the best of the situation.

The boss indicates when we should begin and end our solo. But when it's our time, then the soul must express itself.

I just spoke on my tape journal on the theme of elegy. Groped to understand it, then realized I don't feel much of anything about it. At least I said that. Verbal exercises. Feelings. Krishna. Christmas. September. Musings. Movings. I get to beat on the heart like beating on a drum. I promised I would write all the way through the desert.

Lovely day today, eh?

The epitome. The pit. I go through lunch in fifteen or twenty minutes "race through the savories, stuff in the dessert, then look up, somewhat guiltily. like a pet dog, at the altar. What must they think about the way I'm eating? I know I don't eat in the way prescribed by the Deity worship book. One doesn't sit down in front of the Lord and eat.

But this is my family Deity. We have a personal relationship. I want the intimacy. For me, it's part of offering *prasada* to sit close to the Lords and eat together.

It's noon. I can't see the sun, but it's at its zenith. Govinda controls all these powerful forces of nature. He's a person and has a beautiful youthful form as Narada told Dhruva. Go to Him for whatever you want. He's not void or uncaring, but He's not easy to reach for the likes of me.

* * *

2:18 p.m.

Narada describes the *catur-vyuha* form adorned with *Srivatsa* and *Kaustubha*. "He is always peaceful, calm and quiet, and very pleasing to the eyes and the mind."
(*Bhag.* 4.8.49)

"The Lord is always smiling and the devotee should constantly see the Lord in this form, as He looks very mercifully toward the devotee."

We don't manufacture our meditation, but we follow authorized *sastras* and teachers. I'm reminded of the *arca-vigraha*. Doing Deity worship is a way to think constantly of the Lord "how His turban is placed, what He will wear the next day, what gift to bring Him.

Next, Narada gives Dhruva a confidential mantra. By chanting the mantra without offense, "the Lord will automatically reveal Himself to the view of the chanter."
(*Bhag.* 4.8.53, purport) The mantra was *om namo bhagavate vasudeva*. Deity worship and chanting should go on together according to the rules. "But this should be done in consideration of place, time and attendant conveniences and inconveniences."
(*Bhag.* 4.8.54)

* * *

2:53 p.m.

Sitting outside with a red plaid blanket on my knees but no headache right now. Don't feel much like writing or reading *Bhagavatam*. Where does the urge come from to do these things? How does it go away? If I lost it day after day, there wouldn't be much to live for. Very old people perhaps dwindle down to such nothingness. All that's left is to sit outside on a garden bench as I'm doing right now. Perhaps they look forward to seeing their grandchildren or becoming drunk. Or a hobby. Not much on human relations anymore as they go beyond the pale.

I'm not yet that old, yet I feel it just now. I hope something will become clearer if I put other stuff aside for awhile "my usual routine. I've emptied my mail slots except for the one letter that came today.

The garden is a bit bedraggled at this time of year, but I see splashes of color here and there. I don't look deeply and sensitively at their little flower faces often enough to mind. I think of other things when I look at them, places I could be, such as Brooklyn ISKCON or in the thick of the preaching action somewhere. No, that life is over for me. This is Saturday afternoon.

* * *

4:45 p.m.

A wash bucket base gut bucket. A
twinge prevents me, professor,
from remembering whatever it was I wanted to do
and *you*?

A cutting wit you always had. You cried through your horn.
I was facing transcendence and had to leave that group to join the Hare Krishnas.

* * *

Weary blues don't go slow. They scream. We wish we were up to it. We *are* up to it.
But I had to drop out. I was weary in the eye-head and weary too of recurrent pain. I
wanted to go to bed early. I'll see you at midnight, or rather there will be no one but You
and I

and I'll read and tread
that road toward You
the one I love.

O love. I don't know of it but I'm calling Krishna Krishna
Krishna over and over.

Weary over the fact that I must sit down and
can't dance or play on my horn anymore.

I used to be part of Swami's Hot Band, but can't even talk about it anymore. Still, I'm
here to sneak in a few last lines before tomorrow.

September 6, 2:05 a.m.

Prabhupada lecturing in Sweden in 1973. He said we're not in control. "No one can
dictate, 'After death I shall go to that planet or this planet.' No. You are completely under
nature's control."

We think we can do as we like, but this means we will be defeated. We need to know
our real identities. Sanatana Gosvami approached Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and asked,
"Who am I and why am I subjected to all these miserable conditions of life?"

Srila Prabhupada follows a steady line of logic, explaining the words of
the *Bhagavatam* verse that begins, *parabavas tavad abhodajata*: "As long as one does
not inquire about the spiritual values of life, one is defeated and subjected to miseries
arising from ignorance." In his purport to *Bhag. 5.5.5*, Srila Prabhupada quotes *bahunam
janmanam ante*. "The point is to know Krishna, Vasudeva, as everything, and to
surrender unto Him." This includes self-knowledge, and it brings relief from *samsara*.
Then our only purpose in life will be to serve the Lord.

This is elementary Krishna conscious knowledge. We detect that the lecture is for the
neophytes in Stockholm, because it's only 1973. Then we wonder whether these lectures
still have meaning for us today. After all, haven't we moved past this knowledge into
something more? Doesn't seem so. We still suffer from bodily identification. I think I'm
of the Western mindset, a white-bodied American. I spend most of my time coping with

headaches. Fortunately, my identification and pursuits as a devotee are also my identification.

Last night I dreamt I was a *sannyasi* or an elder devotee visiting a devotee community in Vancouver. We were on an outing on a large ship. They didn't give me any preferential treatment. A boy came to share the bed I was given, so I opted to sleep alone on the floor. No one minded. The whole dream was about waiting for people to quiet down and go to sleep, but they never did. So many misadventures. No peace. I woke thinking if I visit an ISKCON temple, I won't get the special provisions I now deem necessary for dealing with my headache condition. I'm not fit for life as a visiting *sannyasi*.

Slowpoke cowpoke
wants to write along at a
quick pace, get it done
three pages at midnight.

I'm a laughable fellow with a day ahead. I know what's coming because it's everyday now. Beloved routine.

Srila Prabhupada mentioned Professor Kotovsky, "He doesn't know what he is "an eternal soul." If you don't know this, then whatever you're doing is defeated. Here again is the theme of the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* verse and the lecture, "From Folly to Defeat." That goes for me too. I cannot suffer complete defeat because I've already served Srila Prabhupada. When I die, I won't have to face that all I did is lost. Still, I expect to taste the bitterness of falling short. Sri Madhavendra Puri felt this bitterness as ecstasy: "I could not reach Mathura." Mine is actual failure, because I really have not attained *prema*, or even *bhava*. I couldn't love Krishna, although I so-called tried.

Rsabhadeva says our particular karma gets us a particular body. Even if we are pious, our next life will still contain the pain of birth and disease, and finally, death. "At the time of death the same painful condition is there for everyone." But because of our minds being absorbed in fruitive activity, nature continues to give us bodies to live out our unfulfilled desires.

Our real purpose is to know Krishna and go back to Godhead. Srila Prabhupada speaks practically about the ISKCON centers and how the devotees there are trying to give people a chance to surrender to Vasudeva and be saved. "But who will understand this?" They take it as sectarian, weird, and not compulsory.

"And how do we enhance that love of Godhead? By our activities: rising early in the morning, chanting Hare Krishna, studying the Vedic scriptures, worshiping the Deity in the temple, observing festivals honoring the Lord. These activities in devotional service will save us from the repetition of birth and death. Otherwise, we are doomed. We'll have to continue this repetition of birth and death." (*Quest*, p. 36)

* * *

4:27 a.m.

The Deity worship is over. I finally got up the nerve to dress Them in bright red with gold trim. At first I thought it was too strong a color; I wanted something softer. But I

did it and They look beautiful. I'm still attracted to things other than Their worship. They should be worshiped exclusively, not on a corner shelf of my life.

* * *

I'm not going to get grouchy about handicaps. I'll just face that we have a long way to go and do what I can. Because I created my life by my own desires.

Couldn't get to sleep last night, so got up and read for a while. The Deities were already sleeping. Then I went back and sought sleep in that inviting little room.

We ought to direct everything back to Him, as Sukadeva Gosvami did in his prayers to the Lord before he began answering Maharaja Pariksit's questions. He started with a story of a time when Narada went to his father and raised sensitive questions. He said, "Are you the sole creator? You seem to have everything under your control like a person who keeps a walnut in his fist, but I see that you perform austerities."

* * *

5:37 a.m.

He's back, that man in green Gore-tex and Derry boots made in England. When he's not out walking, he's drinking herbal tea from his china mug made in China, and sitting on a synthetic chair. And he's got a big head "which means he's proud he won first prize.

He's me.

He's upstairs now

practicing the violin. He and his shadow play a baroque concerto for two violins.

He and the cat he didn't see in the blowing dark.

Make a list of titles:

1. Many and I.

2. return to The routine.

3. Sweet it is (Vivaldi).

4. My enemies scour my books looking for ammo.

5. A doctor and a lawyer on the deprogrammer case read of the Swami's teaching ex-druggies, but they could find nothing against him.

Now stumble and tell. Oh, Hare Krishna. we aspire to be with Govinda in His three-fold bending form. Authentic stories of how He acts. Best to take the teachings imparted by the master. Krishna is Madana-mohana and radha is Madana-mohana-mohani. In Vrndavana they chant Radharani's name more than Krishna's name. The energy and the energetic.

I'm glad they finished and opened that temple in Delhi. Someone can say ISKCON is dead, but it's building. How to change it for the better? Now I am waiting for a delivery of fruit (probably prunes), I'll try to think of something that would benefit our institution, but I mostly believe in finding integrity.

Thank you, Antonio. You are great and I am small, but actually, we are both very small compared to God. Sing exultant. It's Govinda who is the source of sweetness.

* * *

9:12 a.m.

Heavy wind and rains. What will be left in the garden after this? Only the deep-rooted. The gladiolas will probably lose their petals, even though the stalks are bunched against the wall.

I just read the purport where Prabhupada asserts that a world *acarya* may teach students differently in the West than he would in India, and that this principle is upheld by Narada's teaching Dhruva to worship Narayana according to time, place, and circumstance.

This is also the purport where Prabhupada thanks Srimati Govinda dasi for growing *tulasi* plants from seeds. She has been immortalized in this purport.

Worship the Lord with clear water, even if it is not from the Ganges or Yamuna, and try to get *tulasi* leaves. I can get them from a neighbor, but I keep forgetting to ask.

Dhruva was told to meditate on the Lord's form, to chant His name, and to worship an *arca* constructed of physical elements. The worshiper should be satisfied to eat whatever *prasada* is available by the Lord's grace. Narada also advised Dhruva to meditate on the Supreme Lord's activities in His various incarnations. repeatedly we are told not to be impersonalists. We need to remain convinced of this, since the world is so influenced by voidism and impersonalism. These people will always take Krishna as a mythical or ordinary being.

Okay, if Krishna's appearance and disappearance is inconceivable by material standards, and if we say He appears by His own internal potency, what does it mean? What does it mean *to us*? We get so restless when we hear this kind of philosophy. We have to find our faith. We'll build our faith by repeated hearing from someone we trust.

If we don't have the physical paraphernalia to worship, we can make offerings to God in our minds with the mantra. This process is so potent and liberal. By worshiping the Supreme, we can receive whatever benediction we want from Him. Pray for the right thing.

Dhruva went to Madhuvana and Narada went to see his father, the king. The king was sorrowing. He realized that he was responsible for his son's plight. But Narada assured him that Dhruva was protected by the Supreme Lord. He would be famous because he was executing the most difficult of all austerities: to satisfy the Supreme Lord. "Every devotee, therefore, should be determined that in this life he will be able to satisfy the Supreme Personality of Godhead and by that process go back home, back to Godhead. That is the perfection of the highest mission of life." (*Bhag.* 4.8.69, purport)

* * *

11:41 a.m.

I mentioned to M. my dream of not being well received at the Vancouver "temple." He said there is now a pendulum swing away from "caste-ism" in ISKCON, whereby gurus, *sannyasis*, and other senior devotees are being criticized for grabbing the best facilities and privileges and denying them to the rank and file. As a result, we can expect older devotees to be neglected in terms of his expecting to have his own room in a temple where other devotees have to share rooms. Another reason why traveling to temples might not be friendly or timely. If I say I need a room not for luxury but for my

health, devotees probably won't understand. Or if some old-school temple authority agrees, then I'll still be criticized by those who don't agree with that attitude.

He said that unfortunately, the temples have not been arranged to care for the residents. Maybe this will change. Anyway, where is this last splurge of my life to be spent? Can I do something equivalent to Prabhupada's going to America at seventy? Probably not. That's like saying I can emulate Hanuman by leaping an ocean. I can't equal anything Prabhupada did. But that doesn't mean I have to sit here, diminished by pain.

The wind is so violent! If there's a breeze in Dublin, they say, there'll be a gale in rathdangan. The big tree branches are forced to be flexible or break, but the wind tears at the leaves. I hope it doesn't knock down the power lines.

The milk fast starts today. M. has his own version of it. He says "milk" includes whipped cream or any dairy product that can be turned back to milk. I agree that it would include sweet rice, sweet liquid cream, and tapioca, all of which are made from straight milk, but whipped cream too?

O foolish *sadhu*, let it go.

* * *

I liked my Godbrother's lecture on *Bhag.* 1.1.1. He said it is startling how Vyasa starts right out, boldly proclaiming that Vasudeva is the Absolute Truth. But that's what Narada told him to do "write a book directly glorifying Krishna.

We read and recorded for half an hour selections from *Govinda-lilamrta*. We read of Radha's breakfast preparations and Krishna's breakfast pastimes. Those are wonderfully accessible pastimes. I am choosing what I think is suitable to hear. Mother Yashoda says that she selects Krishna's ornaments and garments the night before. I do that too "choose the flute and leaning stick and the dress He will wear the next day. routine.

Poems for the Little League of
free-verse. The serious dons
say you cannot give us this kiddie stuff
anymore. Begone, they say. But we're already
gone "gone to the Krishnaites who listen
with kind ears, kind
hearts, friend to friend who
help us offer them to Krishna.

* * *

Krishna went to the pasture. He said He wanted to
make everyone happy. He wanted all living beings
to return home, back to Godhead, so there's
Recurring creation "to give us a chance.
Meanwhile He goes on sporting
with liberated *bhaktas* and waits for our
arrival.

* * *

Speak even in a crude form and those who are honest will like it. Let me be the first to honor any devotee's sincere expression. I am not the only one who wants to write and be read.

Pray that people come to Krishna consciousness. Give them something solid. Give out books, access to Krishna, make the communities so nice that people want to become part of our congregation where they can meet regularly with their new devotees friends, at least for an evening. Don't be dull but creative and alive in Krishna consciousness. Think of ways to improve the relationships and the *bhajan*s and the general quality of a devotee's life. It doesn't matter that we are less than a minority in Western society. Go on without feeling hopeless. That starts, I suppose, with a taste for personal *sadhana*, that diligent work that Dhruva Maharaja did, in whatever way is possible and aiming at pleasing Krishna. Go on hearing.

* * *

2:30 p.m.

Dhruva followed Narada's instructions exactly. The guru gives individual instructions for individual disciples, and if the disciple executes his personal order, he can attain perfection. That's ideal. I don't know how much we critters realize the importance of following the guru, but it's the truth.

Dhruva began to fast by eating a common forest berry every third day. Lord Caitanya has made it easy for us in this age: four rules and sixteen rounds. We are insignificant in comparison to Dhruva, and "absolutely incompetent." But as Dhruva was determined to practice his severe austerities, we should follow our own vows; "We should not wait for another life to finish our job." (*Bhag.* 4.8.72, purport)

Gradually he stopped eating and drinking and inhaled air only every twelfth day. He remained in trance, absorbed in the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Then he stood on one leg. It is said that he captured the Supreme Brahman in his heart and thus all the three worlds trembled as Dhruva stood. The total universal breathing became choked, so the demigods appealed to the Supreme Lord for rescue.

A devotee can become so influential that he can induce people to take to Krishna consciousness.

* * *

4:15 p.m.

I'm so tired that I don't know what this fatigue is and why it hurts around my heart. If it gets worse . . . M. is off making phone calls. I don't know what else to tell you.

I was used to having a good time when I was younger, going out in the car with friends. I really didn't know what to do with my life, but didn't really want to start trouble. Anyway, forget it. How about going out on a Sunday afternoon for *harinama* on the Boston Common "if it doesn't rain?"

She told me she melded her sadness with Dvorak's cello concerto and she thought she knew his soul and dark side. Music can speak like that, without words?

To catch it, you have to be more than a chimpanzee. I mean, you have to have feelings.

Why not suit up in rain gear and walk outside like a tired Frankenstein's monster? Or a man on the moon taking his twelve steps, then going in again. It must be lonely to be surrounded by a big orchestra while history clamors just outside the door and the individual spirit tries to find its way.

Anyway, none of us are alone with our attachments and revulsions. We have attachments, face it. We haven't yet reached *nistha*, where we accept whatever the guru says. Logical arguments may be helpful, but in the end, we have to accept *sastra* with faith.

Pain in the heart region. Krishna will arrange an honorable exodus for me. If He thinks I have more service to do, He may let me stick around. Otherwise, He might as well move me on to a new body so I can get on with the work of facing whatever new struggles there are to face. rest in peace. May I have Hare Krishna heart burn as I go.

* * *

5:50 p.m.

I believe in routine. I came up with titles for this volume while walking in the rain. Faith in the routine, Krishna in the routine. "routine work" was Srila Prabhupada's phrase for early-morning rising and Deity worship. routine work should not be abandoned. Quiet. I like mine. Don't want to be carried away or interrupted. Give me routine.

Cynic: "Don't give me *that* routine."

Oh, the old routine. Just ordinary performance; he was routine.

September 7, 12:05 a.m.

Woke up from a dream, something about a small group in a boat or boats on a several days and nights journey. We had to take one woman, but she remained unseen in the stern. Sailed all night, navigating by the moon and stars. The journey was relatively smooth. I awoke grateful. I don't have children or a wife or even parents to entangle me. No temple or institutional politics. I can come to this desk and read with a clear mind. I should not complain about imagined or real neglect of my needs by those taking care of me. They are not perfect and neither am I. To be perfect means to be single-minded in devotion to Krishna, with no distraction from the material world. Transcendental and always attracted to Krishna, absorbed in His service, as was Dhruva Maharaja.

The *Quest* collection gives us a sub-section of articles titled, "Matter, Spirit and the Controller of Both." The first is from a lecture given by Srila Prabhupada in Vrndavana, August 1974, about how to spiritualize matter. But the idea of "inferior" and "superior" energies is something that exists for us, not for Krishna. From Krishna's point of view, the energies are all His and He can use them as He likes. Scientists recognize Krishna's energies, but they don't know to whom they belong.

That Krishna has such energies proves His greatness. Don't avoid hearing about them and instead jump to the Tenth Canto or even further to *Vidagdha-madhava* and *Govinda-lilamrta*. Carefully understand how the material elements are Krishna's separated

energies. The material energy belongs to Him, but He chooses not be personally present in it.

Yesterday I thought I had found a title for this volume "something like, "My routine," or "Faith In The routine." But when I looked up "routine" in my two dictionaries, it emphasized that there is no variation in the daily round. It sounded uninspired. There's even a word, *routinier*, which refers to a musical conductor whose performance is mechanical and not coming from the heart. I was aware that *routine* had these implications, but now I worry that the reader won't catch the good connotations that I am trying to attach to it. But there is a blessing to the unvarying, simple, quiet life of *sadhana*. Maybe the word "schedule" is better. Finding a volume's title can help me shape my life and writing. I'll keep looking. Even if I don't choose "routine," I'm seeking to become lost in mind, appreciative, and inspired.

But that means plugging along when it's dry. Srila Prabhupada is lecturing on the *bhumir apo* verse, explaining how the material elements come from God. In the first verse of the *Bhagavad-gita's* seventh chapter, Krishna says, "Just hear from Me. Then without doubt you will understand Me in full."

The finest of the eight material elements is ego. It needs to be cleansed. Pure ego means to know, "I am not this material body; I am spirit soul."

Could I reach a state where I honestly didn't feel compelled to report on the pushing, peeking, and flopping of my consciousness? I tell it now and call it free-writing or the "mix." Go ahead, write whatever comes. It's the way to fill pages, an artless art. It is not afraid (so much); it conquers shame. It speaks and we say it helps us admit. It unblocks us, forces us to stop our pretension. The people who don't like this method say they know that consciousness is like dirty drain water, so why do they have to hear me tell about it in a Krishna conscious book? We want to rise above it. Give us only another repeat of Prabhupada's perfect teachings.

Well, I have a different idea about this.

We're in the Vedic institute for higher education, learning lessons. The teacher assigns everyone the same page to study. "Gradually, by studying the teachings of the *Bhagavad-gita* and practicing them in life, we shall very easily understand *atma-tattva*, the science of the soul." Srila Prabhupada adds, "Unfortunately we're not interested in understanding *atma-tattva*." As Sukadeva Gosvami said to Maharaja Pariksit, "For ordinary men there are many subject matters for hearing. Therefore people have so many books, so many newspapers, so many magazines they like to hear and read. But they are not interested in hearing *Bhagavad-gita* or *Srimad-Bhagavatam*."

* * *

4:15 a.m.

Light green with gold trim today, and for the first day in months I offered Them Their *cadars*, because it is beginning to get cold.

Blessed routine.

Who blessed it?

Krishna and Prabhupada.

You mean they bless anything you do "your own additions like writing funny poems or chanting without attention? That's your routine too, isn't it? Are you claiming that God has blessed it?

Krishna and Prabhupada have blessed *me*. They accept me. They know I'm trying. They help me.

The mixture of the world's tear-streaked rain pane. The patter and smack of raindrops on my skylight. Narottama dasa Thakura says (in *Prarthana*) that even if one doesn't become His devotee, Lord Nityananda will award him love of Krishna.

You want to sing for the people? Fine. Like Lester Young, Machado, *et al.* Like Jesus Christ?

Wait a minute, you can't aspire that high. Don't bluff. You go and do your little thing, blessed routine,

There will never be another you. You and
me and all devotees
try to deliver the message. Been doin' it . . .
Got reactions "the fray, the same old
arrangements. Had to simply find
the taste in the preaching.
Quiet routine of daily Krishna consciousness. I thank God for it. Hare Krishna.

* * *

My boss, mentor, is not a pet guru. He keeps me under control. I follow, I'm tuned-in to his books three times a day, and on the beads. Master, it's me
blessed

'Fess

I am grooving but

I can't just give up and be
a solemn-faced Vedic priest

I have to give to the people
my my my my "you are the only person
in this room, so tell them:

"Hey folks, the body has to die and the soul is the only real thing. Don't forget that."

I release you. Chant five Hail Marys. Got your medal in your breast pocket? Hear the rain? Mingus. rain shingle. Suhotra Swami's article on channeling. I don't know what love is. You're Donald Duck sittin' here in this room. Better wake up and be buffeted by a lively wind "I mean a real outdoor *breeze* coming from the Irish hills. This is no Swami's night club. It's an alone place.

Now, I'll give you ten more guesses as to where I am and what I'm doing.

(1) You're listening to Fingus McParley on the short wave while you write.

(2) You're rewriting Hart Crane's "The Bridge" in your mind.

(3) You're getting in trouble and trying to get out. You have reached a point where even though you know stealing (or your particular crime) is punishable and against the *Vedas*, you can't help yourself.

(4) You're in Cozilli, Italy, writing *Hideout Journal*.

(5) You are a simple *cela*, but not very surrendered.

I give up. We can't guess anymore. The panel will decide if you are fit to be called a guru. We have your defense, and you have also reminded us that you are not an isolated individual but are part of a syndrome which is ISKCON itself. In other words, you don't want to be made into a scapegoat.

So saying he blessed himself and suited up for the outdoors. O Lord, O energy of the Lord, please engage me in Your service.

Don't bless the routine. It's already blessed to the degree it is *sampradaya*. Love the routine. Bless the routine. Ordinary love. Fah, Krishna science will overrun your spiritual head and feet.

* * *

5:52 a.m.

I settled on *Beloved routine*. Hope you like it. It says what I want it to say. Beloved means "dearly loved" and usually refers to a person. Lover and beloved. Our beloved spiritual master or father. But home can be beloved also, and why not routine? This includes faith in routine, following it strictly, blessed routine. It allows my active participation. It's like saying, "I love my routine." It removes the idea of the uninspired, yet it's true that I love doing the same thing every day. It's what Srila Prabhupada called "the routine work" of regulative devotional service.

"Is it sick to love a pen?" "an advertisement line for Pilot pens. *Cry The Beloved Country* "a book. Beloved routine. Is it sick to love your same-patterned life? No.

My routine includes down and sour moments, things that don't come in *sampradaya*. What? Then that's beloved *maya*. Headaches and remedies are certainly part of my routine. The whole day in its particulars. But I mostly mean living here in this house and going through the day with Krishna conscious intent.

* * *

9:16 a.m.

The demigods prayed to Lord Visnu to save them from suffocation. The Supreme Lord replied that it was Dhruva who had stopped up the universal breathing. Lord Visnu promised to break his austerities. The saving factor for the demigods is that whenever they encounter material difficulties, they approach the Supreme Lord in surrender. "For a devotee, everything in the world is very pleasing because he knows how to use everything in the transcendental loving service of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 4.8.81, purport) I want to keep this in mind when I think of my own troubles. Don't forget Krishna. I may not pray to Krishna, "Please stop this headache; please don't let this disruption happen to my quiet attempts at remembering You." But when the disruption of pain does occur, I can use it to seek peace of mind with Krishna and to ask Him to ultimately deliver me from fear and illusion by coming closer to Him.

Thus the Supreme Lord went to Madhuvana to see His servant, Dhruva. Of course, I have long ago overcome the problem of incredulity, wondering how God could have four arms and why he rides Garuda. But a voice remains, that whispering gremlin. I

ignore him. What will satisfy the gremlin? Nothing, because it's his duty to make me unhappy. I will tame him.

Dhruva's meditation broke when he saw the Lord standing before him. "When a devotee becomes mature in his prosecution of devotional service, he sees face-to-face the same Syamasundara he has thought of during the entire course of his devotional service." (*Bhag.* 4.9.2, purport) Devotees attached to radha-Krishna forms in ISKCON temples or in their homes can take solace in this statement.

Dhruva Maharaja experienced the eight kinds of bodily ecstasies upon seeing the Lord before him. Dhruva Maharaja wanted to offer prayers to the Lord, but because he was inexperienced, he did not know how. The Lord then touched Dhruva's forehead with His conch shell. Srila Prabhupada states that devotees always want to praise God, but "sometimes they feel inconvenienced by humbleness." Thus Krishna gave Dhruva the intelligence to describe Him. "One cannot write to glorify the Lord unless one is endowed with His causeless mercy." (*Bhag.* 4.9.5, purport)

"Dhruva Maharaja attained this perfection not by acting hastily, but by patiently executing the order of the spiritual master, and therefore he became so successful that he saw the Lord face to face." (*Bhag.* 4.9.5, purport)

* * *

11:53 a.m.

Devotees like it when I write straight Sastric books, like favorite selections from *Caitanya-caritamrta* or on *Bhagavatam* purports. Now I write the mix, and kind of say, "Take it or leave it." Some will leave it.

Some may take it, but think I'm not the same devotee I was when I wrote straight. I just read a statement about an artist who was supposed to have declined after traumatic experience. Others disagreed with this analysis, and felt an artist can only be measured against himself and not against others who criticize his changing perspectives.

Be that as it may, I have to write out of who I am today. We all have to serve like that "out of who we are today, filled with aspiration for becoming more, but as we are today. What else can we know? We eternalists, we followers of *sanatana-dharma*, know that we had better aim for what will last. But how else can we do that except through the persons we are now? We can plan our mental disposition at the time of death, but that's based on what we are now.

Does being who we are now decry the idea of leaving behind a legacy when we leave this world? Srila Prabhupada used to spoof at the concept of leaving something for posterity. He was referring to the materialists' illusion of leaving money for their children or giving something to a charitable foundation "while the donor himself went on to become a dog by his karma. I know that Prabhupada doesn't spoof the legacy left by the Six Gosvamis or by Lord Caitanya. These great souls deliberately gave something people could follow. They cared for what would happen to their immediate and future followers after their disappearance. It's not a wrong or vain conception. And if we are working for Krishna's cause, then our own salvation is automatically included. The work has to be done in times that are with us now. We have to try to help both ourselves and our contemporaries, and if we're lucky, our work will also help those who come after us.

It makes sense that we would like to do something that will live on, not something so paltry that no one will be interested in it after a few seasons. It's the nature of the disciplic succession that a new generation of disciples takes help from former teachers. We are meant to add to what we have been given. It's yet another test of our sincerity to receive our guru's gifts, preserve them in our lives, and then to pass them on to future generations. The guru's institution should not be ruined or abandoned. The method of Deity worship, the books "everything should be maintained and protected. ISKCON does that in various ways, including the legal measures it takes to protect BBT copyrights and properties. Individually, we may not provide for ISKCON's legacy in quite the same way. Our contribution may be something else but something equally important.

How do we provide a legacy? Do we work always with an eye to the future? We can't calculate it exactly. We just have to do the best we can with whatever we have and are at each moment. We have to give ourselves to the preaching work with humility. How long our contribution lasts won't ultimately be decided by us. Still, we will be measured by our own sincerity. Even if our contribution is quickly lost, we'll still have been successful, even in terms of the future, if our devotional act was sincere. It will have at least a subtle influence on those around us and in turn, on those who come in the future.

* * *

We read about Krishna's breakfast feast being cooked by the *gopis* and His mothers. Everyone did the best they could. It was eternal devotional service aimed at His pleasure. The boys also pleased Him, succeeding by demonstrating their hearty appetites and their jokes. Eternal pastimes. One doesn't ask, "How long did it take to cook all those preparations? Were the remnants stored somewhere?" No, all service is consumed immediately in the land without time.

* * *

That tightness in my chest still hasn't gone away. I can't figure out what it's from. Don't know who to ask about it. Perhaps it's caused by the preventative medication I'm taking to reduce headaches. Should I take such a risk? The pain has been present now for over two months. I probably wouldn't be concerned anymore than I am about a similar pain I often feel in the back of my neck. But the heart is the heart.

Anyway, the reason I'm mentioning it here is that I've been realizing I really could die at any moment. Today even. I need to be serious about my work. Do it nicely, for Krishna's pleasure.

Thinking about imminent death has made me notice that I haven't suddenly rushed to live an extreme *babaji* lifestyle. Neither have I run off to the hospital for the twenty tests which in the end would prove nothing. If it's the medication that's causing the pain, let me take the risk to be able to work with less headaches. My routine is beloved because it supports my remembrance of Krishna.

M. is out making more phone calls. When he came back yesterday, I said, "I know it's inconvenient for you to drive to someone else's place to make phone calls, but I like the privacy life without a phone allows." M. said he had just been thinking we should get a

phone. But, "I'm glad you mentioned that you don't want one and that the real point is privacy." He will honor my desire and live with the inconvenience.

* * *

2:25 p.m.

Dhruva *uvaca*. My dear Lord, I realize my life force and especially my words have been sleeping until this moment, when You have entered me. Dhruva felt the impetus to glorify the Lord according to the Vedic conclusion.

Where is that difference within me? I wish I could wake up and be completely aware that I had received Krishna's mercy. "Without revelation by the spiritual energy, one is unable to offer prayers glorifying the Lord." (*Bhag.* 4.9.6, purport) Before enlightenment, the senses are engaged in a mechanical way. In Krishna consciousness they're engaged in spiritual understanding.

* * *

I went with Madhu to Uddhava's house and we phoned Samika Rsi in America. I told him about the chest pain. As we spoke, I held my hand over my heart. He asked some questions. We concluded that I should see a cardiologist in Ireland, so M. will try to line that up. It will mean a trip to Dublin.

Better do what I want in my limited time. A touch of silence and a grim talking about doing the needful.

Samika Rsi said I shouldn't mess around with chest pain but go to a doctor and get a proper diagnosis. The pain isn't so sharp, but it's constant. Does it cause anxiety? You see, I thought I'd live forever with only my benign head pain. I didn't expect my heart to give out.

Samika Rsi told me that Bhakti-caru Swami has been visiting him for the past five weeks. He's working on the "Abhay" video. I would like to visit Samika Rsi in January.

You better get with it and focus on Krishna.

Oh, I have plenty of time. I'm only fifty-nine and three-quarters, and the pain is dull.

Give me a remedy for my Krishna consciousness, so I can remember God as I go out on broad pen strokes.

On my last day I'd like to remember Krishna in one of His Vraja pastimes, then go to where I'm supposed to go under my spiritual master's direction, taking the lonely passage as in dreams, leaving everything but his order behind.

* * *

6:10 p.m.

Painted "tried to find faces, shapes, animals, or something never quite seen to put alongside words coming from a moment of hearing Srila Prabhupada singing with the window open on a gray rainy day and forgetting the chest pain. No head pain today either. Spread pink and yellow, thin it out with water, find a face. The stick figures seemed too stylized. I was not exhilarated, but at least I dove off the pier and swam. Hare Krishna.

September 8,12:03 a.m.

Beloved routine . . . uh . . . ha. Not so joyfully does he jump up from bed at this hour. What impels him? I think it's pure. His master is with him and God is in his heart. All these years.

What was that dream about two cats in a room with devotees? The cats were fighting, and I thought one of them would surely die. I forced myself to wake up. I didn't want to watch. Later, I had another dream about a misunderstanding between devotees in a temple. One devotee claimed that Prabhupada said we should do some sort of obscure, material speculation rather than talking cheaply about Radharani. The other devotee didn't believe it. Someone said I should take the responsibility to sort out the dispute.

Now reading "From Matter to Spirit" in *Quest*. remember? The eight material elements all come from Krishna. We have to cleanse false ego by chanting Hare Krishna. When we are free of *ahankara*, we can understand Krishna. People aren't interested in *atma-tattva* but in many other things that have little permanent value. They seek happiness through their interactions with others "society, friendship, and love. Why? It's our nature to be happy. *Ananda-mayo 'bhyasat*. "Krishna is enjoying His life with Srimati Radharani and the other *gopis* and cowherd boys, and with His father and mother. All of that enjoyment is spiritual (*ananda cinmaya rasa*)." (*Quest*, p. 43) We create an imitation of Their pastimes here in the material world. "real life is in the society of Krishna." We are trying for happiness in the shadow material energies.

To know the real truth of Krishna in the spiritual world, we should hear from Him. I like Prabhupada's logic as it builds step upon step. It convinces me. It's leading me out of the material world.

But right about here in his discourse, one might start wondering, "Is he saying the material world is complete illusion?" No, he's saying it's not false. We are not Mayavadi philosophers. We only say that it's temporary. It's also Krishna's energy, and Krishna's energy should be used for Krishna's purposes. Then it will become spiritual for us. *Yukta-vairagya* "construct a building, but use it as Krishna's temple.

So again the door opens to our service. Whatever we do, we should do it to glorify Krishna. Yes, Goloka is the perfection, but even here we can be converting matter into spirit. That's another way to live with ourselves in the present, rather than pretending we are not part of this world. What good does that do? We will not use the energies for Krishna's service if we are pretending to be something we are not. This world and these bodies are the vehicles by which we connect to Krishna. We are not meant to reject the world as if it is false.

"A tape recorder is material, but it can be used for Krishna's purpose. That is how we are writing books "recording them on a tape recorder. This is *yukta-vairagya*, proper renunciation."

We are also Krishna's energy, but often separated from Him, at least in our own minds. It's unfortunate how far into *maya* we have fallen. But Srila Prabhupada has come to show us the way out. We devotees are trying to change material energy into the spiritual world by also changing ourselves.

But oh, this body is ready to give me varieties of exquisite pains, the head has its own varieties "grogginess, vise, sharp "and the back of the neck, chest, and overall lack of energy. I'm sure disease lies dormant in the body, or budding karma could become a broken limb by which we are left screaming in pain. There's a limit to converting matter into spirit. We won't suffer like this when our bodies are spiritual.

I hear Praghosa returning from Dublin. Time for *japa*. Crack the whip. O mind "I'm only kidding. But could you please listen? You'd like it. They say you'll become fully satisfied if you'll only take shelter in Krishna's names. After all, you are seeking happiness. The holy names are your solace. In them, you can meet God. He'll bring you all relief "and ecstasy.

* * *

4:24 a.m.

Jaya Nrsimhadeva. He in whose mind the Vaisnava *smṛti* sours "who is this fool? He who puts down all devotional efforts except his own "who is that arrogant? He who wishes to be spared pain and travail "who is this blind man?

Indian summer doesn't come to Ireland except by chance. I liked the Pennsylvanian autumns when melons and pumpkins would ripen, and dry corn stalks would stand in the fields. I was a young spiritual father wearing the best silks we could find in a Vrndavana market.

The coon was up a tree
up a mountain, clutching at his chest.
Now beloved routine up and
down the scales on the way
to Goloka
we're bound to go
eventually we
little fellows
who have snatched back our souls
from the black hole of
material life.

* * *

I don't believe you write them odes to Uttama-Sloka. I heard you can't praise Lord Hari with the blues unless you get an honorable discharge from the school of hard knocks. You have to actually be free and empowered. Otherwise, you're short.

The truth of the matter "
we heard it in the dark dream of unmarried
a monk's wish
life in a cell
and all he does is follow
his schedule.

Wait, wait, that insect crawling around on the page is hot and hopping under a hundred-watt bulb. He thinks he's on holiday "a beach in South Florida.

Full-stop insect hops on my fist. It's no good. What if I were to mash it? Hop where I'm not writing and "Hare Krishna!"

So the Mass ends and we suit up and go out to catch sparks of darkness. Our mission is to chant and walk and talk. I'll see you out there in the bye and bye. It's going to happen in its own way, rush it or not.

* * *

5:40 a.m.

I walked. My ankle hurt. I saw no birds. I heard the breeze. It was not raining. Faint sign of light over the hills. I can cry with a man or woman somewhere on another side of the world, the way Antonio Vivaldi expressed his soul through those violins.

O Krishna, please bring my mind back! With all this energy I could be hearing Your names. I tend to think I don't utter the holy name with feeling, but I do love Krishna. I make a naked act of surrender by not indulging in the bombardment of thoughts.

She asked in my *japa* workshop, "When you chant, are you able to gain access to thoughts you can't ordinarily access?"

O hopping insect, you seem to have died.

"No," I said. "Don't use *japa* to gain access to anything but Krishna." I say that even while my own mind fills with inferior thoughts. How magnificent can these thoughts get if gut death awaits?

* * *

9:12 a.m.

Dhruva Maharaja's prayers are philosophical. I have to pay attention to them or I'll miss something. It sounds strange to say that I may be getting a headache, so I can't read his prayers. But it's true. That's how I am. That's why I like simple prayers: "Krishna, I love You. I *love* You. Please reveal Yourself to me." Or lesser prayers: "Lord, please help me. Give me strength." These are interjected prayers, and they are fine too. But let's pray in one way or another.

The Supreme Lord spreads throughout the world by His energies. Dhruva is canceling the voidistic concepts. Nondevotees act under Maha-maya, and devotees act under the *sva-dharma*. "The original energy inspires a devotee, and thus he engages all his bodily limbs in the service of the Lord." (*Bhag.* 4.9.7, purport) The energy of the material world by which everything is operating, needs an energetic source and controller. That source is called Krishna.

The more a devotee engages in devotional service, the more he appreciates how much Krishna is doing for him. The Lord's energies supply him the encouragement to never forget the Lord. "He always feels obliged to Him for having achieved increased power in devotional service by His grace." (*Bhag.* 4.9.8, purport)

Dhruva Maharaja regrets that upon seeing the Lord, he, like so many other foolish persons, had approached the Lord for sense gratification. He prays, "O unlimited Lord, kindly bless me so that I may associate with great devotees who engage in Your transcendental loving service constantly, as the waves of a river constantly flow." (*Bhag.* 4.9.11) He says that by devotional service he'll easily be able to cross the ocean

of birth and death, "for I am becoming mad to hear about Your transcendental qualities and pastimes, which are eternally existent." (*Bhag.* 4.9.11)

Here is the purport where Srila Prabhupada states, "We have established the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Anyone who is trying to be aloof from the Krishna conscious society and yet engage in Krishna consciousness is living in a great hallucination, for it is not possible." Many who call themselves followers of Srila Prabhupada will have their own version of how this statement should be understood. Some say ISKCON is no longer Prabhupada's society; the leaders are simply misleading it. Some dare to say the society, even as Prabhupada envisioned it, is outmoded and was originally defective. Too many social defects need to be reformed before it is can be called functional. Others say ISKCON is too sectarian; other Gaudiya Vaisnava gurus outside ISKCON can also make us Krishna conscious. What do I say? You already know.

I don't think this statement means we have to live in a temple. We should keep a friendly relationship with ISKCON, however, and try to contribute to it. I honor the statement that one needs the association of pure devotees. If we feel we can't find any pure devotees in ISKCON, then we can associate with the pure devotees in Prabhupada's books. And ISKCON devotees *are* pure, at least in relation to so many others with whom we could build friendships.

We don't have to spend so much time measuring one kind of holiness against another. Let's get down to the business of real devotees "hearing and chanting about Krishna together. Become addicted to hearing. Devotional activities here and in the spiritual world are the same. We are only unripe mangoes. "It is possible to make advancement in devotional service only in the association of devotees."

* * *

11:47 a.m.

I took an Esgic and the pain calmed down. Told M. something about the blues in hopes he could pick it up for his own song-writing. I don't know if he was even listening. I was somewhat pedantic, I know. Anyway, let me follow my own advice when I try to hang a song-message onto my prose. My song is usually so sprawling. Yes, I'm aware of that.

M. has gone off to have his photo taken by a photographer from the local newspaper, because he's the Wicklow man who won the national competition for traditional Irish singing. He hopes to use the article to send to ISKCON publications as part of their preaching "a prestigious devotee published in the nondevotee press.

And I'm here trying to bat out a story for my newspaper. My copy is about late morning, and I don't mean blues. Blues is depressing, according to the dictionary. The term comes from black folk music and was adopted by jazz musicians using minor harmonies (M. said they make it sadder). The dictionary says that blues are usually slow, but that's not really so.

There is Krishna conscious blues that we can write. You get into the mood of your down feelings about your Krishna conscious practices, maybe your repeated failure to follow the rules or to be happy in the society of devotees. Maybe you don't have to

specify your particular failures; you can feel their general weight without categorizing them. Things that are wrong with ISKCON could be "ISKCON blues."

The trick is to feel what you need to feel without coming up with a too-idealized solution. Most of us have already played out our "I-was-a-nondevotee-suffering-in-the-material-world-and-when-I-found-the-Lord-all-my-problems-were-solved" blues. That's not real. remember that holier-than-thou poem published in BTG where the author said that the U.S. president is afflicted with the itch for sex desire "which he can't conquer" but we devotees have no such problems, because we chant Hare Krishna. Yeah? In 1966, Hayagriva Prabhu wrote his "*Brahmacari Blues*." I doubt much has really changed since then.

* * *

Madhu said if we make an appointment with a cardiologist (he's not sure they even have such specialists in Ireland), we can then go to a bookstore to make the outing more interesting. I wouldn't be up to giving a lecture probably. I'm a writer, and bookstores have their uses. But in the end, I always discover that my favorite sections contain mostly superficial diaries and biographies "they're not written by people really trying to tell their truth.

* * *

2:45 p.m.

If we associate with devotees who always hanker after Krishna's lotus feet, we will become completely unconcerned with the body and its happiness or distress.

Dhruva Maharaja says he had already known that there were many forms of life (8,400,000), but he had never before experienced the supreme form of the Personality of Godhead. "Now all kinds of methods of theorizing have come to an end." (*Bhag.* 4.9.13)

Krishna is so different from the *jivas*. For example, we are often in ignorance, but the Supreme Lord knows everything that is happening in everyone's heart. Still, He can enjoy in Goloka without worry.

I suddenly remembered Italy. I think it's because I read the word *trayadhiSa*, "the master of the three modes of material nature." This led me to think about my Godbrother, Trai Prabhu, who is married and lives in Italy. He has such a suave yet innocent look. I saw him the last time I was in Italy. He was on his way to India. What's he doing now, I wonder. Then I thought of Matsya-avatara Prabhu, then my own relationships with the Italian devotees. They never come to see me here in Ireland, and anyway, these days in ISKCON, devotees want to draw close directly to Srila Prabhupada. They don't want fallible guru guides who fall down between them and Prabhupada.

I hear a car "maybe the mail is arriving. In a moment, the brass "ship's bell" will ring. I'll buzz M. on the intercom to tell him that someone is at the front gate.

We can never compare ourselves to God. He sleeps, but not like we sleep. He dances, but no dog dances. He's not a plaything of lust, and He doesn't sing the blues. Rather, He has His own transcendental songs of separation and union. He's God and we should celebrate His existence.

* * *

3:40 p.m.

Lester leaps, Steven creeps, and the twinge returns. Distant shouts of cowherd men. I'm sitting on the bench outdoors. Honk of a bovine. Gray sky and quiet hills.

Wind in the leafy trees in our backyard. That cow sounds like it is protesting. O Krishna. Dhruva regretted his material desires. He knew that pure devotees don't care for their bodies, and that the Supreme Lord is everything to them. Seeing the Lord's form ended all his speculation. He was satisfied: *svamin krtatosmi radyam niyace*.

Mr. Gore-tex, why are all your clothes green?

Do I think I can trace my ancestors in Ireland? What records are available? Almost nothing except a photo I once saw of my maternal grandfather, who played the fiddle, and whom my mother resembled. And my mother's mother, I never met them. Can I discover their names? Doesn't seem so. My mother and I don't communicate, and who else is there to tell me?

Anyway, it doesn't really matter. I can stay in Ireland without their help. Also, several generations ago I was in a different body "human or otherwise. I don't have Irish roots any more than I have dog or demigod roots.

September 9, 12:01 a.m.

Starting a new lecture in *Quest*. The editors have titled it, "The Potencies of the Omnipotent." God has unlimited potencies. His potency is *acintya*, inconceivable.

He's a person, but what kind of person? "A person like you, working the whole day for money? No . . . Krishna doesn't have to do anything. He is simply playing on His flute and enjoying with Radharani, that's all."

Dear Lord, please let me read my spiritual master's words, which are nondifferent from the *Vedas*, with faith.

We try to imitate Krishna's enjoyment. Sad.

Lying in bed last night I wanted to say something in favor of EJW and my dedication to it. That includes the willingness to speak my life in all its particulars, naming names, exposing my opinions. I forget exactly why I felt it. Maybe it had to do with my encouraging Madhu in his music career. I wanted to encourage my own career in Krishna's service. Write wholeheartedly of a wholehearted life. EJW is that conception "and it's never complete, no holds barred.

Our imitating Krishna is like old men about to die going to Paris dance clubs to mix with young girls.

Krishna works through His potencies. "We have seen [that] Mr. Birla" also doesn't have to go to work; he works through his potencies.

What's your opinion, Steve? I don't want to put *my* photo in *The Hare Krishna World*. Our preaching events, published books, lectures attended, *hari-nama* triumphs, or picture moments with a local mayor "all good material for HKW. I liked the photo of the eighteen-year-old devotee in cap and gown who was graduating from Florida International University after having been home-schooled. That's encouraging to other devotee parents.

When Srila Prabhupada quotes Sanskrit, I find it impressive. These verses are his evidence. I should also cite such evidence. I'm asking others to believe what I say. Krishna is enjoying, not working, but His energies are working and doing everything required in both the spiritual and material worlds.

Yeah, *Hare Krishna World* arrived last night. I want to go through it so I can put it aside.

And because, like it or not, it's my world too.

Listen, care about these teachings. Since we have a spiritual nature, we can transfer to the spiritual world and remain there eternally "if we like.

* * *

4:21 a.m.

A devotee wrote me that he never thought he had to cultivate the twenty-six qualities of a devotee. He thought they would happen to him automatically. Then he heard Prabhupada go over each one in a 1966 lecture. He now feels he has wasted time. "I know one thing I have to try very, very hard to develop is the quality of humility. Instead of looking at my own faults, I tend to compare someone's behavior with the ideal. I never do that for myself. Sometimes I say something stupid to someone and regret it later." Yes, I know exactly what he's talking about.

Also in the mail was a report on a crisis in ISKCON Italy. The Godbrother who wrote it said the Italian crisis cannot be separated from the general ISKCON crisis. He laid the blame on the leaders, and specifically the gurus, not only for falling down but for not taking personal care of those they presumed to accept as disciples. He said the very delicate process of converting from material life to Krishna consciousness should be supervised closely by the spiritual master.

I see his point, although I'm not able to give that kind of close, physical supervision. People know this, yet they still ask me to initiate them. Maybe they will blame me later.

After reading his report, I thought for a few moments that perhaps I should break out of my beloved routine and go to Italy. But I'm no knight on a white horse, able to save the situation. He already knows that. Anyway, what long-term good do my lectures to them do?

* * *

Boy, I am what I am stuff. The kid said his father was a devotee and an artist. He died, and the son is now repairing his father's sculpture at New Vrindavan.

Look, don't tell me all this stuff you read.

No, I have to tell you a little more. They want to know whether ISKCON criminals will be sent to jail. Do we have our own jails, or do we just turn them over to the demons?

Another says that it is a medieval measure to threaten devotees who don't comply with the official policy with excommunication, and to demand an *apriori* oath of allegiance. It's going to turn people away even more.

I forget what else. Oh, we're all invited to a conference in Washington, D.C., and, "What is feminism? Let's get back to *the Vedas*."

What is relevant? What am I going to take from the freedom movement, the women's movement, the harsh treatment, to go-with-the-latest-trend? What is best for me in my own floppy-disk following of my spiritual master? Do I agree and later regret? I say this, then look at the whole round of opinions.

At any rate, I will go out for a walk around the boards to think it all over. Can I be more present in my disciples' lives? Do I need to hold their hands with my physical presence in their temples? I wish they would read my books and understand what it is I'm trying to say. No, they say, they need to do my laundry and cook my lunch. The lectures I give are good too, they say, so they'll attend and listen. They want to see my thin face and thin sides. The books seem so incidental to them.

But what do they expect me to do? I am no devotee in a pinstriped *dhoti*. I am part of Prabhupada's army, true, but just a little guy who has to keep to himself to nurse his poor head.

Here is the youngest person ever to go on TV for Krishna. Here is the person who gave the most money without falling down while earning it. What body did we take next life? The *Bhagavad-gita* promises us something better, because we're trying to serve Krishna. I can't tell you more than that, and the newspaper certainly doesn't fill in any details.

* * *

8:30 a.m.

As I write, Syamananda is taking my photo to use on the inside flap of the EJW dust jacket. They say the photo in BTG is "too stern," so wait, let me soften my face. I posed and he's gone.

I look down at a picture of an antlered elk on the 7 K.r. Sverige postage stamp. Someone in Sweden read one of my books. Well, what's next? How to be kind to people, yet be ourselves. How to chant Hare Krishna, yet be ourselves? Yes, that's what I should do. Chant one round. Ask Krishna to always help us. Ask Him for the intelligence to serve truthfully and to preach with realization.

* * *

An advanced person realizes the impersonal Brahman. A more advanced person knows the personal features of the spiritual world. So Dhruva Maharaja finishes his prayers, praising the Lord as "the causelessly merciful maintainer, just like a cow, who takes care of the newly born calf by supplying milk and giving it protection from attack." (*Bhag.* 4.9.17)

Beloved routine, but I find myself looking at my watch and waiting for the next leg of the day's journey. I want to relax today. Once I wrote to Prabhupada that I wanted to do several things at once sometimes, such as washing dirty pots or reading or chanting. Which should I do? He replied that Krishna would give me the intelligence. Sometimes I might want to wash pots, and another time I might be happy to read or chant.

Krishna will tell me? Sounds good. I just have to tune in to my own intelligence, and as long everything gets done sooner or later, no problem.

Uninspired acts are not as valuable as inspired service. "A devotee must be very sincere in his devotional service; then, although there may be many things wrong on a devotee's part, Krishna will guide him and gradually elevate him to the highest position of devotional service." (*Bhag.* 4.9.16, purport)

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12:19 p.m.

A devotee from whom I haven't heard in years just wrote me, saying she is still an affectionate disciple. She included some Oriental poems written in a reclusive mood. I sent her some of my favorites in return, including the famous ones by Wang Wei and Li Po on the same theme.

I also wrote a letter to be distributed to the Italian disciples asking them to please write me. Maybe my letter-writing persona is like dancing in a mask, but I'm in earnest, especially when they are too.

Radha-Govinda in gold and purple today. I felt the beginning of a twinge, but doused it with a hot - cold water treatment. In that dream last night, the source of my chest pain was my trying to lead the *kirtana* at a meeting of disciples. I had to tone down and eventually stopped. Is that the physical reality?

Everyone's playing psychiatrist. Irish cardiologists won't see you unless you are referred by a general practitioner. We are seeing if they'll accept Samika Rsi's referral, even though he's in America. If not, that burning sensation will just have to go on.

* * *

4:00 p.m.

Bay tree, holly, laurel, bamboo, evergreen, creepers, and the plants close to the wall are all doing well. It makes me feel I shouldn't travel long away from here. These plants want me to see them grow. Of course, that's silly. It's better to travel to see humans in Italy or America than to watch plants grow in the backyard. Hare Krishna dasi can come while I'm gone and check on them. Hare Krishna heartburn. Is mint good for that? Thyme?

The wind is up. There's a gray-sharp, bottom-edged cloud over the Wicklow mountains. I can't hear anything over the wind.

It's Wednesday afternoon and Madhu has gone in to Dublin. It's a complicated trip to go see a doctor, so I may have to wait. The dark sky is liable to change. I feel drained of energy. Looking forward to this evening's rest.

Heard that Dr. Robbins said that preventative medications like Depakote are not as effective as people think they are. At best, forty-five percent of the patients benefit from preventatives. "However, what are the rest of the patients to do? Well, they generally do take things such as lots of Excedrin or other OTCs, prescription pain meds, opioids, triptins on a daily basis, etc. relatively few people do not medicate moderate to severe chronic daily headaches." I commiserate with all of them.

Yeah, it looks like a sheet of rain is moving across the valley. Better go inside.

* * *

5:10 p.m.

I've been reading a journal for migraineurs. "They think I'm a whiner," one says. "My boss told me if I take one more day off work, or even come into work looking like you might get a headache, he's going to fire me on the spot." I'm fortunate that I don't have to contend with all that.

I looked at my recently done artwork and thought it was harsh or sharp-edged, not kindly. I didn't want to put it on the walls.

I have to be detached from the results "perhaps not even attached to the process. Wait and see. Be quietly alert to sense what Krishna wants of you. In other words, if you're not so much asserting, controlling, and grabbing the steering wheel, jerking it to the left or right, maybe there'll be more of a chance of that power so much greater than you speaking through you. To feel Krishna's hand takes Krishna conscious sensitivity. Develop a gentle relationship with the Other.

Each person learns to do that in a different way. I read years ago how Brother Lawrence did it, and Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and others. But I couldn't do it in their way, because they're on a different path. Neither could I do it as the Six Gosvamis did, living in Vrndavana and writing Sanskrit poetry. I tried that more straight approach for many years and succeeded only to a limited degree. I'm feeling more in the human realm now, closer to myself, which means closer to Krishna.

Four percent of the U.S. population suffers from chronic headaches almost every day, with a severe headache once or twice a week.

The sun is moving in and out. I've learned to lie down and rest without an eye mask. My body has a delicate system, and I need to keep the balance. I read an article about the relationship between the immune system and headaches. Very complicated. The immune system patrols the body and knocks out or regulates disease critters. Sometimes the patrol workers becomes overactive and attack the body itself. Headaches sufferers have a certain . . . Couldn't figure it out as I read it. Immune system, headaches, triggers "but what are my triggers? I don't watch TV or go to loud parties where people are smoking and the stress runs high. I've been in this house since early spring, when the leaves were just tight buds. remember?

* * *

Pens in a bottle. Typewriter ribbon cartridges. On the front-page photo of workers on the "Abhay" set, one of the camera men was a thin young man nervously chewing his fingernails. An unsightly habit, and right in the photo. And they were *all* so thin. One might think that all this fighting and dissolving and weakness and bureaucracy in ISKCON would drive us to want to leave the material world. Oh, but are we ready to go to the spiritual world? No, but we mean we want to stay in ISKCON and don't care to join the *karmis'* parade. Sometimes we feel we're tired of ISKCON. O Krishna.

Toilet paper on desk, "Quiet Please" earplugs, a relaxation tape, a copy of Srila Prabhupada's *Namamrta*, which I haven't been reading, writing paper "the objects on my desk. Nothing else but a desk lamp, a typewriter, and my dancing fingers. I desire to hide the truth. I desire to write a book that would *be* the truth and so absorbing you could lean

back and say yes, I dedicated my life to that while others were out shooting rabbits. I was improving my soul, see?

* * *

5:45 p.m.

Dhruva Maharaja finished his prayer. Then the Lord spoke and said He would fulfill Dhruva's ambitious desires. Dhruva's case was special in that the Lord would award him great material wealth, yet he would not be deviated from love of God. The Lord told him he would be awarded the polestar, Dhruvaloka, and would live there for thirty-six thousand years. He also told him about the death of his stepmother, Suruci. Srila Prabhupada warns against insulting a Vaisnava or displeasing the spiritual master. The Lord assured Dhruva, "At the time of your death, you will be able to remember Me."

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6:35 p.m., Night Notes

Peaceful coming together of minimum requirements at night time. Radha-Govinda in Their pink night clothes. Prabhupada *murti*. Gather the simple items of a life of worship.

September 10, 12:00 a.m.

We *jivas* are God's marginal energy and He is the supreme energetic. He's not forced to do anything and He has inconceivable energies.

I've taken on the assignment to read all the words in this book, just as I expect someone to read all the words in one of my books. But I've already heard or read these words so many times. Would it be better to take a *lectio divina* approach? Somehow let me be with Prabhupada in his words, hear what he's saying, and enter *Krishna-katha*.

Krishna consciousness means to leave the marginal position and join Krishna in the spiritual world, where there is no more changing of bodies and suffering. People are blind to this, and they also elect blind leaders. The guru is one who can open our eyes.

M. returned around 11:30 p.m. I woke up when I heard the van. He might have come in and put the mail downstairs, but I haven't gone downstairs yet to see. I wanted to save myself to read *Quest*.

Quest? Am I questing? reviving what I already "know," the tenets of our religion. Do the people in other religions become ecstatic? Sure, every religion has some ecstatic saints. They also have their nominal members, like we do, and the dutiful, like us. Bhaktivinoda Thakura speaks of the difference between burden-carriers and those who know the actual essence. I would like to be in a state where my rising at midnight is proof of my personal desire to be with my Friend as soon as possible in a day. That's why I sometimes like to hear of St. Francis of Assisi. Even though he's in an "inferior" *rasa* with God as the almighty and opulent Father, he glows in ecstasy and desires to surrender more and more. In short, he's a *sadhu*. I often say I don't want to become such a saint; it's too dangerous, too all-consuming. Then? Face your Elmer Fuddism.

For Krishna there is no distinction between His body and His soul (although certain rascal scholars don't know this). "Also, there is no distinction between Himself and His Deity form made of stone." When we understand Krishna, we are liberated. "So keep yourself in Krishna consciousness. Kali will not be able to touch you."

That finishes that essay. Let's begin another. Once I get underway, I like reading them. Talks about Krishna are transcendental. The next is called "The Fall of The Soul" (uh-oh, a controversial title for some). This is based on a talk Prabhupada gave when he was in Tokyo in 1972. He was traveling around the world lecturing at that time, being there for his disciples.

For us, he's the only one. We burn with sorrow or envy that other gurus come now and appear to do what he did. It's also sad that we are not carrying on his work in an exemplary manner in this movement. We could blame so many for this, including ourselves, but for now, I think we'll just read. Reading can revive our integrity and faith. Yes, the fall of the soul.

It's nice to know that Prabhupada speaks on the basis of a *Srimad-Bhagavatam* verse, in this case, *Bhag. 2.9.1*: Unless the soul is influenced by Krishna's bewildering energy "there is no meaning to the relationship of the pure soul . . . with the material body. That relationship is just like a dreamer's seeing his own body working."

The living entity has not actually fallen, "but he is thinking, 'I am fallen. I am material. I am this body.'" Controversial topics were never controversial when Srila Prabhupada was present. He answered the questions as much as he wanted and not more than that, and we shut up and stopped asking and didn't form parties or debate endlessly over the issues.

"The body has no connection with the soul. We can experience this. The body is changing, dying, but I am the same." It's time for me, more than ever, to show some realization of this as my bodily pain increases. I should demonstrate detachment. Detachment isn't the same as neglect. But there's a limit to what doctors and hospital tests can do. I'm not the body. I suffer because I think I have a connection with the body. "My heart (chest) hurts. My head. I have a headache." It's the illusory energy making the identification. It's due to forgetfulness of Krishna.

We wanted to act as enjoyer, as Krishna, so He has given us full facility to be completely convinced so that we can play the part. As Prabhupada said in Tokyo, "But if you feel, 'I am Karandhara,' then you cannot play a king so nicely. . . . You have to forget that you are Karandhara."

* * *

4:22 a.m.

We are devotees who want to praise Krishna in everything we do. If we sit in a darkened theater listening to a Brahms violin concerto (or to Sidney Bechet), or if we are toweling ourselves off after a bucket shower (alternating hot and cold water), or if we're being as honest as possible, or if we catch ourselves deceiving ourselves or others, we have no hope but to praise Krishna and turn to Him.

But Krishna consciousness doesn't come to us so easily. We have to be strict "no *gramya-katha*. Follow the guru. Live in the temple. Be transcendental.

"Intolerable purity." Weeping, he was just a man who drank a lot of strong coffee and smoked cigars. He lived alone in a boarding room, but all day he wrote music and tried to attain purity of emotion. He was asking the questions in his music which should not be answered too quickly or glibly even by devotees of Krishna. Yes, we know all the answers, but as the poet says, it's best to live with the questions for a good while.

You mean, "Who am I? Who is God? What is the meaning of existence?" Yes, those questions and others.

When, Lord? And how? These questions may be asked. What does He want us to do? How will we be able to rise above and be braver and do more? What about the gathering of doubts? So much failure, individual and group. Can we just become caring and say, "Okay, we forgive everyone." Amnesty. Stop the accusing and the lording over. Stop asking the institution to care for us. And you, Institution, stop bossing people around. And you, gurus, get off your high horses and stop collecting money and disciples.

Oh, but what about the work to be done? It can never be solved. Pluralism rules and that means you don't agree with me nor I with you. I say forgive and you say punish. I say relax and you say tighten up. Then? Shall we go alone, each one or each community? Or settle for a businesslike staying together, reluctantly, because Prabhupada wanted it?

Please . . . help us.

* * *

Mister, keep writing out of your cat gut. Did cats actually have to give up their intestines to make violin strings? Isaac Stern sawed his way through the Brahms violin concerto. Should I ask? Are my eyes buttons of pearls from a dead calf? Do I live and walk over the bones of my ancestors? Did I betray my father? Did he kill my spirit?

Psycho-babble. Spirit rant. Hare Krishna. You are about to get over your lullaby. I like it very much how you, a contaminated lout, can write along to a singfest. I want to praise Krishna. Ah, it was done so precisely and with nectar by Narottama dasa Thakura in his *Prema-bhakti-candrika*. Hear of Krishna and the *gopis*, and don't do anything but serve Krishna. The Lord of all existence lives in Nanda Maharaja's home. He stands in a three-fold bending form beside His beautiful radha: KiSora-kiSori, Yugala-kiSora. He wears yellow garments. She sometimes wears blue. I don't know anything about *rasa*, but I have heard that this is the best of all treasure chests.

So we shall hear of Krishna and how He is the supreme truth, the creator of all universes, and therefore when we meet Him by hearing the Tenth Canto (*Hisnara-lila*), we won't mistake Him for an ordinary person. Hare Krishna.

Hurry and get those clothes hung up on the line. I'm asking, "May I surrender here?" Will you please give me, Gurudeva, the necessary wherewithal to cast aside false garlands? Let me be who I am in your service. Let me not be a token disciple but let prose overrun to glorify you. It's my way of bringing the garden to perfection.

The wind-music is calling me to go outside and stride around, chanting a round "my beloved routine. I love it. *Krishna is here*."

* * *

8:05 a.m.

In the mail: the monthly sum-up of world events, which Kr makes up for me from various news sources. A month late I have now learned of President Clinton's confession of a sexual affair with Monica L., terrorist bombings against the U.S. Embassy in Kenya, bombing by a splinter group of the IrA in Northern Ireland, and U.S. bombings in the Mid-East against terrorist bases. I also received a copy of *ISKCON Communications Journal* with its articles on child abuse in ISKCON. I resisted reading much of any of this. I don't want to know all this. It punctures my heart. It's as if I'm saying, "Whatever I already know of the material world is enough. Whatever I know of the ways of ISKCON is enough. Now let me work out my own attitudes toward it all by living alone. Self-improvement is my contribution to ISKCON's improvement."

But I can't create such a cocoon. Even if I could keep out news of the world beyond my gate, it's impossible to maintain my own status quo. My own body betrays me. I will be forced to leave this life. radical changes are in store for each of us. Nevertheless, I have to live in a way that makes the most sense to me now, even though I know I'm going to die.

* * *

8:40 a.m.

"Despite having achieved the desired result of his determination by worshiping the lotus feet of the Lord, Dhruva Maharaja was not very pleased." (*Bhag.* 4.9.27) Srila Prabhupada: ". . . he was ashamed he had demanded something from the Lord, for he should not have done this." A pure devotee only wants to serve the Lord. He's not concerned about what will happen in the future. When Dhruva Maharaja saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead personally, he lost his material desires and was elevated to the Vasudeva platform. From His side, the Supreme Lord knew the desires in Dhruva's heart, and He wanted to award them.

Srila Prabhupada discusses *mukti. Sayujya*, becoming one with the impersonal Brahman, is not counted among the forms of Vaisnava liberation. "According to them, *mukti* means transferal to the loving service of the Lord from one's position of serving *maya*." (*Bhag.* 4.9.29, purport)

The Lord knows what we are thinking. What am I thinking? Is this book a record of my thoughts? To some degree. More shameful things I don't put into writing. Maybe even things that are better than what I write are also in me "spiritual aspirations. I don't always mention them explicitly. So I can't claim I know who I am or what I think, or how the Lord sees me just because I write EJW. But He does see all, and He will award me my desires or not, as He sees fit. I want to be satisfied with however He chooses to deal with me. I ask for increased faith and devotion. On the material side, I already know that I'm afraid of duress. I want ease. A spiritual atmosphere and practice, a creative outlet. A nice breakfast and lunch.

Imagine getting to see God personally and asking for something trivial. To some degree we do that when we meet Srila Prabhupada, receive from him Lord Caitanya's blessings in the form of the order to chant Hare Krishna and worship the Deity, yet we say, "Oh, is that all? It doesn't seem to satisfy. How about _____?"

"Alas, just look at me! I am so unfortunate. I approached the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who can immediately cut the chains of repetition of birth and death, but still, out of foolishness, I prayed for things which are perishable."
(*Bhag.* 4.9.31)

* * *

10:11 a.m.

Talking with M. about my chest pain. We decided not to mess with the Irish medical system. It's too slow, requires too many trips to Dublin, and because Ireland is a poor country, doesn't really have the best medical facilities. We will either wait until January and have it checked out in America, or go now either to America or England. Whatever we choose, I could stay at a disciple's house and be treated quickly by a Hindu doctor. America would be better than England in the sense that the Hindu doctors we know are also my disciples. Amazing that we are suddenly considering interrupting the beloved routine and running off to America.

Why am I so concerned about the chest pain? Because heart disease is life-threatening. The headaches are benign in that sense. They attack my quality of life, but not my life duration. Sorry to bring all this up from this quiet monk's haven. I thought I'd be staying here uninterrupted from September until December, but even as I write, I feel the presence of that burning discomfort in my chest.

Of course, my writing life is portable and will continue from airport to airplane. I will sing the free-write blues wherever I am. If we end up in America, I'll give lectures. I'm not a better lecturer than others. What do I have to say that's so special? The same old thing we all know from reading scripture. We say it to newcomers, and we say it again and again to the old-timers. Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and all the incarnations come from Him. The universes also come from Him. The main thing is that we have become convinced, develop faith, and practice with enthusiasm. If we're fortunate, we'll also be given the ability to convince others of the truth and to hold their attention in a lecture. Prabhupada gave faith to the faithless.

I have spent a lot of time in my writing exposing my own lack of faith (my doubts) whenever I find any. It's a method of purification to remove falsity. Another approach might be to go ahead and speak on the scriptures, glorifying the Lord despite our shortcomings. I don't say we should bluff, but give lectures that force us to be faithful. Perhaps that helps too. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna.

Perhaps what's wrong with my heart is that it's beating against that steel frame and it's becoming uncomfortable.

* * *

10:38 a.m.

Just talk to me a little. You're shocked and disappointed in Clinton, you say? He's still rated high in job performance. Americans, however, have rated him low "as a man." I can't care about him. I need to preach Krishna consciousness. It's strange how we connect things. We may go to America for one reason and turn it into something else. Become the savior of ISKCON.

Don't make me laugh. Don't
make me
pain.

Listen to your soul and pursue what it tells you. Hare Krishna will tell you what to do. Chanting Hare Krishna leads to chanting Hare Krishna. If your chest hurts, take it to the doctor. If your soul yearns, bring it under the guru's scrutiny.

If you want God, chant His holy names. Where does it hurt? How can you chant, sir? Would you like to be in better shape?

TKG's diary now published. I remember they used to measure Prabhupada's urine and food intake. Looking for signs of hope. Then they decided he'd get better if he went to England to preach. But that wasn't to be. Hare Krishna.

* * *

He's playing his cello, the great man, and we may listen. It's the same boring thing everywhere, complete with signs of decay as Kali-yuga progressed. A *sannyasi* should try to get around more, but what can he actually do? Everyone is on their own, it seems.

The attack of the man upon the words that ordinarily come "he wants to see it improve. There's no way out of this. Burke-rocheford. Tune in to what Srila Prabhupada wanted, and don't always blame the elite *sannyasis*. Who tried to follow what the master said? Take responsibility for your own portion of blame. We know to do that much by now, I hope.

Anyway, let me stay out of the controversies that swirl. Can I say something more worthy from a position of a removed non-control? I'm okay when Krishna is speaking to me and I can hear. Someone read my book and enjoyed it. Wake up when they talk like that and realize it's important to you. Out of all I do, I'll get some results like that. Hare Krishna is best.

Kr told me that the U.S.S. Saratoga went from the Philadelphia yards to another berth in New England. Fate still uncertain. I don't care. My days aboard are over.

* * *

12:18 p.m.

Read the articles on child abuse in ISKCON. It made me more aware how I've dropped out of management. I'm shy to admit it. I don't want to be seen as unfaithful to Srila Prabhupada, or as a deviant *sannyasi* or a shirker. I could imagine an ISKCON scholar describing my situation in a cold, analytical way: Dropped out, burned by his own guilt, handicapped by headaches (of a psychological origin?), simply not able to cope. Drops out of e-mail, out of work, out of leadership. Maintains guru position, perhaps in part since it's his only means of economic livelihood. Lives in semi-retirement in Ireland. Publishes books and hopes his private view can be a good influence on ISKCON.

It's a fact I can't face up to or work with ISKCON's problems anymore. The constant clashing of opinions in this movement is one of the reasons that I resigned from the GBC in 1986. I am simply not a manager, not a *ksatriya*, not anyone at all who can endure

what others take as normal. I can survive, however, and take *sadhana* seriously. Try to give that emphasis to others. To help.

* * *

2:58 p.m.

Although Dhruva Maharaja was initiated by Narada Muni into the Visnu mantra, he still aspired for material benefits. "In other words, every one of us who is engaged in devotional service, in Krishna consciousness, should be completely free from all material aspirations. Otherwise we will have to lament like Dhruva Maharaja."
(*Bhag.* 4.9.31, purport)

Dhruva thought that maybe the envious demigods had conspired against him to pollute his intelligence. He regretted that he couldn't take Narada's instructions seriously about not seeking revenge and a temporary kingdom. Dhruva also regretted that he had distinguished between friend and enemy. He was making material distinctions and not seeing the essential oneness of all spirit souls (*pandita sama darSinah*).

"Because of my complete foolishness and paucity of pious activities, although the Lord offered me His personal service, I wanted material name, fame and prosperity."
(*Bhag.* 4.9.35)

Maitreya has been telling us Dhruva's history. He now tells Vidura that pure devotees like him are always satisfied to serve the Lord's lotus feet and never ask Him for material prosperity. "One has to discharge his devotional duties without being disturbed by the coming and going of material circumstances . . . A devotee should always remain satisfied with the standard of comforts offered by the Lord, as stated in the *ISopanisad* (*tena tyaktena bunjitha*). This saves time for executing Krishna consciousness." (*Bhag.* 4.9.36, purport)

* * *

3:45 p.m.

Oh, it's this way in the world. People are dumb indeed, and blinded by *maya*. They don't know what every devotee knows.

Tell 'em, Steve.

Yeah, well, we know that spirit soul is the real thing. We know the facts.

But O ISKCON, you have failed in so many ways. With cynical bitterness we talk on the internet, instant messages on everyone's screen, telling the bad news about how we've been treated.

What will rescue us now? All I can say is that we are chanting and blasting our way through. We will get through.

Now this man over here has a twinge in his eye, and that other fellow has a back ache. This mother has arthritic pain, and this one a panic attack. If we're all smart, we'll pray to Krishna, not for material relief, but for love of God.

It's coming on fast, this daily pain. I can resort to the med-and-bed routine, I suppose, but nothing will help but Lord Hari's eternal service. It's almost four and what more needs to be said?

* * *

5:30 p.m.

Is there anybody out there who writes like me? Yes, the folks on the migraine journal. real writers. Honky tonks. Is there anyone that plays the soprano sax like me? Yeah, Sidney Bechet. "Ain't Mishavin'" "that's one of my theme songs, isn't it? I want to convey that message to the GBC and *Sannyasa* Ministry, and of course, to the ISKCON world. I ain't misbehavin'.

Feverfew means you get few fevers when you eat this flower. It doesn't get you high, don't worry.

Oh, they are looking over my shoulder. I shouldn't have said that. I must do the right thing. I *should* do the right thing, unafraid of whether anyone sees me or not.

A *sadhu* has no really private life, nothing to hide. He types even on rainy days.

From your life is the structure. From your heaven is the hell. Geez, man, I do like the way you guys spout your Krishna consciousness. Tell us some tenets of your Krishna conscious approach to writing.

Okay.

(1) As long as you follow the four rules, chant sixteen rounds, and behave in other Vaisnava ways, then your life will be free of chaos. Everything will fall instead into a pattern, even if you can't always recognize that. From that pattern, you write as freely as you like.

(2) There is a place for sociologists like Burke-rocheford, and a place for poetic diggers into the "unconscious."

(3) By unconscious I mean that which of which we are not conscious. To write from that place allows us to cut through and deliver something that can't be said otherwise.

(4) If you don't know what I am saying or don't agree with me, fine.

(5) You don't write for the audience but for yourself. That is then offered to the audience as, "This is what I did at my best. I hope you like it. I was trying to pray to God here."

(6) You have faith that a day itself and attempting to write what you think and feel and do throughout the hours of that day forms a natural structure, is worthy, is rigorous, artistic, and certainly can be used in Krishna's service.

(7) The USS Saratoga was bumped from the shipyard in Philadelphia and sent up to a New England port. Her fate is still not decided. I told you that already. I am glad to be free of the life I lived aboard her. I am glad to be free of the Lower East Side and of other things. I like where I am now. I also want to accept whatever is coming to me. This ends my list for the time being.

If you chant Hare Krishna in prose, that's a good thing to do. It saves you. You have to be empowered to praise Lord Hari. If you met Srila Prabhupada, you're lucky. Now give to others what he taught you in a way that's natural for you. Chanting Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, all the way.

Written in Blessington on the night of our Lord Krishna, September 10, 1998, while the winds howled and nobody came to bother us. Madhu's taking the kids out for music and dance lessons tonight.

September 11, 3:10 a.m.

Couldn't sleep overnight. Got up at 1:00 a.m. and chanted. Too late to read *Quest*. What to do now? Mechanical rounds. Hopeless. Could it be that my heart "burn" is the flame of love they spoke about in *Philokalia*? Oh yeah, sure. Don't worry if you feel a pain in your heart region; it's caused by chanting Hare Krishna. It's the *anarthas* burning up. Check out the mystical literature and see if you've got any good symptoms. One round every eight minutes, ten seconds. A very slow burn.

Maybe I'll get a chance later to catch up on my reading. Now I'm on my way down to the bathroom to hear him lecture on Ajamila. Nowadays everyone is lusty, even the U.S. president.

* * *

4:45 a.m.

Adagio ma non troppo. We've heard so many sad things about the decrepit, corrupt, failing ISKCON, yet it's not depicted in the pages of our magazine or newspaper. Child abuse, temples in North America almost uninhabited, elitism, casteism, falldowns. No end to it all. Yet the philosophy is pure and strong, isn't it?

The flowers in my garden have mostly survived the rain and wind. I have survived too, at least until I die.

Dark part of himself? He says he's troubled by lack of confidence "like that skinny nail-biter on the "Abhay" film crew. The garlanded director's assurance is a different thing. I want to be a model disarmer. Show the prime minister how to play the harp "Mary Kelly extended her hand in a kind of pose. There was no way she could teach a politician the harp in one posed sitting.

The automatic hands. There's a similarity in these fugues, governor. Here, just put your hands on the strings. Blow into this mouthpiece.

When Krishna-Balaram temple opened. You have to know for yourself.

Dear reader, I'm going at this in tatters and pieces, because it builds my confidence. I believe that ultimately there is a pattern even where things appear chaotic. Everything is included in Krishna's energies.

Clinton's act is a betrayal of trust in him. We feel spiritually abused when ISKCON's caretakers abuse children, and when *sannyasi* gurus give up their vows. We were told one thing, but now . . . What do you mean, "everything is included in Krishna's energies?" What do you mean we should forgive each other just as we forgive our enemies?

All these character traits come in handy when we ourselves want a reprieve. What about the one thousand heroin addicts in New York City who are being kicked off methadone? They are "vulnerable," but still they must get kicked off, says Mayor Guilliani. What about the Guarinos and their last male survivor?

I mean, why should we forgive unlimitedly? We can't.

All right, but then let us punish *you*. The demon wanted to touch Lord Siva's head, but he was tricked by Lord Narayana into trying the boon out on his own head. This is forgiveness. This is the Lord's mercy. It all belongs.

* * *

The finale "*allegro moderato*. rostoprovich, please bow that cello. Bring us a triumph, at least in your music. Otherwise, there is too much defeat and death and wastage of money on billion-dollar roman candles. Too many space-backs, uh, setbacks. The spacey, groggy rashes of side effects from headache meds. Ghost writers for gurus in their Vyasa-puja homages. Oranges and tangerines.

Please spare those bulls (oxen) and cows. No, that you can't do. You may have won first prize in the singing contest, but we can't print your spiel for a vegetarian diet in this land of cow-killing.

The heart may burn when you bring Lord Hari's name down attentively from the mind to your heart (*samadayoh manordi*) as did the meditator who stood on one foot. Thought of Lord Hari and nothing else, with love.

Virtuous. Are you still with me? I'm trying to make these tatters come together in some hopeful message for the Krishna consciousness movement. Not for their newspaper or 'zine, but for my own permissive brook

where the rocks are very old and
fresh water comes down the hill
with each rain, running over the dead, the
bones over the chanting of God's names
drowning the sound
but not the intent.

Please give us emotion, a prayer
a response.

* * *

Now a face
now a farce
"The Gladiators."

* * *

Muscle bound men and women
I saw in the same weekly
Wicklow newspaper where

* * *

Madhu Maurice king of
Fleadh was on the front page for
first prize in Sean-nos singing "

A Hare Krishna does it, but he doesn't want it printed in *Hare Krishna World*, where it would be seen as publicity and not what he actually feels as he does this, his integrity, his relish and desire to sing as a devotee. He likes the people and the music and the way it brings Hare Krishna to their attention.

So let him go out
and me go in
without so much worry
of bodily ailment.
Rise above it and contemplate Lord Krishna the
Supreme.

* * *

5:40 a.m.

Shake it and break it. Well, I walked as fast as I could around our yard, got the thing up to ninety and fifty-seven "pulse and blood pressure. But what does it all mean? Just be a little detached and I'll tell you at the 7:00 news. That's when my secretary will meet me for our daily summit conference and tell me how the world is whirling around my little cabin insights.

Hare Krishna "the only hymn. Gotta swing with it and with them *kirtana* boys, who know how to wail on home.

* * *

Now let me tell you 'bout the old man blues. He can't have sex or fried foods. He can't move like he used to either. Women think he's dead as stone. He's got no money to spend on them either. Now he's got new pains along with the old complaints. His face is more wrinkled every year.

They have old men's jiggling clubs for his kind, but he doesn't go to any of those places. He's no dirty old man. He aspires to be a clean *brahmana* who, as he gets older, becomes finer and more one-pointed in his intelligence. He surrenders to God and asks less for himself. His heart is light.

He practices his riffs until he's so good at them. Then he feels himself waning, running out of steam. Every function seems to scare him. Maybe this will be the thing that will do him in. In a clear moment he realizes that there is no medical treatment for what he's got "mortality. It's incurable. So there's no point worrying about it. All he can do is go on while he can, preaching, praying, leaving things behind. Krishna is with him. He laughs through his old-man blues, an eternal soul, preparing to move on.

* * *

9:10 a.m.

Dhruva Maharaja ruled his kingdom for a very long time. Then he retired to BadarikaSrama. He had become a *maha-bhagavata* and had realized that material engagement was *maya*. He practiced yoga and fixed his mind on the *arca-vigraha* form

of the Lord. He then experienced the *asta-sattvika-vikara*, indicating that he was liberated.

An example to illustrate this type of liberation: the inner core of a coconut separates completely from its shell. "Similarly, when one is fully absorbed in devotional service, he is completely disconnected from the two material coverings, the subtle and gross bodies." (*Bhag.* 4.12.18, purport)

When you think of something while reading and writing, yet you don't want to write it down, is that right? Is it discrimination? Or is it writing block? I can't ask anyone this question. I must decide on it myself. A rule of thumb: if the thought remains insistent, it would be more honest to write it down and thus use the energy it is generating. What will repression accomplish?

For example, I keep mentioning the pain in my chest. I can't ignore it; I have to tell people about it. Last night M. phoned Samika Rsi and told him about the pain and gave him my pulse and blood pressure. Sr said the pulse, fifty something, was alarmingly low. He guessed that the pain could actually be in the heart. Perhaps I have poor circulation. He's sending some harmless Ayurvedic medicines to deal with that. He wants us to go on taking my blood pressure and pulse to monitor the condition, both when my body is at rest and after exertion. Was Dhruva Maharaja beyond this sort of worry in his *mukta-linga* stage? Apparently yes.

Dhruva Maharaja saw the airplanes from Vaikuntha arriving to deliver him. He had received the Lord's special favor. "One can rise, however, to this platform of knowledge by the gradual process of advancing in devotional service, or Krishna consciousness." (*Bhag.* 4.12.19, purport)

Now my attention flickers. remember that cold night I spent with the other junior Boy Scouts in that outdoor lean-to? I lived among strangers on that trip. The fires were smoky the next day. Thinking over the horrific tales of neglect and abuse told by the generation of persons who grew up as children of ISKCON parents.

Two Visnudutas appeared before Dhruva Maharaja, but he was "puzzled" upon seeing them and didn't know how to properly receive them. Therefore, he chanted and glorified Lord Visnu's holy name. Srila Prabhupada remarks that chanting is always fitting, whether we are in danger or are happy. It's always the perfect greeting. It makes any occasion right.

Dhruva Maharaja was *sammata*, obedient and agreeable to the Lord's will. The thing about the *gurukula* generation and our failure as a movement is that it tends to sour everything. *Gurukulis* are also blaming Srila Prabhupada for not stopping the abuse. After reading what they have said, it's possible to feel soured when you turn to Prabhupada's purports. He seems to be preaching so many ideals. What happened? Perhaps you don't need to hear all these ideals anymore. Better you spend your time rectifying all these horrible situations. How can I claim I'm exempt from the responsibility for what has gone on in this movement? How can I go on reading perfect knowledge?

But I do. You go on. What choice do you have?

* * *

12:32 p.m.

I really liked hearing Prabhupada narrate the story of Krishna in the arena talking with Canura. It sounded great. His Vraja pastimes are the best, yet *all* His *lilas* are relishable. It's amazing how He performs them all, first preferring one mood, then giving His attention to another.

But it was disturbing today to get a letter from a disciple in Italy. The temples are decimated. One of the Gaudiya Math gurus is reinitiating many of the Italian devotees. There are only fifteen devotees left at Villa Vrndavana. This devotee is himself depressed and confused. What can I advise him? I can't change the situation. He says his guru (me) is far away. I'd probably bail out if I were there, at least from the most distressful aspects of the scene. Things just seem to get worse and worse no matter who goes there, because so many previous leaders and gurus in Italy have fallen and broken the faith.

* * *

2:39 p.m.

Mentally tired after a morning of marathon letter-answering. I still have the one to Italy left. Tell him to maintain hope, even though we cannot save the larger situation. I'll encourage him to at least save himself, to protect his consciousness. How will he do it? No man is an island. It's the larger situation that troubles him "the dissolution of temples, the cooperative spirit, and the inspired leadership. Will I advise him to withdraw? Is that what I have done?

At least I'll encourage him not to become confused and desperate to the point of giving up his Krishna consciousness. Better to stay aligned with Srila Prabhupada's teachings and practices and associate with like-minded devotees. I hope whatever I say will be meaningful to him. I don't just want to pat his head and say, "Everything will be all right." He needs a message of spiritual hope despite living with a situation that feeds his darker side.

* * *

4:30 p.m.

I was outside. rain dripping. Some polly noses have fallen to the ground and some pink flowers have been knocked over. Caranaravinda is here to take a few drops of blood from my finger for a cholesterol test. I hear Irish trad music coming from Madhu's hut. I'm walking around, looking here and there, on a recreation break from writing and reading. Cruise along after typical afternoon twinge (fourth day in a row it has come at that time), treated with feverfew. Finally answered all the mail. Today the routine has been shortened, and I hope it will enliven me to bounce back more voluntarily tomorrow. I'm not inclined to go to America for special heart disease investigations.

September 12, 2:36 a.m.

Another delayed beginning to my schedule. Missed the midnight reading. This is my longest essay in defense of why I am not on a team to prevent child abuse or other more

recognizable ISKCON services. I had a headache overnight, see, despite both feverfew and Esgic. Still have the vise sensation. Decided my service should be the nonlinear, poetic approach. Hope to begin a Biggie Sketch feature just for fun. Going to *japa* now. I quest for *Quest* reading, but need a better head and a good night's rest first.

* * *

Biggie Sketch

The heart is a lonely hunter, a plant aorta "ventricle. It is a fleshy part and somehow home to the infinitesimal soul. Sorry, man. If I had read Swamiji's book, I'd be better able to tell you more about the heart.

This reader wants to be reader-friendly
bradycardia is when the heart beats
are too slow "like fifty or less
per minute.

Sound that melancholic cello
and move those wrist sinews to sign up for heaven
or to approximate a message
a cry
for help.

Mantras float in and out of my brain
and nurture the soul
as I wish to nurture
all those who come to me
But I can't fake it
and don't want to.
I'd rather be a real person
with no profile
in this upside-down world.

* * *

4:45 a.m.

Someone wonders how we can be happy with all the suffering, but I think we need exultation as an alternative to misery. Transcendental knowledge really is the only way to get beyond worldly suffering. It sounds glib, I know, but it's true. Only Krishna consciousness can underline suffering, then show us how to leave it behind.

We're not meant to be happy alone. Prahlada Maharaja advises that we don't all move to the Himalayas to find a little peace, but to the cities to share Krishna consciousness with others.

So, my brothers are in the cities, and I'm here behind a wall having my blood pressure taken five times a day. Oh well, I have already told you why. O proud soldiers in cities and behind walls, don't allow your spiritual pride to pull you down. Because then you will disappoint so many people. Clinton asked both his friends and enemies to forgive him. But does anyone forget how he betrayed their trust? No one asked us to be heroes; we have been asked to be humble and honest.

* * *

5:54 a.m.

From *Quest*: We identify with the body. We think we're American or Europeans or intellectuals or whatever. All illusion. We play roles, and Krishna gives us the facility to get into it. "But if you think, 'I am Karandhara playing the part of the king,' then you cannot play the part convincingly." (*Quest*, p. 58) Srila Prabhupada mentions that he played the part of Advaita Acarya in a play when he was a young man. "Our director, Amrit Lal Bose, repeatedly said to me, 'Feel like Advaita Acarya.'" The bewildering energy is directing us in a certain way ""Be a Beat poet," "Be anything you like," and it's even possible to play-act at being a *sannyasi*, a guru, a leader, or an advanced devotee. None of this has anything to do with our eternal identity, which Lord Caitanya described as *trnad api sunicena*.

Writing this, I think of one of my disciples who loves it when I cut myself down and leap from exalted titles and seats. Would he like to drag me through the street too? "That's our guru. He finally got humble." Maybe they wouldn't, but it would be good for me.

We cannot be fallen, but we have created an illusion in which we think we are fallen (see p. 59, of *Quest*). We play out our roles, but at death Krishna takes everything away. As we may wake from a dream when it becomes too fearful, so we may break the material connection as soon as we awaken to Krishna consciousness.

* * *

9:04 a.m.

If you become obedient to the Supreme Personality of Godhead's orders, you can overcome the laws of nature. "What was possible for Dhruva Maharaja is possible for everyone." (*Bhag.4.12.22*, purport). It may take time. We have to persevere. Srila Prabhupada writes that the leaders of the Krishna consciousness movement must start educational institutions to train children beginning at age five. This is still true, but nowadays, no one wants to imagine how it can be done. It's too big a project and is likely to turn out a big mess. People will resent anyone who tries it. They might even lynch them. Better not to try anything. These defeatist thoughts come in the wake of failure. Let everyone take care of themselves and leave it at that. Simply remind one another of Krishna.

Read how Nanda and Sunanda spoke to Dhruva, "We have been deputed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead to take you to the spiritual world."

That much I can do "read with quiet faith. Maybe later I will be able to repeat what I have understood to others. Tell them that Srila Prabhupada assured us that anyone can attain the same perfection Dhruva Maharaja attained. If they ask how they should educate their children, make money, and where they should live, tell them they'll have to figure that out for themselves.

How should *I* live? I also have to figure it out from what I have understood from Srila Prabhupada.

Three ways to move in outer space: spaceship, pigeons, and *akasa-patna*, spiritual airplane.

Could you please tell me about the pigeon carrier?

I'd rather not. Go ask Sadaputa Prabhu.

But does it bother you?

No, I've read things just as strange, such as about *timingala* fish, eagles so large they fly from planet to planet, and more. Anything is possible in this culture, it seems.

It's also possible that we don't know at all what is meant by an "ocean of milk" or an "ocean of liquor." Even the polestar (Dhruvaloka) we can't understand. What is the SiSumara planetary system? The Milky Way?

But I have read of machines like ECGs, ultrasounds, and others. There's little mystery behind their workings.

Oh no? Then why is there heart disease at all? Why don't the machines both predict and cure it? Why when the heart stops beating can no one revive it?

Pigeons. You stay here and wonder what it means; I'll go on to the next verse and purport. They invited Dhruva to board the plane. They would take him to his eternal life. He's going. Even on his way to Vaikuntha, please note that Dhruva first bathed his body as usual, then humbly asked the sages at BadarikaSrama for blessings. After that, he was transformed; his body became spiritual. Srila Prabhupada comments that the Visnu temple is also spiritual.

You mean ISKCON Chicago? The ISKCON building on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston?

Yes, each one.

What about my home altar?

It depends.

And what about the blowing up of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi by a terrorist? A hundred and fifty people were killed and thousands injured. What about it? How does it fit in? And what about the thousands killed in floods in China? This sort of thing keeps happening.

As Dhruva Maharaja attempted to board the transcendental plane, he saw Death personified approaching him. He put his feet on Death's head and boarded the plane. Is that metaphorical language or what? A devotee's death is completely different from a nondevotee's death.

* * *

10:00 a.m.

Biggie Sketch

Keep writing, stretching, working. Big handwriting. I may be interrupted. Or he may forget to come up. Even one sentence more is something.

I have a little life, I too

can get blown to bits. He

asked me what kind of funeral do

I want? I said, "First catch me."

* * *

I said, "Do what ISKCON law says."
Do they say a *sannyasi* and guru should be
ditched in salt or burned? A tomb
in Mayapur? But wherever my books are
there I am too.

* * *

He asked how it feels now. I
said, "Not bad." Put it into words.
that burning-stabbing-tearing
pain. He wrote it down.

* * *

Does this deserve divided lines? M. Smyth. Smithwick.
Dhruva's men.
A boring lecturer/ a good
lecturer. A lecture well-prepared.
Travel into Dublin to speak and then return. Was it worth it? At least they know I'm
still alive. They don't want to travel to where I am just as I don't want to travel to where
they are. I wish I could just forget all this misery was happening, he said. Said who?
Thank God and win a grateful heart.

* * *

Sanskrit squiggles. Your face is shaved. Your humor is . . . also your arms are props.
Your books tell histories, and *sastras* are completely distinct. Among *sastras*, *Srimad-
Bhagavatam* and company are *completely* distinct. You have to read them as if
understanding that from the beginning. He joked about death, a little sorry he had to
write so much about his pain. As if death is the end and the *sastra's* promises all empty.
Dhruva stepped on the head of Death as if it were the front steps leading to his house.
An insult to Yama? I don't exactly know. He entered the Vaikuntha airplane which was
as big as a city. We take liberties with straight logic to argue in favor of God and
whatever guru and *sastra* say. We're not neutral. We want Krishna to win. "You know
where my sympathies lie," said Phil Rizzuto. "It's with the pinstripes." That's
understandable. Similarly . . . And the Scooter said, "You don't know what it's like. You
never wore them [the uniform of the New York Yankees], so you have a right to sing the
blues." Similarly, we Krishnaites know Krishna in Vrndavana and want to defend His
honor.

I heard Srila Prabhupada say Krishna grabbed Canura and whirled him around (before
thousands of cheering fans). Canura died by the power of the centrifugal force. Then one
after another, the other wrestlers came forward to be killed with a casual punch of a

negligent left hand, or kicked in the head by Krishna or Balarama. Each was liberated. Finally, the prize: Kamsa himself was quickly killed and on his way to Vaikuntha.

Repeating it mildly doesn't raise my pulse.
It's the waiting for lunch that does it "such
exertion.

M.'s starting to burn turf in his
stove. He's the king of the Fleadh
and I'm a quark of the ney.

* * *

O Krishna be kind You
are and I forgive too
even Bill and the Monicas only
if they'll take to chanting Hare Krishna
once again.

* * *

Was I right in nothing? Yes, you were right to like ducks on morning walks. A pen in your hand. You're right to be detached from whatever you drew. You were right to say prayers to Prabhupada each day, and to ask him to rise and dress, even though you weren't the best servant.

You were right to admit
you are wrong.
To ask others to forgive.
To fight as you did with
courage on any occasion you
represented the master
who is always right.

* * *

12:35 p.m.
Lunch the wolf
unravels his dream
no feast lasts even half an hour
around hear
words get chosen
for prayer
to hold onto God.

* * *

Rain. Prabhupada is warm enough. It's time to start wrapping Radha-Govinda in wool *cadars* now that the weather is changing.

* * *

2:41 p.m.

Dhruva thought, "How shall I go alone to the Vaikuntha planet and leave behind my poor mother?" The great associates of Lord Visnu then showed Dhruva Maharaja that his mother, Suniti, was also going to Vaikuntha. A disciple who is a strong devotee can carry his guru with him. Srila Prabhupada states, "I think that even though I am crippled in many ways, if one of my disciples becomes as strong as Dhruva Maharaja, then he'll be able to carry me with him to Vaikunthaloka." (*Bhag.* 4.12.33, purport)

Every mother should be like Suniti and desire that her son practice austerities in Krishna consciousness.

"Only persons who constantly engage in welfare activities for other living entities can reach the Vaikuntha planets." (*Bhag.* 4.12.36) Prabhupada states that Krishna consciousness is the only philanthropic work. Devotees "come forward in the actual field of work in Krishna consciousness to reclaim fallen souls." Only they are eligible to enter the spiritual world.

* * *

4:18 p.m., Biggie Sketch

Varuna wrote me from Pennsylvania: "We couldn't match what you have there, both privacy and on the ISKCON map." He also said, "You served the society for thirty years and still do by writing letters and books. I think we should leave you alone." That's the prevailing opinion: he wants to be to himself, so leave him alone.

And is he happy with it? What does his heart measure?

We can't measure the sort of thing to which you are alluding.

When Irish eyes are smiling . . . and Duffy's Tavern was on the air
'twas a World War and I a tot remember none of it.

Neither does it matter to my eternal life.

* * *

I heard the stories, but my eyes opened when I heard truth from my *sat-guru*.

Now I know that devotional service is the only way, even while
polly noses fall to the ground every wet September, and I cannot cry
but in this empty house where the wind is my only companion
I try.

* * *

4:50 p.m.

Very windy on the hill. The wind blows the leaves from the tree. I remember that tree without leaves. I saw it in the spring. It will be leafless again, whether I'm here to observe it or not. The house, the body, the earth . . . Hare Krishna.

Was there any mail for me? I ask the question as if I am not satisfied to be here alone. Chewing my mental cud. Feeling no particular direction right now. According to St.

Benedict, monks need a structure imposed upon them to benefit the most from solitude. They have a time to pray, a time to read scripture, and a time to engage in manual labor. Others have time assigned to choir practice. The Carthusians have more alone time in their cells. But they also make wine to make money.

Raindrops.

Hare Krishna people emphasize preaching. They engage in social reform in order to make a society that will provide support for ISKCON's members. Because we don't want to associate with nondevotees. We want to be educated by devotees and marry devotees, and live in the ways Prabhupada has said devotees should live. Whatever we have known as "the devotee lifestyle" from the past is now changing. They say we have to change or our society will not survive. Whatever we did in those days was wrong, or it was right for that time but no longer relevant. I see their point sometimes, but I can no longer allow what little life duration I have left to become consumed by trying to figure out how we should all live. The answer to that question seems relative. I know the question is important, but I have another mission: to teach Prabhupada's emphasis on chanting and hearing.

* * *

If I was hiking the Appalachian trail, I'd be afraid of meeting black bears, freezing to death (if it was winter), or being attacked by hillbillies.

Torchlight Books publishes books for children. One is about a mouse in a *dhoti*. I did a mouse story too. Yes, a man sold a fish and put it on a dish. He wanted warmth on a cold day, so he stayed indoors. He counted his prayers. But no matter how much he counted, he could not realize the basic tenet that God is nondifferent from His names.

But is he supposed to realize that? Is it par for the course *not* to realize it? Isn't such a realization quite rare? After all, we should not try to see God, but act in such a way that He sees us. Let Him hear us chanting. Go on crying in the wilderness.

I ordered a tape by someone talking on the silence of God. I didn't receive it yet, but it was advertised as saying that the important thing is not God's response "God has His reasons for not speaking directly to us "but that we become satisfied by making the prayer in the first place.

There's a delicate balance, however, between becoming satisfied by our own practices in spiritual life while always yearning for God, and becoming self-satisfied in spiritual life and losing the sense of aspiration. We're not trying simply to convince ourselves, as the atheists claim, that God exists. If we believe it, that belief will give us mental peace, and we can go on praying, aside from the facts of God's existence themselves. We are not so deluded. Srila Prabhupada says we need experience with God, and that will enlighten us. Sometimes he says God should talk with us. At the least, we should feel Him giving us intelligence.

At any rate, it's not useless for a devotee to go on chanting and to claim that he has not received Krishna's *darSana*. We have received some experience of Krishna's presence if our devotion toward the holy name increases. When we yearn to be with Krishna, it means that at least to some degree, we have already been with Him. We have tasted Him. We want even the most initial taste.

I have not been keeping track of the Vaisnava days, such as Haridasa Thakura's disappearance day, the date of Prabhupada's crossing the Atlantic to America, the anniversary of his *sannyasa* initiation, etc. I don't mean to be neglectful. Perhaps I'll look them up on the calendar and at least mention them in this narrative. I have missed some of them already.

Moving toward Karttika. I'll be here, but I'll light the candles. Hare Krishna. Do something devotional. Don't just merge into the rain and winds and the passage of time. Stay alert in Krishna consciousness.

* * *

6:37 p.m., Night Notes

M.'s been gone all afternoon. He was supposed to be back a few hours ago. He'll have to go out for drinking water. The kitchen is still a mess from lunch. I'm going to bed soon, but will probably wake when he comes in. Again, I'm swallowing any resentment I may feel toward the fact that he no longer does these menial duties. He likes to go out and see people. How can I expect him to want to stay here all the time and see to my needs?

Am I doing the right thing by living here? It seems so. I'll try harder to rise at midnight, even if I haven't slept properly. I want to look at Prabhupada's next article in *Quest*. remaining quiet is not so austere. I won't defend it, though. Krishna, Krishna. Perhaps You'll save me one day from feeling I have to.

Today is the day Srila Prabhupada arrived in America in 1965. He certainly didn't stay in the monastery at Radha-Damodara. Rather, he risked everything for Krishna. So we have been saved.

September 13, 12:08 a.m.

Reading a lecture by Prabhupada spoken on the anniversary of Bhaktivinoda Thakura's appearance day in 1973. In the first line he quotes Bhaktivinoda Thakura's amazing statement: "One day while performing devotional practices, I saw my house transformed into Goloka Vrndavana, the spiritual world." Srila Prabhupada states that as Krishna is spread everywhere by His expansion as Supersoul, so Goloka Vrndavana is spread everywhere. It is spread by the presence of Krishna's devotees. "Devotees are so powerful that by chanting the holy name of God they make the all-powerful Supreme Lord descend along with His personal abode. Therefore Bhaktivinoda Thakura sings, 'One day while performing devotional practices, I saw my house transformed into Goloka Vrndavana.'"

Srila Prabhupada says, "We also can change our homes into Vaikuntha." Just follow the authorized practices. You don't have to give up your occupation or become a *sannyasi* or *bornbrahmana*. Krishna is open to everyone. Prabhupada makes it sound so easy. Chant Hare Krishna, don't commit sin, offer your food to Krishna, and you can enter Goloka even in this lifetime. I know there has to be a quality to the practice, but it doesn't sound so difficult. Still, we have discovered that complete purity does not come overnight, at least not for most of us. Attaining perfection by *sadhana* is a long haul. Of

course, once we attain it, it will seem to have happened in a flash. We won't even remember what we went through.

Srila Prabhupada says people think of perfection as material improvement, but no ideal material situation is permanent. "The perfection of life comes when there is the guarantee of no more birth, no more death, no more old age, and no more disease. That is perfection. And that perfection can be achieved only by Krishna consciousness."

Worship Krishna by the four things, *man mana bhava mad bhaktah . . .* We're doing it in the Krishna consciousness movement, "at least trying to become His devotees." One who is actually wise surrenders to Krishna.

May I give a lecture like this? I can follow in his footsteps. May I live a purified existence? I can practice most of the externals of purity. I can also refuse to give up trying.

Surrender to Krishna seems almost elusive. I could go through the motions, yet not feel much change of heart. Ask another devotee, "Why don't I feel surrendered?" He will assure me that it takes time. Srila Prabhupada refers to the devotees in his movement as positive evidence that purification is possible. He thought we were becoming wise, and in most cases, we had abandoned sin (although we were once "Jagais and Madhais").

Just see. We don't have to be obstinate and refuse Prabhupada's hope. Rather, we can beg Prabhupada for his help.

The actual beloved routine means daily *sadhana* by which we eventually purify our existence, surrender to Krishna, and go back to Godhead. By the routine work, one day we will see our rooms transform into Goloka Vrndavana.

* * *

2:52 a.m.

I know it's foolish, but upon falling sleep last night and upon chanting *japa* this morning, I kept thinking about President Clinton's affair with that woman right in the White House. Shame, shame. But they say he's a good President otherwise. His enemies love this. He begs forgiveness. I really have nothing to do with it. Within the Krishna consciousness movement we're diverted by our own leaders' falldowns and the resultant politics.

O fellow, it's Sunday and I want
to see you moving in your groove
to the tune of a Hare Krishna *bhajana*
in your head in your
boots in your fatigues
your pain and worry.

* * *

O small-timer, we want to
see what you do when you
claim bankruptcy and that you may never
come up to the standard of
pure devotion.

He write, fighting off Mr. Sandman and any other uninspired lethargy. In faith. Praghosa getting back so late? My clock and me. Maybe that was the sound of the wind. Dreamt I entered the camp of a deviated leader. He had different teeth, for some reason. Not sure what that meant.

* * *

4:30 a.m.

In Belgium (and elsewhere in this time zone), *mangala-arati* is just beginning. My eyes feel heavy. The exultant and transcendental Lord gives *darSana*. The sadness of Radha in separation from Krishna is a kind of ecstatic happiness. But don't think, "She's not suffering." You simply don't understand what it is She feels, and material experience will not help you. I heard Lalita's message to Krishna about Srimati Radhika's feelings in separation from Krishna. Whenever she mentioned Akrura, it was with intense fear and dislike. They blame him for taking Krishna away from Vrndavana.

Radha says, "Krishna, do You remember that one calf? She has now had her first calf. Do You remember that sapling You planted? It's now a big tree with many leaves and branches." She says Krishna is not to be blamed; it's just His nature to take advantage of the *gopis* and then to leave them bereft. I listened while I chose Their Lordships' earrings and necklaces. As an afterthought, I wrapped Them in soft *cadars*.

When is the last time you let go of something? A self-centered person notices the ink under his fingernails; a God-centered person thinks of the Supreme Lord always and never of himself. Krishna engages the fruitive workers in His service via *karma-yoga*.

Oh, let's go outside. You're too tired to write now. Chant a little, and let the fresh air wake you up.

I walk clockwise around the building, as if I am circumambulating the Lord's *cakra*. I try to meditate on Krishna in the center. Go to Him by the power of the soul.

* * *

5:56 a.m.

Got any mantras? A punctured, spike-haired ex-*bhakta* said he hoped he would have been given a certain name at his initiation, but he left ISKCON, so who will give him that name now? He's died his hair orange.

Oh, he'll come back. They *all* come back, doncha know.

* * *

8:35 a.m.

An agenda item for my meeting with M.: "When will I lecture again and where?" I was thinking to go to Dublin on the twentieth of this month, but I wanted to discuss whether to go to Silavati's house in the morning (easier for me) or to the afternoon Sunday feast lecture. Traveling in the morning and returning before lunch is less likely to cause a headache. Madhu said he thought I ought to give priority to a lecture in the restaurant because it's a higher profile duty. People would see that I'm still lecturing on

what Prabhupada teaches. Lecturing to fewer people at Silavati's, mostly my disciples, doesn't count for as much.

All right, I'll do it. I'll go next week, on the twentieth.

No, he said, Another swami is scheduled for that slot. I should go on the twenty-seventh. I may do it, but somehow his words left me feeling a bit agitated. Why?

Because he implied that if I don't lecture, I'm not doing enough. I ought to show that I'm "still alive" by getting out there and doing something people accept as service. Of course, I was the one who really raised this point; it's why I broached the subject in the first place. But hearing it from him made me feel defensive. I wanted to assert that what I'm doing *is* Krishna conscious. And it is service to Prabhupada. If I don't go out, I send my books out. I often challenge myself about why I don't do more, but I have gone over and over again the reasons.

I don't think M. was really challenging me, but he reminded me that there are those who would. I need to reconfirm for myself how my health and temperament has driven me into this house, and how I am trying to use the circumstances as well as I can to preach on Prabhupada's behalf.

M. is like a representative of all humanity for me. He's a gentle and sympathetic friend, yet he's the first person I have upon whom I test out my ideas. In that sense, he sometimes punctures illusions and reminds me that I don't live in my own universe.

* * *

9:39 a.m.

In describing Dhruva Maharaja, Maitreya says that devotees are peaceful. Srila Prabhupada says that this is because they have no demands, "They are simply dedicated to the service of the Lord . . . a devotee is completely peaceful, for he depends on the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." (*Bhag.* 4.12.37, purport)

Srila Prabhupada discusses an ideal ISKCON in this purport: "Whoever lives in this society automatically develops Krishna consciousness . . ." Devotees in ISKCON distribute *prasadam*, "and thus, everyone is pleased with us."

Sure, it may be hard to believe that everyone in ISKCON automatically develops Krishna consciousness, but who can deny the power of *prasadam* distribution? ISKCON cannot satisfy everyone with everything, but it can still give out Krishna consciousness.

Take it, believe it, the ideal, the absolute, Prabhupada's statements, the existence of persons who are constantly chanting, who are completely pure, who are eligible to go back to Godhead. I'm not sick of hearing about them. But I know there's a reality to consider. That is, who are these devotees of the highest standard, and what is the gap between the ideal ISKCON and the external, struggling institution? Also, ISKCON can mean "greater ISKCON" "it must. A voluntary congregation, one that is not controlled by force. Persons who don't serve out of the fear that they'll be excommunicated, censured, investigated, ostracized, or smeared by bad talk "that kind of congregation.

Narada praised Dhruva, saying that at five years old, he executed austerities under Narada's order and was able to conquer the unconquerable Lord. "The sum total of devotional qualities is development of unalloyed love for Krishna. This unalloyed love for Krishna can be achieved simply by hearing about Krishna." (*Bhag.* 4.12.42, purport)

* * *

11:25 a.m.

Krishna killed Kamsa. He does that again and again in various universes. He ripped off his helmet, grabbed him by his hair, and dragged him from his royal seat down to the wrestling dais. Then he threw him on his back, straddled him, and punched him again and again in the face. To prove to His parents that Kamsa was actually dead, Krishna dragged his body around the arena.

Krishna is for each of us
if we'll turn to Him in holy name.
Listen to the murmur of the devotees' *japa*
and wonder if they are actually praying
but know that even if they're not
the Lord will hear each and bless them
to come closer to *prema*.

* * *

12:10 p.m.

Take your Ugresh Sarma, I mean, your Lavan Baskara. Enough reading of pulse and heart beats. Let's measure devotion.

Imagine if they had a machine you could put around your heart, pump it up tight, then press a button, and it electronically flashed your stage on the path from *Sraddha* to *prema*. Imagine it analyzed all your personal subdivisions of *anartha-nirvrutti*. On a separate reading, it might flash whether you are *kanistha*, *madhyama*, or *uttama*. We would be so exposed. We'd also know who was advanced.

But it's fortunate that we don't have such a meter, because if we did, the politics would probably be even worse. Would the lowest of the low ever approach those whose readings proved them advanced? Especially when many of those devotees who would come up "advanced" would be people we had previously disregarded as unimportant?

* * *

3:08 p.m.

Hearing about pure devotees is as good as hearing about the Lord. One should hear all the portions of *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and not jump exclusively to the *rasa* dance chapters. "If one simply reads over and over again about Dhruva Maharaja by hearing and reading this chapter . . . he gets the chance to become a great devotee . . . to finish all miserable conditions of materialistic life." (*Bhag.* 4.12.46, purport)

* * *

3:58 p.m.

Hello to the plants and flowers from a lonely man. If only I could pour my heart out and become a devotee. The flowers are patience personified, it seems. Even when they

are inactive above the earth, their roots are spreading and growing. They appear so fragile, but that's probably an illusion.

Burning heart, cold soul. Well, Mac, you're inactive, so what do you expect? For the time being you've managed to avoid the long arm of the institution and the quick boot of *maya*. No, I don't do nonsense, even when I'm alone. I murmur His names.

* * *

5:15 p.m.

Yes, I painted abstract to a blues-line tattoo. My heart began to hurt, so I drew hearts with a Valentine-red aorta. What if died right then and that was the last thing I did? Hare Krishna dasi said she wants to take walks in the evening, not to chant *japa* but to get a break. Take a break and return refreshed to the world of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*.

September 14, 12:10 a.m.

I had a dream that I was considered fallen. A laughing devil announced the news to the devotees: "Another ISKCON guru has fallen!" I had embraced a woman, although nothing more than that. I then saw a long report some investigative group had made before my apparent falldown. I woke from that dream and searched my consciousness for any loose or suspicious behavior. Beware of impure influences. Take full shelter of Srila Prabhupada and his practices. That dream was at 8:30 p.m. I then fell asleep and dreamt that I had gone to where HarikeSa Maharaja lives, thinking I could do some good. I immediately saw I had no influence over him and that the situation would quickly become complicated. The dream went on and on, and eventually I left to wander off in whatever foreign country we were all in. Upon waking, I thought of the importance of simplicity and minding our own business.

So here I am, ready to start a new *Quest* article. It's called, "Joy Beyond False Boundaries." The editors introduce it like this: "Here Srila Prabhupada explains the nature of this chanting [of the holy names of God in congregation] for the modern world." He begins by quoting the *brahma-bhuta* verse (Bg. 18.54), and states that Krishna consciousness is blissful because "it is the stage one reaches after attaining liberation from all material miseries."

Be happy.

Protect yourself from falldown. How? Do you need a servant who stays with you twenty-four hours a day? An alarm system that goes off if "danger" is near? Freedom from all outside influence? Act straight and read submissively.

"And what is the nature of that joyfulness? *Na socati*: even if one suffers great loss, one does not lament. And *na kanksati*: one feels no hankering for big profit."

Krishna consciousness doesn't kill you in the way Buddhist or Mayavadi philosophies do. It brings you to the real life, "a life of devotional activity in the liberated stage."

You know I'll come in with any thought while I read; it's how I write. What is literature? For me it's a gamble, you could say. *Any* service is a gamble. But work according to authorized teachings, try to do something nice for Krishna's pleasure and something wonderful for preaching. Deliver yourself and hope to help others become

delivered too. That's the best we can do. Look, I'm a specimen of an improved living being. I don't claim to be liberated and therefore ever-joyful, but I'm not deserting Krishna consciousness. I write of it in a direct, all-out way. It is literature that brings us as close to life as possible.

Srila Prabhupada states that Krishna consciousness is difficult to understand for the *grha-vratanam*. This body is also a *grha*. First, we mistake ourselves for the body. Then we expand the idea of *grha* to "house, society, and nation." The *Srimad-Bhagavatam* states that as long as we keep ourselves in the boundary of limited life conceptions, we can't understand Krishna consciousness. Another limited concept is to think, "I am American. Why should I hear from a Hindu spiritual master?"

Srila Prabhupada spoke these lectures impromptu. I'll be lecturing again too, starting next Sunday. I could pick a Sastric verse, study it somewhat, then also speak impromptu. I tend to plan the lectures too much. Or I could choose a topic rather than a verse, and plan a step-by-step logical proof. If I choose a verse, the outline is built into the verse and purport; I simply have to explain the individual words and trust that the verse has its own profound meaning and logic. I trust that I will recall things that can be connected to the verse while I'm lecturing, because I've read so much over the years. I'd really prefer to lecture that way, but I'm always afraid of failing in public. I go back to my outline for safety. I also feel it's more responsible to prepare for a class.

Prabhupada's lecture started with *brahma-bhuta* but moved quickly to Prahlada Maharaja's statements covered in *Bhag. 7.5.30 - 31 (matir na krsne and na te vidhu svakagatim hi visnu)*. I could lecture on those exact verses too. Krishna consciousness is the goal of life, but people can't follow it because of their *grha-vrata*. That's because they don't know that Visnu is the goal, "because they're entrapped by the consciousness of enjoying material nature."

* * *

4:30 a.m.

Two days in a row headache free. ready to ride? ready to dried? ready to die? Dead to wed? Sex still in your loins and chest. Best if the monk is free of those last traces.

So he wiled, the wild man
to serve Krishna under guru's
guidance like that race of hog-
herders who became exalted by
serving Nilamadhava,
like we Westerns who came to the Swami.
I don't indulge in the
worst faultfinding because he gave us
something so good I
only want to honor it
receive it from his devotees' hands.

Hare Krishna. Radha said, "If I say I love You more than my life, that will seem pretentious." She couldn't think of the right words for Her message to Krishna. But anger was mixed in there too. "You will not believe me when I say . . ."

It's the Depakote that makes me so groggy. I eat no butter. I eat no self-centeredness. False ego in the mode of ignorance brings about creation under the will of the Supreme Lord Visnu.

Wind, don't rock me to pieces. Hare Krishna. Hare Krishna.

* * *

5:30 a.m.

"How is your heart?" Someone once asked me that. Maybe Murray. I think he meant .

..

No, it was a Vaisnava. He meant, "Are you developing kindness toward all and melting a bit?" I didn't know what to reply. I thought he was referring to coronary disease. I thought I was okay in that department, but now I'm not sure.

When I was painting yesterday . . . I strained joyfully in the work. I'm not about to stop. Better die trying than become a big old tree in lower consciousness.

But I could use the duration, friends. All that time to make more advancement. I'm so slow in Krishna consciousness that I need more time.

Yes, but there's another way to see it: Better I die before I fall down.

Wow, you think like that?

Yes and no.

Hare Krishna. Letting down the sheltered heart, the shack heart, in the highlands,

my seat of affection,

heart of jazz,

soulville, in the heart of the city

(Boston) shopping

area or ghetto or

Beacon Street,

the heart of New York's

financial district. Have a *heart*.

Put a woman on the GBC to

give it a heart.

Heart warming spectacle

of senior devotees scrubbing a floor.

* * *

8:48 a.m.

Beginning "The Killing of The Demon Putana," the sixth chapter of the Tenth Canto. However Srila Prabhupada tells this *lila* is fine. We don't need anyone to correct it, contradict it, or change his emphasis. Even his words, for the most part, stay as he spoke them. I wish to maintain that kind of faith and affection in Prabhupada. He composed this version in 1977.

At the end of the previous chapter, when Vasudeva met Nanda Maharaja in Mathura, Vasudeva told him to start for home, because there might be some trouble in Gokula. Chapter Six opens with Nanda Maharaja on his way home, worrying about what dangers

might befall his beautiful son, Krishna, and when he felt fear, "he took shelter at the lotus feet of the Supreme Controller." There is danger at every step in this world, and we have no recourse but to take shelter of Krishna at every step. As stated in *Krishna* book, a devotee is always under the shelter of Krishna, "but when he specifically sees some danger, he remembers the Lord very rapidly."

"Therefore we should be encouraged to chant the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* so that in our family, society, neighborhood and nation, everything will be smooth and free from danger." (*Bhag.*10.6.3, purport) This statement seems to advise chanting even for material peace against evil agents.

The mystic witch, Putana, was sent by Kamsa to kill baby Krishna. She took the form of a beautiful woman and entered Nanda Maharaja's house unobstructed. She went right up to baby Krishna, whom she saw was sleeping in His bed, "His unlimited power was covered like a powerful fire covered by ashes." Under Krishna's deluding potency, Putana picked up the child, intending to kill Him. Yashoda and Rohini saw Putana, but overwhelmed by her beauty, remained silent, because she was treating Krishna just like a mother. I can see and appreciate this at least a little as I read.

Her breasts were smeared with poison, "but the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krishna, becoming very angry with her, took hold of her breast, squeezed it very hard with both hands, and sucked out both the poison and her life." (*Bhag.* 10.6.11)

* * *

9:55 a.m.

Now there's nothing left to do. Much mental time has been taken in weighing out the chest pain factors. Does it warrant a trip to England or America to be tested? I'm not inclined to go anywhere. What's that called, *anartha*? Unearther? No, inertia. I just don't want to go. I stay and shrug. But I should go where I have to go "out there "both to preach and to get a medical check-up, as required. Such a long haul, however. Can I take it as Srila Prabhupada was saying this morning, as some not-too-bad suffering, some purification? Just accept what comes.

* * *

10:25 a.m.

We should be true to Krishna. That will give what we do and say life. Our Krishna consciousness should come from life.

O Swami, what will you say if we take you to town? I'll say, "Chant the holy names. Prabhupada has written about this and Lord Caitanya has said we should do it with attention." Now what do they say about how this *japa* should be performed? Anyone know? Because it is God's names, and we should pay attention.

Yes, I can lecture on this even if I haven't realized it fully. That's called preaching to yourself as you give a lecture. You can even feel the zeal. You speak to yourself first, and if the audience also benefits, all the better. In that way, you maintain your lecturer's humility.

I looked at *Hari-nama Cintamani's* category, *pramada*. I read it, but I'm usually not fully satisfied by what's there. It doesn't really hit hard on *why* we are so mad, lazy, and

inattentive. Disinterest and laziness. But we already know that, and when we hear it again, it doesn't seem to make us give those qualities up.

In other words, there is no way around the actual work of surrender. But you may at least be made more willing to try to work again. Don't give up. I remind you to struggle. "To be introduced to *lectio divina* is to be introduced to a struggle." Same with *hari-nama*. The Vaisnava's ordeal.

But isn't it easy compared to other austerities?

The ordeal is not the chanting but the dryness of our own hearts and the mechanical nature of our own chanting. We are told it will be blissful, but we don't find it to be. We can only go on chanting and hope to find the true taste. It takes faith.

I once wrote an article on this for BTG. An enemy of the ISKCON gurus criticized me, singling me out as a misleader because I had spoken honestly about the Vaisnava's work. He said, "How dare you say the holy names don't make you blissful? And if it's true that you experience such a low state of chanting, then why are you a guru?"

The *sastra* relieved me. I won't give up the holy name, despite my honest admission.

The *sastra* suggests that we ask forgiveness for offenses, pray to the holy names, and take support from enthusiastic chanters. The devotees here have a *japa* support group. Some of the worse habits can be changed easily "those who have completely abandoned their chanting can take it up again.

* * *

12:04 p.m.

Now waiting for lunch. Make it a Krishna conscious offering. We think of devotees we know and pass judgment on them one by one. What's the criteria of perfection? How much they like us and understand us with empathy. Those distant from us we keep distant in our hearts. Silly "as if we're God, He who can measure all things. "As you love me, so you are holy and sinless. As you ignore my wonderful qualities, so you have failed." See how silly that sounds?

Zounds.

Who won the pennant? The Yankees?

Who dropped the bombs?

Fortunately, I only have to find out once a month.

You're just a gigolo

everywhere you go . . .

No, not that either except

in a dream. I saw the ex-

sannyasi propagating a new

way and tried to preach to

his followers but they

smiled, "You can't defeat

him. He's greater than you."

* * *

Around their fortress hill,

was a barbed wire fence.

What did the nondevotees think?

I got lost trying to catch up to the men. I tried to catch up to one of the women followers of the *ex-sannyasi*. The one I finally caught up to was a distant member, not following strictly. She noted that the suit jacket I was wearing (brown tweed) was in tatters. But that's all I had to wear. Then I lost track of her too, and found myself alone in a strange place. Lost.

America, 'tis of thee. I hope I don't have to rush off anywhere for a heart checkup. Maybe it's better to just die here. At least I shouldn't leave here prematurely. He said there's an Irish blessing that ends, "And may you die in Ireland." And may you die in Vrndavana, thinking of Krishna. Shall we burn you or put you in the grave? First you have to catch me.

Ginger rogers, Fred Astaire. Doris Day "all gone. Small children learn sayings, "Bye-bye," "All gone." Hide-and-seek delights "that little scare of not seeing mommy, even for a moment. Being lost. This fear tends to grow as we get older. Football bullies. Learn to play a musical instrument if you have it in you. He learned to ride a fountain pen, but it took years to discover that this was for him. And only in his late fifties did he allow himself to draw stick figures again.

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna,
a poem about praying:
May the Lord
of room and board
allow me the guts to utter
mantras as a follower
and to find taste before I die.
May Lord Sri Krishna
give me the mercy only
He can bestow,
and may I always honor
His gift.

* * *

2:25 p.m.

As Krishna sucked out Putana's life, she assumed her original form as a gigantic raksasi and fell in the pasturing ground. The cowherd people were frightened by this, but baby Krishna played on the upper portion of Putana's breast. The mothers were joyful to see the child unharmed and picked Him up. The *gopis* then offered baby Krishna protection by reciting the names of Visnu. They chanted Visnu's various names over different parts of Krishna's body, like a shield. "May KeSava protect Your heart, ISa Your chest . . . ISvara Your head." It appears that one may sometimes pray to God for the physical well-being of a beloved. When the motherly *gopis* saw Krishna suck Mother Yashoda's breast, they were satisfied that He was peaceful, and they laid Him down on His bed.

I see images from this chapter. The voracious mind, the always dissatisfied mind, felt satisfied.

* * *

3:25 p.m.

Thyme at my feet, its tiny flowers blooming, and tagetes, buzzing with flies on their yellow blossoms. A bright, blue-purple, unnamed flower sprinkled with raindrops. Parsley. Names too long and unfamiliar for me to write down here. The topsoil is soaked through. Not many weeds grow aside from whatever plants have been deliberately planted here. Moments of blue sky and white clouds blowing over the hills. The hills look washed clean by all the baths they get. Is your Krishna here? Yes. Hear Him in the sound of the wind moving through leafy trees. right now there's a full chorus of leaves. It will be different in the winter, when the tree-harps are bare.

Beloved, you're mired in meditation about that chest pain. Are you afraid of dying before you're ready? I won't leave you, even though you are mortal, so there's no need to worry. Transcend worry by realizing what I have been telling you: you're not the body.

Pen poised. A Godbrother no longer writes me. My literature is a pretense, he said. My Pilot rolling ball carries on, however.

Someone else: "We like your books."

Red berries
fallen.

Someone else: "You are too informal."

Clouds darkening suddenly. Wind stronger. Probably going to rain. It's like this all day, every day, for weeks on end.

Walked around the building, chanting. Saw cows nearby. They seem like different cows than were here a few months ago. The younger ones looked up at me every time I came around the corner. I remembered the cows in *Krishna* book "the mothers used the switch of a cow's tail to fan Krishna, and they bathed Him in cow urine and the dust raised by their hoofs after Krishna killed Putana.

Let's go in and read with Madhu a selection from *Govinda-lilamrta*. Low energy right now. This literature is for the poor, as I want it, as I know.

Any mail today?

4:50 p.m.

Reading *Govinda-lilamrta* is a special treat. Other things seem make-believe, too impure. Now I'm reluctant to return to my crude painting. I have to wait for the glow to fade. But why does it have to fade? I'm not ready yet to hear these topmost Vraja pastimes exclusively. Then give me *any* pastimes; give me the holy names. Not the same? I'll just say the name is wonderful and carries us to the topmost realm.

We heard how Mother Yashoda insisted that Radharani and the *gopis* eat breakfast. Mother Yashoda presented radha with gifts befitting a new daughter-in-law. Then Krishna went to the glorious *goSala*. The cows were let out of their pens, and He and the *gopas* started for the forest. All the Vrajavasis followed Krishna until He repeatedly asked them to return home. Mother Yashoda said she would go home to cook a lunch

that she would send to Krishna at midday. Radharani and Krishna exchanged glances, agreeing to meet later.

* * *

5:45 p.m., Night Notes

Received *Waves at Jagannatha Puri* in the mail. I can hear the Sean nos Fleadh king singing below. I'm through another day all right. I mean, if I had to leave now . . .

The poems are hasty and choppy and would probably not be received well by the modern-day establishment of Poesy. In fact . . .

We hereby . . . Krishna conscious . . . quick passing faces even in a devotee's life. I will rest. Boy, last night's dreams were so weird. I don't sleep well. I tend to worry. But here I am, writing for someone else to see. When words fail "but they usually don't. The *sastra* is full of words. We simply have to repeat what it says. Srila Prabhupada manages to say a *great deal* clearly "that God is a person named Krishna (and many other things), that He lives in a transcendental abode made of *cintamani*. It's perfectly clear.

Still, we repeat it, and struggle to believe and practice it. It's not the repeating that's hard, it's the experiencing.

Love of God. Radha and Krishna. No illusion. I'm not this body. Go back to Godhead for a life of eternity, bliss, and knowledge as Krishna's associate. See what I mean? Words teach and we reach.

The wonder and beauty of being alive. I am sour when I feel life is not so exciting. It's my lack of energy and appreciation. Lack of gratitude. But here I would like to thank Krishna for everything He has given me. Everything.

September 15,12 a.m.

Quest: Foolish people don't know that the goal of life is to satisfy Visnu. They can't taste the joy beyond material designations. They're trying for happiness within the material energy, and therefore they're not interested in Prabhupada's message. He dares to tell the truth, applying the *Bhagavatam* to the contemporary scene. The blind leading the blind "thinking one U.S. President will be better than the next. But the *Bhagavatam* states, "Both the blind leaders and their blind followers are tightly bound by the strong ropes of material nature." (At sixty years old, he wanted to marry the woman of his dreams and become the next in a succession of falling gurus, *ex-sannyasis*. At the last moment he awoke to the illusion of it, the impossibility. Later, in another dream he was settling for some mental impressions of that woman.)

"The ultimate goal of life is God, or Krishna, but the leaders are enamored by the glitter of this material nature. So they cannot lead us to Krishna." Then if Krishna consciousness cannot be reached by speculation, meetings, or by following leaders, then how? Srila Prabhupada goes on to the next of Prahlada Maharaja's verses to answer this question: *naisom atistavat* (7.5.32). I feel a wave lift me above material nature's chaos. Surely . . .

Caitanya-candrodaya and his wife want to rent a cottage in Wicklow for three months. I'll be going to Dublin to lecture again. One may say it's pitifully insignificant; I plan to go once every other week. But I'm lecturing every day throughout the day in my own way here. For survival. I just had three days in a row without head pain. If I could only grab hold of Krishna tightly.

"One cannot fix his mind on the lotus feet of Krishna unless one has the opportunity of touching the dust of the lotus feet of a person who has given up all material hankerings (*niskincananam*) and who has dedicated his life cent percent to Krishna (*mahiasam*)." That's Srila Prabhupada. He gives the example ("Not a very big example "a very small one") that his students have given up the four sinful activities. Yes, he says, it has been easy for them.

Yes, we say back, please bless us to continue. This is a sinful age.

The next article in *Quest* is called, "The Mercy of Lord Caitanya," from a lecture Srila Prabhupada gave in Atlanta in 1975. I was in the audience with hundreds of other enthusiastic disciples. *Namo maha-vadanyaya*. The temple there had beautiful Gaura-Nitai Deities. Srila Prabhupada was inspired to speak of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He came to preach love of God by chanting Krishna's names.

So let us also chant those names. That is our hope.

* * *

4:22 a.m.

You are awake and alive and want to make literature. It may be done by writing an essay directly propagating the Krishna conscious *siddhanta*. Convince people, yourself included, to take up Krishna consciousness. Defeat some contrary notions. Use *sastra* and logic to glorify Krishna. Quote *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and Srila Prabhupada. That's one way. There are others.

Each man his own way
they play together in an agreed way.

* * *

When's the last time you
met your Swami or Radharani?
Met your match and acknowledged
defeat?

* * *

Praise Krishna
who is sleeping as the sun comes up
and wakes to Madhumangala's call and
Yashoda is there
they ask Him to please go to the barn
tend the *surabhi* cows "who won't
give milk until He or

Nanda Maharaja assure them.

* * *

Please pay attention to it,
the moment you can spring upon
Krishna conscious reflections or out of
your body and mind and grab
hold of *sastras* in a way
that pleases and arrests your hearers
and especially your own heart.

So Stephen ain't a saint or a stutterer. Even Krishnadasa Kaviraja said that the great souls might laugh at what he wrote, but we know he's great, even among other greats. He considers himself a follower of Rupa-Raghunatha. Hare Krishna.

What my master said to do: work with his stalwart followers and perform the austerity of helping those who are weaker. Give Him pleasure. That's the Vrndavana standard. Chant Hare Krishna for Him, and relieve yourself from the burdens of your self-inflicted torture. Because Kali-yuga is getting worse fast.

* * *

9:10 a.m.

If Putana attained liberation, then just imagine the fate of those motherly *gopis* who loved Krishna. What about the Vrndavana cows, who mothered Him with their offerings of milk-affection? In the material world, we have relationships that resemble the spiritual relationships "friendships, parental relationships, lovers "but they are temporary. One who develops an eternal loving relationship with Krishna never has to come back again to this material world. We will still have other relationships when we become devotees, but our relationship with Krishna should be the main one. "One should give up all sinful activities and remain in the family of Krishna. Then one's liberation is guaranteed." (*Bhag.* 10.6.40, purport)

"Any persons who hears with faith and devotion about how Krishna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, killed Putana, and who thus invests his hearing in such childhood pastimes of Krishna, certainly attains attachment for Govinda, the supreme original person." (*Bhag.* 10.6.44) That's a nice benediction. I'd like to receive it. I don't want to become attached to the world that's reported in *Time* magazine "which they insist is the real world. I need to prepare myself for the final test, turning to Krishna and the world to which I wish to go.

At the beginning of the chapter on Trnavarta, Maharaja Pariksit expresses his enthusiasm for hearing about Krishna and His incarnations. He says that by hearing about Krishna, one's attachment for hearing about material things, which is the root cause for material existence, vanishes, and we increase in devotion to the Supreme Lord. Srila Prabhupada mentions that Krishna's childhood activities are "more attractive than the activities of other incarnations, such as Matsya, Kurma and Varaha." He says that the childhood activities are "especially easy to hear and . . . create more and more inquisitiveness." (*Bhag.* 10.7.2, purport)

* * *

Sometime ago, a devotee sent me a book on compassion and self-hate. I had put it aside, but today I picked it up. Maybe I need to read it. Do I hate myself? I'd like to learn how to be compassionate. Psychologists are so expert in certain things. They tend to dig out "or make us dig out "all the unknown or unrecognized things in our subconscious. Even religious people can have hang-ups. In fact, they have some exquisite ones. But *Krishna* book says to make hearing about Krishna the central focus in my life. I need to develop love for Krishna. He doesn't recommend using psychology. Sometimes we do use psychology to remove obstacles from our path, but even if we die with material and mental anomalies, yet have developed love of Krishna, we will be successful. removing obstacles is not the goal of life.

In the last chapter of the psychology book, the doctor says that for him, the purpose of life is to discover the joy of living. He doesn't believe in pursuing any higher goal than that. He has seen so many bad things presented by people who teach a higher purpose to life and who set themselves up as God's representatives. Of course, the doctor has set himself up as a representative for the purpose of life. Anyway, I've decided not to read the book. Let me stay centered on God consciousness and have faith in this purpose.

And I can supply literature on this path. I'm trying in my own way to become compassionate and overcome self-hate. I'm not working with a psychotherapist, so I don't know all the angles. Perhaps that puts me at a disadvantage. But Krishna is in my heart, even if the doctors don't believe that, and He can give me the intelligence I require. How much humility, how much joy, what kind of attitude, how to deal with childhood conditioning and traumas "I'll trust Him to teach me. An expression of my faith in Him: Please, Lord, supply me with whatever I need.

* * *

Noon

Talked more with M. about my chest pain. I felt it all morning. We have a contingency plan to go either to America or London for testing. But I don't want to go if I can avoid it. Talking about it made it clearer that I'd rather forget about it; I'll endure it. It's not a major amount of pain.

Now let me take another sip of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. reading about Krishna and Trnavarta. It's no myth. To read with faith requires a careful approach, perhaps using both *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and *Krishna* book.

* * *

O you with the chest in your
pain with the heart in your
brain, imagine the red flesh pumper
with the spirit-spark inside.

* * *

You can't hide from what's ordained.
Krishna is God and He causes what
happens. I bring it on myself
by desires and actions. I want to
die, I want to live, I committed
sins ago and now I have to
pay.

* * *

If you could only connect to Krishna
with that heartache,
throbbing, with tears for
Govinda, for *hari-nama*,
you'd be doing fine and nothing
could harm or disrupt you.

* * *

Syamananda doesn't have to come here to photograph my paintings. Let them pile up.
It's too inconvenient for him.

* * *

2:50 p.m.

I'll be speaking at Bhadra's and Silavati's place next Sunday morning, if Krishna desires. I plan to do a workshop sort of presentation on *japa*. My opener can be the verse from *UpadeSamrta* where it says that chanting the holy name is the greatest nectar, but those with the disease of *avidya* taste only bitterness. However, by regular chanting, these persons will recover their natural ability to taste sugar.

Even before I recite that verse, I could say that many of us struggle with chanting and fail to become enlivened. Lord Caitanya has described this dilemma in His *Siksastaka*, posing as a conditioned soul. He says the lack of taste is due to offenses.

I could tell of my admittance of this and how I've been criticized. After one BTG essay, I was criticized for daring to say that I had not yet realized the claims that the holy name is blissful and easy. Then I would quote *sastra* and get into it. Tell the audience in that continued mood of honesty that I'm entitled to preach, because I'm preaching to myself when I ask for *japa* reform.

In other words, I do not intend to quit chanting. As I write, I feel tense along the muscles of my arms and chest. That chest pain is coloring all my thoughts. Are we going to have to interrupt this blessed routine? I wish I could discover on my own that I have something that's not coronary disease, something muscular or digestive "something that isn't life-threatening.

What's my message on *japa*? Don't give up. Krishna is His name. *Nama cintamani Krishnas* says it all. I will ask the audience to present their chanting problems and I'll try

to give some ways they can be cured. We may even chant a round together halfway through the class.

Mother Yashoda and others held a ceremony during Krishna's babyhood, "and when they finished and Mother Yashoda saw that the child felt sleepy, she lay down on a bed with the child until He was peacefully asleep" (*Bhag.* 10.7.5) Mother Yashoda placed baby Krishna under a cart, where he took the opportunity to kick and kill a cart-shaped demon. "These narrations are wonderfully enjoyable, and those who are fortunate are struck with wonder upon hearing of these extraordinary activities of the Lord. Although the less intelligent regard them as mythological, because a dull brain cannot understand them, they are real facts." (*Bhag.* 10.7.6, purport)

Nondevotee scholars feel insulted by Prabhupada's insulting language, but I accept it. He delivers his kicks. They don't accept *sastra*. In a "gentlemanly" pseudo-learned way, they deny God (*maya-apratajnana*) and thus insult Him. Krishna's devotee insults them back.

Krishna didn't have to exert much energy or assume a gigantic form to kill the demons who came to Gokula. This is another example of the supremacy of His original form. "When one develops the practice of hearing *Krishna-katha*, he is certainly transcendental to material existence, as confirmed in *Bhagavad-gita* . . ." (*Bhag.* 10.7.9, purport). The children explained that Krishna had kicked the cart apart, but the grownups could not accept that. Nanda Maharaja asked the *brahmanas*, whose blessings never go in vain, to perform a ceremony for His son's protection.

* * *

4:30 p.m.

Boy, I'm doing good! Fourth day in a row without a headache. Has my body called a truce? Maybe it has substituted one kind of pain for another. 4:30, says the clock. I went out for a walk and hoped to write while sitting on that bench out there, but as usual, the sky turned dark and it began to rain. This is beautiful, desolate country. Saw a crow or hawk fly into the trees. It croaked and grackled, but I couldn't see it quite.

"What is your disease, Haridasa?"

"I cannot chant my rounds nicely."

It's like a having smallpox, although we never seem to understand just how bad it is. After all, we're chanting.

We could choose to hate ourselves for it, or we can see the good side. Are we pessimists or optimists? But the fact is, we're not chanting offenselessly. We're not jubilant or satisfied to have Krishna's names dancing on our tongues. Therefore, we have not been able to lose our taste for the varieties we find in matter.

All right, perhaps we can't expect that kind of perfection yet. Anyway, we'll talk about it next Sunday.

Mail slots empty. Notice the difference? M. is going out again to make more phone calls. When I hear the van engine pull out, I may sneak down to the art room and do my thing. I hope I'm not dissatisfied with the results. Live in process.

* * *

6 p.m., Night Cap

Twinge comin' on like a dark sky with rain. Up and down according to the body's whims. Still, I feel good right now. Painting helped. Head and chest stung, but I kept going. Dream of chunky figures while listening to Prabhupada singing *Gurvastakam*. I wrote, "*Vande guroh Sri caranaravinda*" on most of the paintings. I cued myself to draw Krishna's form, but I couldn't. My chunky figures wore *tilaka* "all of them.

I had to write an author's note for the first EJW volumes. I invited the reader to accompany me on an open-ended journey, and said I didn't know when I'd arrive in the spiritual world, but by Prabhupada's grace, I wasn't going to quit trying to get there. Now please make it true; don't quit. Even if these words have to be written from a hospital bed, I won't quit. I'm aiming for Krishna's lotus feet.

September 16, 12 a.m., EkadaSi

Awake all night. Took feverfew at 6:00 p.m., which might be why I couldn't sleep. Now reporting for duty.

Continuing with Srila Prabhupada's lecture, "The Mercy of Lord Caitanya." He's saying that God expands Himself unlimitedly. We're like Dr. Frog when we speculate about how great God may be. Lord Caitanya's mercy is that His movement attracts Westerners, who are now intoxicated with "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna," and able to follow the restrictions against illicit sex, meat-eating, intoxication, and gambling.

Lord Caitanya distributes love of God. Before we love someone, we must know them. It's difficult to understand God.

In terms of possibly having to leave here sooner than planned, perhaps Krishna thinks this life is too idyllic. Maybe He wants me to go through something else. He does many things at once with each living being; He treats us so individually, especially if we are aspiring devotees. Therefore, we should depend on Him.

We're in the grips of the material nature. I find myself scanning Prabhupada's essay so I can write down the main points. That's one way to read, I guess, but let me slow down. Why rush?

We're not these bodies. That's the first lesson of *Bhagavad-gita*. Lord Caitanya's movement is on the spiritual platform. We are spirit souls, eternal servants of Krishna "that's what Lord Caitanya's movement teaches. *Jivera svarupa haya, krsnera nitya dasa*. This is religion. "If anyone simply knows these things "that God is great and we are subordinate, and that our duty is to abide by the orders of God "he is religious."

Unity among people will come when we recognize that everything belongs to God. We can take what we need, because God has given it, but we shouldn't take more than that.

Srila Prabhupada says we've begun the Krishna consciousness movement to purify people. They can awaken to God consciousness, stop their sin, and become purified. Eat *prasadam* and avoid sin. Lord Caitanya wanted His movement to spread to every town and village. He taught that we should "live peacefully, be a gentleman, chant Hare Krishna, realize God, and make your life happy in this world and the next."

That's it, I finished the article. Some of the words are different than the ones Prabhupada actually spoke; the articles are edited. And it's certainly a different

experience reading these than sitting in the audience in 1975 while he personally delivered the lecture. remember those days? That's when I was a young *sannyasi*, in charge of the Library party.

No, don't remember. Know only today.

I'll go down later and check on yesterday's paintings. Chant now. This is precious time and my head is clear. Pray to pray. Hare Krishna.

* * *

4:29 a.m.

"Nobody knows how I feel dis mornin'," he moaned.

Wait a minute, we are transcendental to this kind of blues. Don't cry like a bunch of alley cats. It can't be *that* bad. Please! Give us some brilliant hope. This singer is stuck in the modes, probably caused by his own sinful acts of the night before. Who can stand that kind of repetitive moan? Makes me want to throw a shoe.

I also don't want to hear your dirty songs filled up with allusions to sex. I want to rise up to Krishna consciousness, free of that.

That said, I was going to go to bed but got a wave of energy instead. Let me write. I want to tell my story. I'll read. I'm a bastard because I hear with offenses. I want to kill that offender and cut his body to pieces so he can't be revived. There's no profit in his smarter-than-thou criticism of God's representative.

I've got the St. Louis blues and the
brahmacari heart burn I mean
aparadha woes.

I said, of all the ten offenses, that the worst offense is to sin on the strength of chanting. If we bite the hand that feeds us, what can we expect? We will be punished or thrown away. I'm telling you.

Oh, to be our own best friend, cleansed at last. To become "of" the other world. What we have with us of this world can either be dumped or, if it's usable, used Krishna's service. May Krishna be with us as we sail and stumble. He already is. We just have to awaken to it.

* * *

5:40 a.m.

Ah, we're back and ready for our fruits-only breakfast. I eat too fast. I demand sweets, which are not good for me. I don't exercise in the right way. I don't sleep or walk right. In some ways I'm still a throwback (anachronism) to the high-profile guru days.

He said (or thought) all of that about me and much more. I write with pipe-stripped bottoms. They don't even want to say the worst, maybe fearing they'll be judged for attacking the helpless. Even Kamsa refrained from certain things. For example, he didn't kill his sister. He thought it wouldn't look good.

* * *

8:58 a.m.

More chest pain. Should I go to get it checked? Am I in danger? Can I just depend on Krishna and not receive treatment? Am I in an urgent condition or not? He has constant chest pain and doesn't know what it is. I'm trying to decide with M. He has phoned our friends in both England and America, and will decide which of them to go to and when.

M. also told me that the ISKCON Foundation has recommended to the GBC measures to "keep Srila Prabhupada in the center" of ISKCON. The recommendations include no personal Vyasa-puja celebrations for the gurus after Prabhupada, and no selling of their books in any ISKCON temple. The ISKCON temple in Alachua has already adopted these measures.

These things don't affect me much, although they might affect GNP sales. We can always find a way to distribute books through other channels.

* * *

9:27 a.m.

Nanda Maharaja invited qualified *brahmanas*. Here I go again, speed reading, scanning, noting. I don't know what else to do. I want *Srimad-Bhagavatam* and Srila Prabhupada's purports in my life and my writing, and I don't know how else to get them there. Take shots of purport "intravenously," whether realized or not and even if not in a prayerful mood. Just take something.

Nanda Maharaja fed the *brahmanas* and gave them cows in charity. These *brahmanas* were expert in chanting Vedic *yajnas* and were mystic *yogis*. "Whatever blessings they spoke were certainly never fruitless."

(*Bhag.* 10.7.17) *Brahmanas* nowadays cannot do all these things, so *yajnas* are forbidden. "The only *yajna* recommended in this age is *sankirtana-yajna*." Chant Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/ Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

One day when Mother Yashoda lovingly picked up baby Krishna, He assumed a tremendous weight. He was preparing for the coming of Trnavartasura. Krishna was having fun, transcendental pleasure. He was too heavy for Mother Yashoda, but He became as light as grass for Trnavarta. The demon flew away with Krishna and assumed the form of a whirlwind. Mother Yashoda couldn't find her baby. She and the other ladies began to cry. Krishna allowed Trnavarta to take Him high into the sky, but then became heavy again, so the demon could go no further. Thus they began to compete "who's yogic power was strongest? "One should not . . . compete with Krishna's mystic power." The demon tried to throw Krishna off of his neck, but he couldn't make Him let go. Trnavarta's attempt to kill Krishna failed. Then Trnavarta fell under Krishna's weight. He couldn't save himself, because Krishna held him so tightly. "Consequently, this would be the last time for Trnavarta's yogic power. Now he was going to die by the arrangement of Krishna." (*Bhag.* 10.7.27, purport)

Because Krishna was choking him, the demon's eyes popped out and he died as his body smashed unto a big slab on earth.

* * *

Gadgets and gimmicks to get me to write. A minimum quota (sixteen rounds) to get you to chant. A sense of duty to impel you to render *bhakti*. Sometimes you want relief from all these measures, and from your own reluctance, but all you know is how to relax or be spontaneous in your own way.

In the ISKCON world, the pendulum swings and people and things topple. Everyone goes their way with like-minded friends. Collect the money, enforce the standard, follow the law. Make a new law. Congress and Senate, state and city government. The family, the individual. It's all a microcosm of the larger society. Our simple solution when things go wrong: "Keep Prabhupada in the center." By official allegiance? It's better than nothing. And why not spontaneity in our devotion to Srila Prabhupada. Isn't that what we all want?

Come to think of it, maybe I just don't want to be told what's good for me by any official body.

Then get out of our society, if that's how you feel.

Put pressure on the groups. Get the people in line.

Now everybody, here's the announcement and the resolution.

Oh no, not again. Satsvarupa and his men shall not sell their books on temple grounds.

Radha-Govinda in pleasing pink with green peacock-feather patterns embroidered in golden *jari* today. He's blowing His flute, and Radha is offering something to Him in Her right hand.

You may take one giant step.

But *you* must take one step backward.

Why? Is it arbitrary? Is there some higher force or reason?

You may take two baby steps forward.

We liked to play that game and submit ourselves to the person who gave or denied permission. I forget all the rules.

We played "War," too, and "Hide and Seek," "ringaleevio," stoop ball, marbles in the gutter "my pewee marble hits yours? I collect your marble. It now becomes my property. That's outright gambling. I learned it as a child on 76th Street in Queens.

Now you may go back to Godhead.

Or, you may take another body in the material world.

You may not . . .

* * *

Noon

EkadaSi today, so no *halava*.

How's your chest now?

Okay.

Then forget any problems connected with it for now. It's Wednesday. M. will soon be heading out to Dublin for his evening gig at the restaurant. I may go down to the art room this afternoon.

Paulist Press catalogue has arrived. Nothing much of interest this time. Saw *A Handbook For Spiritual Directors*, which contains outlines for the problems faced by

those trying to help others in their spiritual lives. The problems are listed in alphabetical order, there are so many of them. The author also writes about how the directors should maintain confidentiality.

How to love them all? How to live together in an institution? When you're not sure you're good enough, can you deliver them from death? What would the Catholics advise? Often their approach seems psychological, although of course it has religious undertones. Therefore, these books are different than life. The spiritual director tries to problem-solve. Can he presume?

* * *

3:03 p.m.

Is it possible you'd *like* to leave your beloved routine, so subconsciously you're giving yourself chest pain so as to get out? No, that's too weird. I like it here. And if I wanted to go out, I could just go. I wouldn't have to sabotage my health with a death threat. There is peer pressure against my continuing here, and that makes it hard for me to live this way, but it's not so strong. And there is what you might call "guru pressure," which is my internalized Prabhupada "my desire to please him. I hope it's accurate. Every devotee has a Prabhupada to tell him or her what to do. The real one . . . for me and for you. Then there is "God pressure," what Krishna wants when He asks us to surrender. We shouldn't desire to escape His demands. "Surrender, you rascal!"

But there's a certain unpleasantness associated with *all* pressure, especially when it is wielded by people who are less than pure, or less than expert, in representing Prabhupada. Or by those who manipulate others in the guise of Prabhupada's teachings. It has happened.

And we certainly don't desire to revolt against the spiritual master. Following him for thirty years, then snapping and saying he taught us all wrong, he was ill-motivated, it's time to throw off that monkey from our backs, etc. That's why it's good to be gentle on others and even on ourselves. The easiest way to do that is to remain respectful toward the spiritual master.

The house is empty. M. is gone. I doubt my body will collapse in the next few hours. Two things I'd like to accomplish as long as my head is clear: to go outside and chant a round, and to paint for an hour in my beloved art room. Let's make that the priority. I have approximately three hours.

* * *

3:35 p.m.

On the bench outdoors. Put it this way: There is no harm in my breaking my solitary routine to go to America for a medical check-up. I wouldn't go except for the pain. I'm satisfied to dig in here and live alone until January. But since the medical need ought not to be ignored, I can see the virtue in going. It will be interesting, provide variety, and then I may return here.

* * *

5:41 p.m., Night Notes

I read a little *Govinda-lilamrta* on my own. But I was too tired. It's better if Madhu and I can read together, taking turns. He's hard to catch, though. I'll try tomorrow.

In *Govinda-lilamrta*, Radharani makes a garland. The author tells us what flowers She uses. I also worship Govinda, although I don't make Him garlands.

I'm writing this with a stick pen on an 18" x 24" sheet of drawing paper while sitting on the floor on the landing. Sunlight is coming through the skylight. After I'm done writing, I can draw on the top of it. I often draw not-so-human-looking people. They are misshapen or imaginative characters. I've given up hope of working from live models, although that would be good too. I just draw what comes out of the initial splashes, globs, globes, and things that connect.

I did one today that resembled two doctors working on a heart. The heart was six feet tall, like them. Some of the drawings were entirely abstract, but most started as abstracts upon which I imposed personal forms "faces and bodies. I often *saw* the forms, or improvised them. I didn't add many words, but felt my spiritual aspirations as I painted.

September 17, 12 a.m.

Yesterday while painting, I forgot my chest pain. I didn't remember it until this morning. Does that make painting good therapy? Paint as you like and die happy?

Let's read *Quest* for discipline and nourishment. So what if "gurus" books can't be sold in temples? I still have to read.

The next section of *Quest* is called, "The Spiritual Master," and the first lecture is titled, "Who Is a Guru and Why We Need One." Fair enough. Let's hear it. Perhaps we think this topic might be touchy for people these days, but let's just hear what Prabhupada has to say.

Maitreya is speaking to Vidura. Lord Krishna says *tad viddhi pranipatena*. The Vedic injunction is *tad-vijnanartam sa gurum evabhicchet*. You must approach the guru if you want to learn transcendental knowledge. I'll be looking to see if he touches on the subject, "But isn't a guru just to start you off? Later, aren't you on your own? How long do you need to keep a guru? Don't you follow many gurus? What about when you're an old man and people approach you to become their guru?" I can answer all of these.

What about, "When our guru disappears from this world and we need direction, especially as we change and grow older . . ." The answer in which I want to believe and by which I wish to live is that Srila Prabhupada will continue as my exclusive guru. My ability to hear him will depend upon my purity. I don't, however, like this being shoved down my throat in an institutional way.

Okay, you're a disciple of Srila Prabhupada. But what's this stuff about you being a guru in his disciplic succession? Do you actually represent him? Can you do that and grow on your own? Are you "heavy" with knowledge? Are you *strotriyam*, or "One who has received knowledge by hearing the *Vedas*"? At least I'm filling up right now. Are you *brahma-nistham*, one who has realized the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

Srila Prabhupada refers to "standard transcendental knowledge, not upstart knowledge." Get it in *parampara*. So again, the guru's two main qualifications are: (1)

he's heard from his guru in disciplic succession; and as a result, (2) he's "firmly fixed in the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

Vidura served and pleased Maitreya, who was then willing to "speak very frankly and freely, which will be beneficial for you." Don't challenge the spiritual master. Make submissive inquiries, and accept the spiritual master's answers. "Just as we have to surrender to Krishna, we have to surrender to Krishna's representative, the spiritual master."

Madhu arrived home at midnight, just as I was beginning to read. He came in, but didn't come upstairs. I'll go down soon and look for the mail he should have left for me. At least I'll look at the envelopes, put them in piles, then start chanting. Just go a little further into Prabhupada's lecture first. It feels good to be hearing about the guru. As I read, I note the burning sensation in my chest. Prabhupada said, "One should not search out a guru to cure some material disease. For that there is a medical practitioner."

We can't understand Krishna fully, but if we try as far as our capacity allows, that is our perfection. If we think Krishna is like us, we are *mudhas*. The whole material nature is working under His direction. We don't have to know all the details. But the summary, *janmady yasya yatah*, "Everything has emanated from the Supreme Absolute Truth, Krishna," is sufficient. I may claim I have already learned that from Prabhupada, but it's obvious I am still not convinced that Krishna is God, that He's in my heart, that He cares for me.

* * *

4:20 a.m.

"Behave Ideally "Or Don't Preach." We must both behave and preach. Write and chant, lecture and answer letters, read, and in my case, be a literary man. Do your stuff with love.

"You are mine," and so on. We sing the blues, but Krishna will never leave us. We don't have to feel sad. He's not merely ethereal but has a fully spiritual form. He's eating breakfast at Mother Yashoda's house.

The times that are with us. Krishna's rambling devotees go on preaching and feasting and feasting no matter what happens. The Vaisnava holidays are established methods of giving Krishna consciousness to ourselves and others. A lady writing from Russia tells me that the economy has collapsed and there may be war. "Then who will preach?" she asks. But preachers endure and find the way. Or am I just overly optimistic, blessing them from my hideout, Dug-out Doug praising the troops?

Please, Lord, bless me. I want to be a right-on singer for You.

Distracted fragments. I heard Prabhupada say that we have to behave. He spoke of a so-called saintly person who became impotent due to having so much sex. Then he began a lecture on what he said was a very important verse. I can't recall it just now. He said Maharaja Pariksit was ideal. He was ready to kill Kali personified. Kali conspired against Maharaja Pariksit to kill him. I have never heard it said like that before. Lord Ramacandra was also ideal.

Low water pressure in the bathroom. Lots of mail today.

* * *

5:20 a.m.

I used to write after my morning walk. It was nice then, because it was spring and early summer, and I could see where I was going. Now that winter is coming on, it's too dark except for the sliver moon lying on its back with the old moon in its arms and a sprinkling of stars around it. You hardly see the moon in Ireland; it's usually so overcast.

A kind of quaint feeling this morning, not like this was an eternal night, but as if I was in the 19th century, a literary night.

I walked around and around the building. As soon as we moved into this house, I knew I would want to circumambulate it. Not that I considered it a holy place, but I liked the idea of that kind of exercise, and I knew it would soon be too dark in the mornings to walk on the road. Aniruddha built the plank trail around the house for me. I like the sound of my boots on the walk. Then I walk on the gravel paths where the garden is illuminated by the outside light.

May Krishna allow me . . . No, don't go so far as to pray for good health. You're a migraneur, right? Yeah, but I meant to say that I'd like to be able to stay here for a few more months and to write deeply rather than having to run off to a doctor. But if I have to, I'll accept that too. Or death by bullet, as Gandhi met. As long as I can remember Him.

* * *

5:35 a.m.

Krishna holds a silver flute. A very tiny insect crawls on this 11" x 14" page, where I'm writing. Conceive the page of writing as a kind of area for drawing. You fill in each line from left to right with the squiggles we call handwriting. Language and thought and reading material result. It's an unusual squiggle, but you can't expect the world to be interested in that. I read a lot of handwriting in people's letters. I wish they would type, since it's so much easier to read.

A new book for me in the mail: *The Alchemy of Illness*, by Kate Duff.

You ill? I thought you were a lifetime migraneur. Illness "isn't that something that comes and goes in between bouts of good health?"

We aspire for our eternal relationship with God. Anything that distracts from that is an enemy. Those who don't believe in God or know Him, cannot lead us as teachers. Maybe we can learn from them how to fix the plumbing, or how to read and write, but the most important thing they cannot convey.

So here we are. Hanging in there and ready for the pitch. Playing another day's game. All the rumpelstiltskins have come and gone. Short as it is, you shall tell us in your correspondence. "Heal yourself by the Krishna conscious chant." Who is crazy? Manipulate. Kate Duff is a fifth-generation Minnesotan. How about that? Natalie Goldberg approves the book. I have another book on migraine, which gives a favorable report on caffeine (provided you don't overdo it).

* * *

8:18 a.m.

Mr. V. has been to a few festivals holding signs, some against ISKCON's cow protection programs, and at least one against my books. A disciple of mine burnt down the sign and was fined in court for destroying property. Something else to worry about. Oh, strike it from the record but not from my heart.

Now the word "heart" has a new meaning in my vocabulary. It means a place of possible disease, a cause of death. I told M. how yesterday I had forgotten about the chest pain. He said we'll have to continue to monitor it. He said it's dangerous "I substituted the word "risky" for "dangerous" "to wait until January to check it. I guess I just hope it will go away.

Took an Esgic at 7:00 a.m. Twinge still present. You expect smooth sailing? You won't get it. But you can (and must) keep on serving in the interim, regardless of storms, burning, pains, and worries. It produces an interesting tension in life.

I wrote a letter to a woman, telling her that spiritual life isn't an either-or proposition. That is, just because you have to work in the world doesn't mean you can't practice Krishna consciousness.

Hey, get 'em piping hot. Fresh yams dripping from the fire, with butter. Just a dollar a yam. Step right up!

Haunting passage in Ellison's *Invisible Man* "how he owned up to being a southern Negro with a yearning for yams, and how he once stopped on a street to buy several and eat them with relish.

Hey, I admit I'm afraid. I don't want to be killed in my sleep by heart attacks or crazies. I'll take a dose. Not an overdose. I'll sing a little song and pass it on the waves.

* * *

11:30 a.m.

Skipped the Prabhupada *puja* because of a headache. Snuck in reading and answering mail anyway. Felt the specialness of these people who write to me.

* * *

2:32 p.m.

After Trnavarta died, Krishna played upon his chest as He did after He killed Putana. The cowherd people were joyous to see Krishna alive and unhurt. They believed that Krishna was an innocent child who was therefore protected by the Supreme Lord against such a sinful demon. Srila Prabhupada states that a devotee has faith in the powers of *Sravanam-kirtanam* for removing fear and sinful reaction. This is one of the six items of surrender: "Simply depend on Krishna, convinced that He will give one all protection."

Prabhupada mentioned that pious people plant trees on both sides of the road so everyone can walk in the shade. I began thinking of this, how a benefactor passes away, but ensuing generations benefit. I thought of the trees lining the road from Calcutta to Mayapur, and the trees on both sides of the road on Bhaktivedanta Marg.

In the next chapter, Gargamuni visits Nanda Maharaja at his home. Nanda Maharaja receives Gargamuni as an honored *sadhu*, and considers himself a poor-

hearted *grhastha*. Nanda praises the sage's knowledge of astrology. Nanda requests that Gargamuni perform the name-giving ceremony for Nanda's two sons.

* * *

5:20 p.m., Night Notes

I couldn't work this afternoon "twinge had returned. Picked out the light green and gold for Radha-Govinda to wear tomorrow. Walking in the mist in the front yard.

As a kind of joke, I looked up in the sayings of Theophan the recluse something I recall about a burning sensation in the heart as a result of chanting the Jesus prayer. The joke is that my chest pain could not be caused by my chanting, because my prayer is too dry to be called prayer. Anyway, I found this:

In order to keep the mind on one thing by the use of short prayer, it is necessary to preserve attention and so lead it into the heart: for so long as the mind remains in the head, where thoughts jostle one another, it has not time to concentrate on one thing. But when attention descends into the heart, it attracts all the powers of the soul and body into one point there. This concentration of all human life in one place is immediately reflected in the heart by a special sensation that is the beginning of future warmth. This sensation, faint at the beginning, becomes gradually stronger, firmer, deeper. At first only tepid, it goes into warm feeling and concentrates the attention upon itself. . . . This warmth then holds the attention without special effort.

He goes on to say that this warmth in the heart is not necessarily spiritual, but even then there's nothing wrong with it, unless the chanter tries to enjoy it. Also, if it does occur, one shouldn't focus on it as the all-in-all.

The warmth which is filled with grace is of a special nature and it is only this which is truly spiritual. It is distinct from the warmth of the flesh, and does not produce any noticeable changes in the body, but manifests itself by a subtle feeling of sweetness.

Everyone can easily identify and distinguish spiritual warmth with its particular feeling. Each must do it for himself: this is no business for an outsider.

My pain is not a warmth per se. rather, it's a discomfort. If I call it a burning sensation, it is more like the burning you feel with indigestion, or an undesirable fire. It would be nice to have that other kind of heart pain, the kind felt by Lord Caitanya. Prabhupada did advise we experience a change in heart.

September 18, 3:15 a.m.

Missed the midnight opener because of a sleepless night. M. was away making music, and I was anticipating a late visit by the electrician. I lay in bed, but was too alert for sounds. We can't enjoy peace for any extended time in this world. Complaining, mulling, going over things in my mind, the evening past, eight, nine, ten . . . I had some dreams.

* * *

4:30 a.m.

Routine disrupted. Each person tries to hold theirs together, twenty-four hours of *sadhana*. Do each thing at the same time each day. Maintain it. It's not possible. The

body fails, or some pressure from the outside world interferes, or a person interferes. Now the water here has turned brown with sediment. Special means have to be taken before we get clear water for bathing. Drinking water brought from another house. Everything takes time.

Dressing the Deities while hearing of Krishna's morning pastimes after His breakfast. When He saw Srimati Radharani, Krishna lost His appetite for the breakfast feast. But this caused pain to Yashoda and Rohini. Krishna muffled a belch, and they became happy.

Don't want to write in detail "it is too painful to hear "of the "mosquitoes" that have been biting me these past few days. As Bhaktivinoda Thakura prays, "O Gopinatha, my mind is crazy and does not care for any authority." Endure it, and get through.

Mind scattered. Think of letters to write. And a P.S. to a letter I already completed. Annoyed that the house is dirty but I don't have the energy to clean it myself, M. is too disorganized or overburdened to do it, and Caranaravinda is on a typing marathon to catch up. Live with filth and you accept the mode of ignorance. Bite at your fingernails. Something has to be done.

* * *

"Getting sentimental over you"? That's just a secular starting point. Carry it to Krishna consciousness. There is no shortage of ideas in this world, and almost all of them can be offered to Krishna in some form or other. Everything in this world comes originally from Him. We simply have to remain open.

Almost all devotees in ISKCON are troubled by the demise or troubles of the leaders, or by their eccentric behavior. It's a burden on our hearts. When we fall down, especially if we have allowed others to build their faith in us, we bend and twist our followers. Those of us who are left have to deal with the reality of our lives in the institution and again find faith. We have to do so despite the ill wishes of the institution's enemies.

* * *

5:20 a.m.

Going out for my walk, I suddenly decided to get the chest pain checked. The heart is such a vital organ, and the pain is undiagnosed but constant. It's difficult to get any serious treatment in Ireland. We phoned our friends in England, and all they did was give us a phone number of a doctor who's a disciple of an ISKCON guru, and we'd have to approach him cold. It looks like America will be our best bet.

Of course, I began to think of how making this trip will affect my writing. I can turn it into a writing adventure. I could write for another week here "*Beloved routine*" then start a new book, a new adventure, a travel book. I hope I will be able to return to the routine afterwards. It made me realize that my beloved routine is really meant to support my writing service, and my writing service can't actually be disrupted if I'm willing to write wherever I am. I'll present this to Madhu this morning.

As for the sky, not a star in sight, and no moon. I couldn't even distinguish between the dark night and the cloud cover. It's already 5:00 a.m., but it's still so dark.

* * *

9:02 a.m.

Well, I told M. that we should go to the U.S.A. He'll make the necessary calls to make it happen. I told him of my writing plans too. M. will ask how long I have to be away "how long before we can get an appointment, plane tickets, etc. Yes, I feel it's the right decision: take care of the body so you can serve Krishna.

I still plan to give the *japa* workshop on Sunday. It now has three parts: (1) what's wrong with our *japa*; (2) the glories of *japa*; and (3) the remedy for what's wrong. I'll speak for twenty-five minutes, we'll chant a round together, then answer their questions.

Oh, I wish I had a banjo

I could sing the holy name.

I wish I could chant my *japa* on a string
of golden beads. Yeah I wish I had a handle
on the holy name.

* * *

Gee I wished I had some
love burning in a heart of
silver flame.

* * *

10:18 a.m.

Gargamuni was afraid that if he performed a big *yajna* for Krishna and Balarama, Kamsa would find out about it. He might suspect that Nanda's son was actually the son of Devaki and Vasudeva. "Then he might take steps to kill Krishna. That would be a catastrophe." (*Bhag.* 10.8.9)

Nanda Maharaja then asked the sage to perform the *yajna* privately in a cowshed. He didn't want to miss out on the purificatory process for his sons. Gargamuni gave the boys their names. One boy would be known as Rama, Bala, or Sankarsana. rama, because He gives happiness; Bala, because of His strength; and Sankarsana because He unites two families. The other boy appears as an incarnation of God in every millennium, in hues of white, red, and yellow ""and now He has appeared in a blackish color. All such incarnations have now assembled in Krishna." (*Bhag.*10.3.13)

I'm calm for now, having taken an Esgic, but I'm aware "it" can flair up again. Maybe the desk lamp is too bright. Maybe I should not read through this whole purport. After this, I'm going to read aloud with M. That's risky too. Everything in small increments. Hoping to do Srila Prabhupada's *puja* at eleven. The old boat sails along.

The *avatars* appear incessantly like waves in the river. In Kali-yuga, Bhagavan has appeared in *pita-vana*, a yellow color, as Gaurasundara. *Krishna varnam tvisa Krishnam*. This is an important moment in *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, as further evidence both for Krishna's identity as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and as evidence that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is Krishna in *achanna* (covered) form.

* * *

12:11 p.m.

You will last until lunch and after. Any signs of autumn yet? What have you got to offer? It's nice when you are in a ripe, receptive mood. Then you can even reread an entire *Back to Godhead* magazine with relish. What is the elusive quality?

Hare Krishna. Give love. Withhold judgment. Know that Krishna consciousness is most important, and that Srila Prabhupada's version of it is your own. Seek to find it in his house. Yes, I do look at old ISKCON pictures and feel disappointed to see how many leaders have left, but chanting Hare Krishna is chanting Hare Krishna, and life means nothing else.

* * *

2:45 p.m.

M.'s music from his cottage reaching here. He plays or listens to music on traditional Irish instruments "a tin whistle, a bourang, a fiddle. He's listening now, because I hear a woman singing. Has this become my homeland? My roots are in my soul.

Earlier today I was thinking of living at Baladeva's house in Vrndavana. I could just stay there and not worry about what anyone else says. I'd give lectures once in a while. But I'm accustomed to more comforts, and especially the peace and quiet of the Irish countryside. I guess I can't have everything in one place. If I want to live with the quaint, deep-hearted Brijbasis, I can't have the quiet of Ireland.

In India I am given both honor and criticism as a *sadhu*. Do I want the honor? Ireland allows me to keep a lower profile. If I went to India, I could write about the sense impressions there; here, I have more solitude, more self-reality.

This afternoon the burning sensation is hardly noticeable. Am I sure I want to go to America? Yes, I should check it out.

What culture do I actually belong to? Hare Krishna. Christian books, psychology, jazz, highways, disciples . . . Can I aspire for the culture of the transcendental soul? Prabhupada's books, a midnight-rising schedule, time alone to hope and pray "isn't that all I need?"

* * *

"For this son of yours there are many forms and names according to His transcendental qualities and activities. These are known to me, but people in general do not understand them." (*Bhag.* 10.8.15) Lord Krishna has many names even Gargamuni doesn't know. Yet Lord Caitanya said He needed to know only a few of Krishna's names. Just love Him "Radha-Govinda. Hare Krishna. "To increase the transcendental bliss of the cowherd men of Gokula, this child will always act auspiciously for you. And by His grace only, you will surpass all difficulties." (*Bhag.* 10.8.16)

Krishna comes to protect the *devas* from the demons. Gargamuni told Nanda Maharaja, "Your son is as good as Narayana (*narayana-samah*)." Nanda would remember this later in explaining "wonderful Krishna" to the *gopas*. In fact, Krishna

would enjoy more than Narayana, as Rasabihari, the central enjoyer of the *rasa* dance with the *gopis*.

"Let others, fearing material existence, worship the *Vedas*, the *Puranas* and *Mahabharata*, but I shall worship Nanda Maharaja, in whose courtyard the Supreme Brahman is crawling." (quoted in *Bhag.* 10.8.21, purport) This is the best meditation, on Krishna's youthful Vraja-lila.

* * *

3:40 p.m.

Front yard. The beef ox is looking at me while he drops his stool. It's warmer today, and the sky is a nice white and blue. My head is foggy. Feeling the likelihood of our transit, the uprooting. It seems wherever I go, the main factor with which I will have to deal will be my daily headaches. Don't let that depress you. Keep up your daily schedule of *sadhana*.

What kind of person joins this movement? What kind of person leaves? So many apostates recovering from the "cult." My head aches and I have to stop writing while M. whistles, wearing earphones, and a bee buzzes by in the garden. In a couple of hours, M. will drive over to Uddhava's to use the telephone. He'll call America and try to figure out how long the whole trip will take.

September 19, 12:10 a.m.

To be accepted as an *acarya*, you must write a commentary on *Vedanta-sutra*. We have to approach a spiritual master who is in Vyasa's disciplic succession. But what does it mean to follow Vyasadeva? Vyasa accepted Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

I'm reading about this in a *Quest* lecture. Prabhupada quotes *viduram prita*, "Vidura pleased Maitreya." How can one please the spiritual master? As *Bhagavad-gita* states, by surrender, inquiry, and menial service. "Sir, I'm your most obedient servant. Please accept me and give instructions."

I'd like to pray like that now to Srila Prabhupada. I need further instruction in how to be satisfied in Krishna consciousness, how to endure these disruptive times in ISKCON, and how to understand what I can best do to help, despite my physical handicap. Also, I need instruction so that I can taste the chanting. I need to know how to gain preaching strength, and to understand the higher topics of Krishna consciousness. I still need my guru in so many ways. I need him to be with me in life and at death.

Prabhupada says we shouldn't challenge the guru. Don't go to the guru and say, "I know better than you. Let's talk." If we can't surrender to him, then we are wasting both his time and our own.

The next *Quest* lecture is also on *guru-tattva*. It's about Sanatana Gosvami inquiring from Lord Caitanya, "Actually, I do not know how to inquire about the goal of life and the process for attaining it (*sadhya* and *sadhana*). Please be merciful to me and explain all these truths." (Cc. *Madhya* 20.103)

We come to the human form of life after a long evolution in the personal transmigration of our soul. "And now we have a chance to escape from this painful process." The goal is to revive our intimate relationship with God.

Imagine me telling someone, "I just can't take all the controversies tearing ISKCON apart. Those people outside ISKCON who attack the whole system, who do so with vicious words and wholesale rejection, pain our minds. Even those who clamor for reform within our society are too rigorous for me "too controversial and challenging. I just can't take part in it. As I can't take part as a manager, I also can't work with the social reform movement directly. I need to confine myself to reading books, chanting, and writing. Do you understand?"

Yes, but then how are you relevant? How can you *not* take part in this turbulence and still be accepted as a member of our institution? Are you simply neutral?

Because we accept the body as the self, we are kept in darkness, but Sanatana asked Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, "*Ke ami . . .* who am I? Why should there be such a struggle for existence? Why not an easy life, a peaceful life? . . . I want to be happy, but there is opposition. Why?" Srila Prabhupada mentions the little restrictions he has experienced "a fly was attacking him as he lectured. He mentioned how dogs bark at us when we take walks. "And the immigration department . . . In many places we have been refused entry."

We should ask why so many things are forced on us. That asking is more important than trying to raise money. The Krishna consciousness movement is meant to help us understand this struggle and its remedy. We should do as Sanatana Gosvami did and approach Lord Caitanya or His representative, and surrender.

Again, as in the last lecture, Srila Prabhupada instructs us not to challenge the spiritual master. We should surrender, *then* serve and inquire from him. "You must be ready to accept the answers he gives." That sounds strange to Westerners, but it's the proper system and we have to follow it if we want the result. "First of all settle up in your mind that whatever answers the spiritual master gives, you'll accept. Then you can make an inquiry." Then carry those orders out.

ISKCON struggles with this concept, because we aren't sure what constitutes a bona fide guru or whether we have any in ISKCON since Prabhupada's departure. Srila Prabhupada: "If out of ignorance you approach the wrong person for spiritual guidance, you'll be cheated." Krishna will help us find the appropriate guru.

Of course, I always take this discussion personally. Whatever I am "whether guru or not guru, or a *rtvik*, monitor, emergency (castor oil tree) "let me not desert or fail.

* * *

4:20 a.m.

Stabs of pain in the chest. Yes, I'm going to America. Ah, how lovely are Radha and Krishna today. Charming and playful Krishna is dressed in yellow silk with red and gold trim; Srimati Radharani, beside Him, is dressed in a flouncy red skirt and blouse, with yellow and gold trim. They are wearing gold and red necklaces.

I was listening to the precious recording of Srila Prabhupada dictating *Krishna* book (Chapter Forty-six). He says that *lila-smaranam* is an excellent way to be Krishna

conscious in separation from Krishna. Lord Caitanya practiced it, and we may too, if we're on a higher platform. He suggests we read *Krishna-bhavanamrta*, by Vishvanath Cakravarti Thakura. "Any book of *Krishna-lila*, even this book, *Krishna*, or our *Teachings Of Lord Caitanya*, is actually solace for devotees feeling separation from Krishna."

Sending code messages to the Lord and receiving His assurances.

Haven't been using inks or paints in last days. I'm not writing so much. Not able to follow the full divine routine. Missing pieces, like midnight reading. Keep having to rest early due to headaches. Encroaching maladies take my time. "This is a kind of death," the migraineurs say.

VrakreSvara Pandita was here for Janmastami," she wrote to me, "so we were blissful." She adds (this simple woman from Puerto rico), "Nothing can stop Lord Caitanya's movement. People may come to join it or go away, but it will continue for ten thousand years."

Yeah, I thought. We come and go, but the movement will go on, because it's Lord Caitanya's desire. Timelessness of time.

Well you needn't add your word
songs of one who cares
you have no special
trunk of
elephant-seeking tourists in India
born as urchins
or businessmen

* * *

you are caring for yourself
I hope. Now this is
the only one time a human
life is that Krishna chants
for you to become a devotee . . .

So saying he blew his horn the last mile and smiled. Wake up soon, Madhu, it's time for another day.

* * *

5:25 a.m.

Dark night "I won't say of the soul. We go through our own difficulties as chalked out by the Gaudiya Vaisnava *acaryas*, Rupa Gosvami and Vishvanath Cakravarti. Prabhupada tells us not to expect smooth sailing but to always depend on Krishna.

It's very dark this morning, but it's not raining, and I can see the stars in their constellations. I hear the sound of running water out there over the wall. Probably the stream rushing down the hill. Madhu is up inside the house, and I'm circumambulating. Fifteen rounds done, *gayatri* chanting, and I'm pretty much done too.

I only use the flashlight on one side of the house, where I can't see and where I have to step up twice on the boards. round and round I go, chanting my clockwise mantras. It

makes me feel like a watchman making my rounds. All seems well in the world, and so I'll report it as such. There are only a few minor disturbances, such as birth, death, disease, and old age, but the Krishna consciousness movement can take care of those, if only we can run it properly.

* * *

8:30 a.m.

I'm going to stop taking Depakote. I'll tail off to one pill today, one tomorrow, then stop. It's not supposed to be connected with heart pain, but the pain began only two weeks after beginning to take this medication.

The trip to America is still at the planning stages, but maybe stopping Depakote will solve the problem. We'll see.

Sure, I'm tired of all this medical talk, but what can I do? The chest pain may be taking some drive away from my desire to write. Makes me afraid and spoils my routine.

But the prospect of going a great distance, trouble (now they're seeing if they can get me medical insurance) for just a day's worth of expensive tests, is not at all appealing. I was somehow trying to link it with some kind of writing adventure, but I don't need that at such expense.

Krishna, can I stick it out here and let things take care of themselves?

* * *

9:30 a.m.

All the motherly *gopis* in Vrndavana enjoy Krishna and Balarama's babyhood activities. "The babies would catch the ends of the calves tails, and the calves would drag them here and there." That has always been a favorite *lila*. People like to hear it. Srila Prabhupada stopped and looked at a painting of it when I was present in Los Angeles. He said this is the difference between a devotee and an atheist. The devotee enjoys this pastime of Krishna, and the atheist only sees God as death. I went back to Boston (1969) and told the devotees what Prabhupada had said. He was our only Guru Maharaja, and we loved sharing stories of what he said and did. We were enthusiastic to read his books, and determined to carry out his orders for preaching.

The mothers were "always in anxiety, and their household engagements were disturbed. At that time, they were fully equipoised in the transcendental ecstasy known as the distress of maternal affection . . ." (*Bhag.* 10.8.25) In other words, their feelings were spiritual, although they involved motherly love, crying, fear for their children's safety, etc.

Another favorite episode is when the neighbor *gopis* come to Mother Yashoda and complain about Krishna. I repeated this to a Boston audience in Srila Prabhupada's presence, and he smiled. Krishna, the butter thief.

* * *

10:50 a.m.

This book has really turned into a straight diary, with my medical concerns in the forefront. Flow with it anyway. This is my current reality. Still, I can give more literary fare. Remember Phil Harris (1940s), whose specialty was to sing-speak rapidly? He had one song where he listed many things as rapidly as human speech would allow. It ended with the refrain, "That's what I like about the South." Walt Whitman often wrote like that too "his cosmic "I" lists.

For me, to get away from health anxieties, I twirl a baton. It's like whistling in the cemetery. I mean, *I resort to the philosophy my spiritual master taught me.* That's what I like about the South, see. And I'll smile as I go out.

* * *

11:47 a.m.

Krishna held Uddhava's hand and asked him to go immediately to Vrndavana to deliver His messages to His parents, friends, and to the *gopis*, who were feeling pangs of separation from Him. The Lord also wanted Uddhava to learn about the highest standard of devotion, which is realized only by the *gopis*. So Uddhava set off on his chariot for the holy land of Vraja.

Tick-tock, the clock
moves heart
beats. Waves of peace
and disquiet
come one after another.
Is this yin and yang and
everything belongs?
Will I understand if I chant?

* * *

12:40 p.m.

Late lunch. Still waiting. Be calm. So much waiting in this world. I'm also waiting to develop *bhakti*. Srila Prabhupada and Rupa Gosvami tell us to be patient. But patience doesn't mean sitting around like a person killing time while waiting for the dentist. We shouldn't spend our time leafing through slick magazines or spacing out while listening to the radio. Do something constructive to help yourself at every spare moment.

Later he regretted "
"If I had only approached the Lord
to serve Him . . .
Come to think of it,
his order is my life."

Oh, trash that silly poem. Put your teeth in and get ready to honor *prasadam*. You'll be hearing Bhurijana Prabhu lecturing on the *Bhagavatam*, and you'll be relishing the lunch while you look up shyly now and then at your favorite Deities.

* * *

2:45 a.m.

When the motherly *gopis* complained to Mother Yashoda about Krishna stealing butter from their homes, Krishna sat innocently and without comment. Mother Yashoda looked at His beautiful face and didn't want to chastise Him. One time, Krishna's friends lodged a complaint with Mother Yashoda: "Krishna has eaten earth." Lord Krishna replied, "My dear mother, I have never eaten dirt. All my friends complaining against me are liars. If you think they're being truthful, you can directly look into My mouth and examine it." (*Bhag.* 10.8.35) His mother then demanded that He open His mouth. When Krishna opened His mouth, she saw within it the universal form. "Seeing all these aspects of the cosmic manifestation, along with herself and Vrndavana-dhama, she became doubtful and fearful of her son's nature." (*Bhag.* 10.8.39) At first this vision was in conflict with Mother Yashoda's maternal love for Krishna, but Krishna allowed her to adjust it.

* * *

The farmer has his tractor parked with a small trailer hitched to it just outside my window. He and his daughter are throwing field stones into the trailer. No machine can do that for them, I guess. I'll watch. I'm usually walking in my yard at this time, but not now. A misty Saturday.

* * *

4:05 p.m.

Talking to the writer:

You've got this setup here so conducive to writing, but you are doing less of it. Why? You are not making old quotas or writing with intensity. You say this is part of the flow, but I wonder. Are you just not working? You already took a vacation last month, you know.

One reason is that I want to engage in strong Krishna conscious service. I'm not always sure the writing qualifies. The other reason is that my health has been so weak this month. Perhaps I'm not feeling the same spirit to persevere despite pain.

There are always various factors that determine how intense my writing life is. For example, there's the point about my willingness. Krishna gives us the drive to do our services. To be a writer is my so-called psychophysical nature. Also, when I feel the impulse to preach, I do it through writing. Still, I find myself regularly questioning the genre. Probably I'll never be completely satisfied with any answer on that point.

Talking more than usual with M. today to hash out all the nitty-gritty details of a trip to America and what options are open to us if we don't. Is the chest pain getting worse? I just wrote a note to him saying I think I should stop taking the suspect medication. Let's see what happens in a week. If the pain gets better, we'll know what was causing it. Why rush off the U.S.?

Caranaravinda contacted a doctor on the Internet, who said that neither my low blood pressure, the Depakote, the feverfew, or the Esgic cause heart problems. Still, he suggested I see a doctor soon for my chest pain.

Perhaps I'm not writing as much because I feel this is all I have to write about. If I want to produce pages, well, here they are. But if I want different subject matter, I will have to search for it. I mean, do you want to hear about my fear of someone assaulting me at a public devotee festival? Or would you rather hear my reasons for not printing certain things? Want to hear about my *siddha-deha* (or Prabhupada's *siddha-deha*)? Want to know what's going on in all the Russian temples? Well, I don't know. I'm not on the worldwide web.

My whole situation takes place at the end of this rocky lane. And perhaps I think that's a problem. This romance of the beloved routine that's breaking up is too quiet.

Local general practitioners are known as "gate-keepers." They keep you from going directly to a heart specialist or gaining access to the big machines that can diagnose most conditions. If I use the Irish medical system, the gate-keepers, if they will refer me to a specialist at all, will place me on a waiting list whereby I won't be tested until November or so. By then, I'd have either figured it out or died from the condition.

In any case, where are my interesting thoughts on life in Krishna consciousness? Where are my EJW songs and whatever it is I'm supposed to be doing? Listen, and tell us what you hear.

* * *

Word play gets beta-blockers and heat pouring out of the heaters. Be thankful for the blessings you receive "a clear head and a chance to lecture tomorrow in Dublin. My head is full of Sastric references, and the only other thing I have is my honest expressions. Hare Krishna. I have that too.

Once a Zen monk was practicing zazen and the whole universe collapsed. He was glad about it, and told his Zen master what happened. The master said it was too soon, he was trying too hard. He advised him to keep at it and let him know what else happened. The monk went back to his sitting practice and performed many severe austerities. I'll have to tell you later what happened, when I can remember the rest of the story. Something about a snowball falling off a mountain peak and the monk tasting it. He savored so many koans he fell into the abyss. Those voidists.

Then a devotee prayed to Krishna to please be allowed to join His eternal *lila*. He begged for faith in His pastimes and to always remember that devotional service was not meant to supply sense gratification. He wanted to sacrifice his life, putting aside his own pleasure and desiring only to please the Lord. He felt the happiness of *bhakti*.

Japa is devotional service. I'll tell the folks that tomorrow.

* * *

4:55 p.m.

Farmers doing something in the nearby field with the cows. I'm sitting on the front yard bench, facing the maimed sycamore tree and the bare topsoil in our garden. M. says he prefers no domesticated garden at all; he'd rather have overgrown weeds and a beaten

down path to the house. All the flowers (or most of them) are starting to look old. You don't know what I'm thinking. I should tell you the context, huh, not just spring words on you out of nowhere. But suddenly the sun goes behind a cloud and that happens suddenly here in Ireland. One who lives here understands the context.

M. phoned Italy. The devotee couldn't speak English, but when M. attempted to speak Italian, the devotee said, "Hey, Madhumangala!"

"My Italian is so bad they recognize it as me." This sent me into a reverie on the Italian warmth of expression.

September 20, 12:05 a.m.

Quest lecture: "Put Krishna In The Center." Srila Prabhupada speaks on his "favorite" *Bhagavad-gita* verse, 7.1, which is the *tac chrnu* verse. I have so many times heard him explain the meaning of the word "Bhagavan." It's become a question of my ability to hear it each time with my heart. Otherwise, I'm stuck with the superficiales. It was always rewarding for Prabhupada to speak the definition, and always rewarding for us to hear.

Srila Prabhupada spoke this lecture to a public audience in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1973. The historical context is another way to savor his preaching. He catches their attention with touches of scholarship, "Those who are Sanskrit scholars will understand . . ." and he places *Bhagavad-gita* in the context of the *Mahabharata*. If I'm going to appreciate, it's better I not try to cover a lot of ground.

"Krishna is teaching Arjuna *bhakti-yoga*. By yoga we link with the Absolute Truth. Srila Prabhupada then explains the three phases of the Absolute Truth. We can sympathize and almost visualize how Srila Prabhupada is presenting so many concepts carefully and logically to convince the students of things they have never heard before. Most people then and now think of yoga or meditation as impersonalism. The Absolute Truth is ultimately Bhagavan, the Supreme Person. He is all-attractive, and He loves all living entities. "For Him, for God, everyone is a lovable object, because everyone is the son is God."

I've been reading a novel, *Saint Francis*, by Nikos Kazantzakis. Parts of it are interesting, especially the descriptions of the constant and fervent love St. Francis felt for the Lord. Now, however, I can't get past how much the author has fictionalized his character and dramatized his life. I certainly can't quote this author as an authority on St. Francis's life. It's the same with we devotees who write about Srila Prabhupada or Krishna. We have to tell what happened.

We can trust what Prabhupada says as coming straight from the Vedic scriptures. He didn't manufacture anything. When Prabhupada says that God is inherently attractive to all, and that He loves us all equally, we can trust his word. I have to return to this fortunate position of the submissive disciple. I used to be better at hearing, but I can recapture that essential spirit. It will take a conscious effort to bring the will to attentive, submissive hearing. It's easiest if I don't have other things on my mind to distract me.

The best *yogi* is the *bhakta*. "If you want to understand God, it is better to understand from God Himself." The *acaryas* accept Lord Krishna as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. To become a first-class *yogi*, you must increase your attachment to Krishna.

I'll be going into to Dublin to lecture today. I hope I'll be able to do it. I plan to take a couple of naps before we leave, and one in the van on the way down. Then I'll speak as Prabhupada's representative. I'll tell them that we can become attached to Krishna by chanting His name. My *japa* this morning will be my qualification for speaking on *japa* reform.

"For love there must two . . ." Take shelter of Krishna. "Whether you increase your attachment for Krishna or for a devotee of Krishna, it is the same." I seem to recall being in the audience when Srila Prabhupada was speaking to nondevotees and rooting for him, following his examples, hoping they'd be convinced, thinking they *should* be convinced "if they're lucky, pious, intelligent, and not too stubborn.

* * *

5:46 a.m.

It looks like I may not have heart disease. If that's the case and I have no need to leave Wicklow, then what am I going to do with my time? Can I spend it in a better way? Can I push myself to write many pages, read more, chant more, paint more, exercise more, go out to lecture and meet people more? No, I can't. But if I'm not in danger of a heart attack, then I can continue to gently immerse myself in my routine. Just for three more months. I doubt I'll be seeing God in three months, or even six months, like Dhruva did, but I can resign myself to "and celebrate "the quiet life. I'll still make my twice-a-month trek to Dublin to lecture. I'll still answer mail. My life may be slow, but it's steady. I pray not to fall down.

Maybe something unpredictably auspicious could happen today, by His grace. I could become more fired up in Prabhupada appreciation. Perhaps I'll find a new literary streak or vein for creative expression, or find something out about myself that would be useful in my attempt to serve Krishna. There are so many ways I could improve. My attention could shift off myself and onto Krishna. I might become absorbed in His teachings and pastimes.

* * *

6:35 a.m.

In *Hari-nama Cintamani*, Srila Haridasa Thakura instructs us how to overcome inattentive chanting. His recommendations are preceded by an analysis of inattentive *japa*. It's caused by apathy, worldly distraction, and laziness. He says inattention and negligence are synonyms. We neglect this precious gift, this most important duty, both grossly and subtly. If we're lusty, greedy, or otherwise materially attached, then no matter how many times we chant the holy name, our attention (mind) will fly to those things. The lazy fellow can barely chant before falling asleep.

The cure? Spend at least an hour a day chanting in the company of Vaisnavas who are enthusiastic to chant. Their methods will favorably influence us. Try to gradually increasing the quota. Chant in a secluded place, away from distractions. Cultivate service to Tulasi-devi. Observe Vaisnava holidays with devotees. We are rejuvenated when we hear *Krishna-katha*, take part in *kirtana*, see the Deities, and such freshness will carry over into our *japa*.

* * *

9:17 a.m.

Dublin, in the bedroom above the room where I'll lecture. On the way in, M. told me of the phone call he had with a cardiologist in Scotland. The cardiologist doesn't think I have a heart problem. He's prescribing a painkiller. I'm to take it, and if it removes the pain, that's proof that the pain is not related to the heart. Another doctor, Nitai-Gaurasundara in America, says he doesn't think Depakote causes chest pain. Since it seems to be helping me prevent headaches, I think I'll continue to take it. But even as we rode, I felt the ache in my chest. It seemed to be worsened by the van's motion.

Got my outline ready for the talk on *japa*. It looks like there'll only be a small audience this time. Does that disappoint me? Glue in your teeth, tie the knot in your *sannyasa* top-piece, urinate again, and lecture. This is what's wrong with our *japa*. Here are the glories of the holy name. Dry practice doesn't have to make for a dry talk.

Japa attack is a joke
advise me seriously
please advocate something
all of us can do.

* * *

Japa care is a habit
always chant because
the purpose is to capture God
on a tongue in
an ear it's all
we need. And Swami's
grace.

I wrote in BTG six years ago, "Great benefits come to anyone who utters the holy names. Whether I feel dry or 'wet' when I'm chanting, the chanting works to destroy sins, provided I don't deliberately commit sins on the strength of chanting." Hare Krishna, whether you know it or not or feel it or not, it works, like a medicine.

I hear the devotees talking downstairs. I'll glide down into their midst in a few moments. I don't socialize. I have come to lecture, and then I'll leave with a minimum of other words. I will leave a good amount of time this morning for discussion, because that's a good way to relate more personally.

* * *

12:40 p.m.

If only I could get going with my writing, *japa*, and reading. Okay, I can't, huh? All I can expect, if I'm lucky, is to return to a blessed routine as soon as possible, as headache- and heart-ache-free as possible, three little increments of daily reading and my sixteen plus.

I preached to myself this morning. The room was full. Gopi-manjari asked what we should do if we try very hard but we remain dry. She said she tends to lose enthusiasm. I

recalled something I'd read by "a monk of the Eastern Church" writing on the Jesus prayer. She should honor even dry chanting. If we chant through the dryness, we're chanting without reward, so it's a "chemically pure" act of sheer will. If Krishna doesn't seem to reciprocate, or rather, if He gives us dryness as reciprocation, we will keep chanting. I like that. It reminds me of the last verse of the *Siksastakam*. The *gopis* never stopped crying for Krishna. He told them He had been standing nearby, witnessing their great devotion. He increased their love by separating Himself from them. Honor the dry.

But, Radhanatha asked, what about complacency "when you forgive yourself for being at a low level? Don't be complacent, and always hope against hope that you can improve. Before you chant, feel regret for your failure to be better and pray for reform. Even if you don't see any immediate change, continue to hope.

Abhaya remarked that she chants often during the day without her beads. She gives the holy name to suffering and dying animals, and to her mother, who is a terminal patient at the hospital. Nothing much I could add to her remarks.

* * *

3:10 p.m.

Lying in bed on my right side, I went to put an earplug into my left ear. I felt the exhausting pain in my left chest under my arm "the same area as the chest pain that has caused me to worry about heart disease. It demanded relief, similar to the pain you feel when you're trying to do push-ups beyond your capacity. I searched my mind for what I might be doing that would be causing that kind of muscle strain. I discovered it. Every day, I lift up the eight-liter container filled with water with my left arm and carry it into the bathroom. I do it again at noon. That would account for why the pain never goes away. It could very well be no more than a strained muscle. I'm eager to reveal this discovery to M. when he wakes from his nap. It would be great if I can close the "heart disease" case.

Shall I celebrate my discovery with a little *Srimad-Bhagavatam* reading? Sure, why not?

Mother Yashoda began to argue within herself, "Is this a dream, or is it an illusory creation by the external energy? Has this been manifested by my own intelligence, or is it some mystic power of my child?" (*Bhag.* 10.8.40)

She considered from all angles the meaning of the universal vision she saw within her son's mouth. She even thought she might be crazy, but realized that she wasn't. When she couldn't find the vision's cause, she simply offered obeisances to the Supreme Lord to protect her child. "When we are beset by some problem for which we can find no reason, there is no alternative than to surrender to the Supreme Lord and offer Him our respectful obeisances. Then our position will be secure." If we are suffering we chalk it up to our misdeeds, "The Supreme Personality of Godhead has caused him some small amount of suffering . . ." (*Bhag.* 10.8.41) Srila Prabhupada is referring to *Bhag.* 10.14.8, the *tat te nukampam* verse. Then he quotes *matra sparsas tu kaunteya* (Bg. 2.14) and paraphrases: "We should know that material suffering due to the material body will come and go. Therefore we must tolerate the suffering and proceed with discharging our duty as ordained by our spiritual master."

Yes, material pain in the chest or the head or wherever will come and go. In between and throughout bouts of suffering, we should practice our *sadhana*.

Mother Yashoda then thought, in a renounced mood, that she'd been falsely thinking herself the queen of Nanda Maharaja, with all his possessions, cows, and subordinates. "Actually I also am eternally subordinate to the Supreme Lord. He is my ultimate shelter." (*Bhag.* 10.8.42)

* * *

I'm grateful. As I told the devotees this morning, I need to be satisfied to make offerings and pray. However the Lord reciprocates (with signs that He's pleased or with silence or "rough" handling), we can continue serving, loving, as Srila Prabhupada would want us to. "Don't try to see Krishna, but act in such a way that Krishna sees you."

* * *

4:24 p.m.

In the class this morning, I described inattentive chanting in the modes of passion and ignorance. Passion, I said, comes when we think of the many things we want to be doing, and it causes us to be negligent while hearing the holy name. Radhanatha dasa said he's a passionate thinker and plan-maker, especially during his *japa*, and his mind only occasionally wanders over to the holy name. He said he's complacent about it and thinks it's natural at his age (he's a newlywed, trying to get a business going, and in his twenties). I'm an old man who is finished with most of the things he now faces, but my mind is just as passionate. It doesn't dwell on the holy name either. If we are complacent about attentiveness in our youth, it won't get better when we're older. We shouldn't kid ourselves. Now that I'm older, I hope against hope, feel regret daily, and try to pray with gratitude.

I felt I was preaching to myself in that class. I especially felt that when I said we should maintain enthusiasm even when the chanting remains dry. Now I have been granted a little extension in my physical well-being and peace because the chest problem has been solved. However, it doesn't seem *possible* to improve. Just now I walked around the house on the *parikrama* boards, chanting a seventeenth round. I communed with friends instead of with Krishna. I hardly noticed that I was chanting. Hopes springs eternal. Krishna will be kind to me in the end, I know.

* * *

6:13 p.m., Night Notes

Crammed in *St. Francis*, by a Greek fiction writer. It was intense. Spoke of Lady Poverty instead of Vraja, but it seized me anyway. True devotion. I'm sure his life story will come back to me in dreams. He practiced extreme austerities, had visions, and actually knew how to pray.

September 21,12:05 a.m.

From *Quest: "reaching Krishna His Way,"* a lecture from November 1966, in New York City. Prabhupada is speaking from the *Caitanya-caritamrta*. This period is one of my favorite times in ISKCON's history. Lord Caitanya was teaching Sanatana Gosvami and explaining the allegory of an astrologer instructing a poor man where to dig to find treasure. The Vedic literature, like the astrologer, can give us hints about how to regain our treasure, love of God, by reviving our lost relationship with our Father.

No method but *bhakti* will work. Karttika in two weeks. I'll be two-thirds through the next EJW volume. I woke about 10:30 p.m. last night and didn't sleep again after that. But I was pleased that the chest pain problem had been solved. I'm *not* going to die right away! I can take a vow for Karttika "increase my rounds or read *Vrndavana-mahimamrta*.

Then some of that enthusiasm faded. Adding pressure to get something done in a day adds the pressure of head pain. It's always like that. Could I do something simple, such as worship *tulasi* for a month? Let me dive into the essence of all times in Krishna consciousness.

Lord Krishna told Uddhava He couldn't be reached by yoga. Srila Prabhupada pokes at modern-day yoga teachers and students, calling them a society of cheaters and the cheated. We can't reach Krishna by Sankhya either. Materialists can't even find the spirit soul, so what chance do they have of finding God?

We can't find God through *dharma*, nor by ritual attendance at a church or temple. Not by *tapasya* or the vows of *sannyasa*. Unless we practice *bhakti*, we will succeed only to a certain degree.

Are we satisfied to only go so far and then stop short of the final goal? I say I have the final goal in sight. I know what it is: *Krishna-bhakti*. I know no other process will really help me. But that doesn't mean I have *attained* the final goal. How long "how many lives" will it take me? Dhruva Maharaja (and St. Francis of Assisi) were so determined that they attained the goal almost immediately. They had real spiritual greed.

Srila Prabhupada says that in this age, we can't do anything difficult. "Therefore Lord Caitanya, by His causeless mercy, has given us the process of Krishna consciousness, beginning with the chanting of the holy name." *Hari-nama eva kevalam*.

The next lecture is called, "How to See and Know God." It was given in Seattle in 1968. He began by singing *govindam adi purusam* with the devotees. He told the devotees that the song was reaching the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and that He was always hearing it. We accepted that simply because Srila Prabhupada said it. He added, "You can always see Govinda in your heart if you prepare yourself properly." It's like television.

Srila Prabhupada asked us to accept *Bhagavad-gita* because the saints accept it. Ultimately, his statements are not open to argument. We would go on arguing forever, because no one could defeat him. Anyway, arguing with the spiritual master is not a recommended method of gaining spiritual knowledge. We are meant to surrender, as he surrendered to his own Guru Maharaja.

Sometimes I see devotees attempting to undo their surrender, weakening their faith by bad association. If we feel we need more knowledge, study *sastra*. Pray to Lord

Balarama, Lord Nityananda, for strong faith in guru. Try to please him by offering sincere service and receiving his blessings. "And who is a guru, a spiritual master? He who follows and explains the scripture."

I had better not aim for big Karttika vows. I'm probably working at capacity right now. If I can keep up a momentum of following my routine, I will accumulate devotional credits. I am already so fortunate. Now I need only pray for an opening in purity, and yes, access to real Krishna consciousness. Guru, *sastra*, and *sadhu* are the way.

* * *

Dreamt that Lieutenant Commander Richardson showed a small group of us rare, classified photos of the Navy's newest planes. First we were shown the planes in silhouette, then shown them from different angles. When it was over, I wanted to thank him for his confidence. I told him it reminded me of when I was a boy growing up "my father was an officer in the Navy, and we often looked at pictures of World War II planes. It developed my patriotism. Although he was encouraging, I knew I was bluffing, trying to impress him.

Upon awaking, I thought about the importance of honesty. Dishonesty and bluffing causes so many complications. For example, what if Lieutenant Richardson called on me later, thinking I was more patriotic than I actually way?

Although this dream was about a Navy leader, some of ISKCON's leaders also appeared in it, trying to recruit devotees for their book distribution parties. Somehow, all the devotees in the dream were compelled to take sides, as if we all belonged to gangs.

* * *

3:45 a.m.

Now careful not to strain my left arm. Hot water pouring into the black bucket for my bath. I'm watching it. Hare Krishna chanter. Srila Prabhupada speaking on Durvasa Muni's attempt to punish Ambarisa. I'll be punished too if I criticize my Srila Prabhupada in any way.

* * *

4:30 a.m.

Tired I am in body and mind, but I'll ask a little more service out of Brother Donkey.

Folk music. Italian shouts, songs. Ah, words. Sound of stream in the darkness. M. leaving at six to pick up his son and bring him back here. He describes me to people as "one of the older members of our society who has daily migraines." When they ask about my relationship with M., he says his duty is to take care of me.

I wrote the mantra on a 9" x 12" cardboard, two words per line, starting with "Hare Krishna." That's a total of eight lines. I look at it when I chant, but I can't coordinate my chanting with it.

I'm happy to report that I have no chest pain. That scare was an interesting episode. My friends came forward to help and show concern.

Yeah, he banged the timpani
he forgot to write a poem
line. No more sandwiches
no heroes or women
to enjoy in any way "oh
you still enjoy them as loving
disciples, but not for sense grat.

* * *

I'm the mayor of Thorbridge so
I'm entitled to use the
company john. I'm deep into
obscure art like Berryman and
readers will have to sort through
my images.

Damodara month ahead. I'll read books on Vraja and imagine the sand
and *tulasi* leaves. I won't forget Krishna at all.

So saying, I bay at the moon and walk on the boards and cry out, "Hare Krishna." No
rattlesnakes here, only devotees in human form, and a widening crack over the arch.

* * *

That man was gray-haired last time I saw him "lots of straight, gray hair. His eyes
blinked rapidly as he looked up at Lord Jagannatha and His cart. He danced with arms
upraised. I was on the cart, so I got a good look at him. It wasn't long after that that he
was dead, murdered. We should become more and more humble. We need to see that
example in one another.

The Stall. Stalingrad. The train oboe. The poets. The slow march of a piano. Artist
and cigar butts wet. Women half naked in nightclubs. Srila Prabhupada and Lord
Krishna condemning it. I get on the pious bandwagon and also condemn it. No more
white sugar for me, and I rarely eat pancakes. Tell the world. We want Krishna
conscious persons in office. Print these books.

Told M. yesterday, while traveling, about the phoenix. He said it's the symbol of the
Irish republican Army. Burn them to ashes, but they will rise again. There's a statue of a
phoenix in Phoenix Park.

I'll sign off here and ask for clemency. Clemency, are you here? Do you demand of
me? More to be done, no doubt.

* * *

5:23 a.m.

Driving myself to walk outside the building, even though I feel weak. Beautiful
morning with refreshing, cool breezes against my face, and plenty of stars still visible. I
don't know how to read star maps, but I see what looks like a constellation low on the
horizon, another slightly above it to the right, another veering off to the far right, and

another even further to the right, resembling a business chart showing its peak. Those who can read the stars know what all this means, but I don't. Instead, it reminds me of the connect-the-dots game we played in childhood. I know of Orion and his belt, the Pleiades, and I can recognize at least the big and little dippers.

Hare Krishna. A studded salt and pepper universe full of holes. The Vedic version, Sadaputa Prabhu, please explain it to us. Where's that planetarium we were going to build? O Krishna, Hare Krishna. No moon in sight tonight.

Walking round and round the house chanting that one last round, but I didn't rub my face against the cement wall. Madhu came out, my good friend. He headed into the house to prepare breakfast and then to get to Dublin to pick up his son, whom he abandoned along with the rest of his family eighteen years ago. Now he's trying to care for them again.

Big dipper like a pan, or, what's it called? A cradle? No, a griddle. A pancake griddle. But it's square. A couple of points are missing on it.

Whaddya mean missing? Everything is perfect in nature. Everything is Krishna. If you take something away, Krishna is still full. If you add something, including yourself, Krishna doesn't gain anything. He's already complete.

I want to worship my spiritual master. I want to know him. Therefore, I chant the *guru-gayatri* mantra. I ask forgiveness for all my inattentive and offensive acts in the name of devotional service. Don't be whimsical, Prabhupada told us, but we are, our minds offenders. Nevertheless, we bring ourselves to his feet. He always wins the victory over us in the end.

* * *

8:11 a.m.

Mother Yashoda, by the Lord's grace, could understand the truth. Then again, the Supreme Master, by the influence of the internal potency, Yoga-maya, "inspired her to become absorbed in intense maternal affection for her son." (*Bhag.* 10.8.43)

"Although Mother Yashoda understood the whole philosophy of life, at the next moment she was overwhelmed by affection for her son by the influence of Yoga-maya." (*Bhag.* 10.8.43, purport) She treated the universal form as a dream and forgot the entire incident. As the influence of Yoga-maya increased, she decided, "Now let this incident be forgotten. I do not mind. Here is my son. Let me kiss Him." Thank God. All glories to Mother Yashoda, who places the Supreme Lord on her lap and only wants to care for Him, fearing that He is helpless without her.

"The glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are studied through the three *Vedas*, the *Upanisads*, the literature of Sankhya-yoga and the other Vaisnava literature, yet Mother Yashoda considered that Supreme Person her ordinary child." (*Bhag.* 10.8.45) We may say that Mother Yashoda is beyond Bhagavan realization, because she didn't care to know that Krishna is Brahman, Paramatma, or Bhagavan. She was situated in *prema-bhakti*.

Maharaja Pariksit wanted to know how Nanda and Yashoda attained their transcendental position. He wanted to know if an ordinary *jiva* could come to that position by *sadhana-siddha*. Sukadeva Gosvami told him the story of Drona and Dhara.

Lord Krishna has eternal parents, so it's not possible for a *jiva* to become His mother and father. We can, however, "Attain such affection as exhibited by Nanda and Yashoda."

Jivas struggle in the material world (Bg. 15.7). If we are not faithful in devotional service, we continue in *samsara* (Bg. 9.3). By studying *Bhagavad-gita As It Is*, *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, and *Caitanya-caritamrta*, one can be delivered from miserable, conditional life.

If we associate with the eternal devotees of Vrndavana such as Yashoda and Nanda, we can enjoy Krishna's pastimes as they did. "In other words, persons who follow the activities of Vrndavana will also develop devotional service in the highest perfection." (*Bhag.* 10.8.51, purport)

Now I have to decide what to read next. The next chapter is called, "Mother Yashoda Binding Krishna." Time to prepare for the Damodara month, which begins in two weeks.

* * *

10:05 a.m.

Saw a show-biz magazine on Madhu's desk. I leafed through it and saw that Spielberg had made a new movie: "Trying to Save Private Ryan." It won Best Movie for 1998. Spielberg is a man with the Midas touch. He says he's trying to answer the questions his children ask him. His answers, he says, can't be frivolous.

It would be nice to be a famous Krishna conscious writer, but everyone can't be popular. It's based on karma. I'm popular in my own small world, this religious sub-culture. We used to say that devotees were appreciated by the majority of souls "among the demigods and in the spiritual world. Only on this insignificant planet are we ignored. Still true? It's true of our leader, Srila Prabhupada. He is very dear to Krishna.

It's mild today. I have the windows open at both ends of the second floor. Not feeling enough impetus to read and record *Govinda-lilamrta* on my own, and Madhu's not here. He's gone to get his son. He'll be preoccupied for the next four days.

Spielberg is one of the richest men on earth, but what does he know of the soul? He has great God-given talents and success. At death, where will those assets take him? That's what each of us has to ask ourselves, even if we appear to have nothing. We devotees should not be arrogant, thinking ourselves better than someone like Spielberg. We have access to something that many people do not. In some ways, we may be worse, because we know better, yet still identify with the perishable body as the self. Prabhupada says that persons who make such a mistake are mad.

* * *

11:45 a.m.

Sunny. Birds twirping. A day like this is rare in Ireland, especially this late in September. I'll be staying here, it seems, until the end of December. We are not this body, but we bathe and clothe and feed it. We're concerned about pleasure and pain. We want people to treat me well. We mean, treat our bodies and minds and false egos well. We care less for our actual selves, because we barely know how to think about them. Thus we speak of ourselves as old men or women, as fragile, creative, hungry, in need of rest, as soft speakers or gregarious, as needing eyeglasses. Where is the life of the soul?

We can only discover it by practicing *sadhana* "hearing from the devotees, chanting, reading, learning to love Krishna and our true selves.

M. is causing me some inconvenience. He says a man is coming to interview him, perhaps this afternoon. What if someone comes right now to see Madhu? I wouldn't invite him in. I'd say, "He should be back in a few hours." I don't want such visitors here.

I heard Prabhupada dictate Chapter Forty-seven of *Krishna* book, speaking Srimati Radharani's words. She was talking to the bee. She said that Krishna might be having difficulty getting to know the sophisticated city girls of Mathura. Maybe He wanted His *Vraja gopis* to go to Him. But no, She said, Krishna has no trouble enchanting any woman in the universe.

I thought of how many nondevotee women would say they were not attracted to Krishna. They could say, "The fact that we are not attached to your Krishna is proof that He may have been a village hero or god, or that the sages idealized someone and created a metaphysical description an all-attractive Godhead. We don't believe in Him. He's a myth."

I can defend against that position, of course, but at least I'll say this: whatever else we are attracted to under the spell of *maya* is also Krishna. Everything is His energy. Our attraction may be perverted "we prefer His separated energies to His actual splendor.

* * *

2:50 p.m.

Finish up the next *Quest* lecture and finish the volume. "For example, in Green Lake Park there are many ducks. As soon as somebody goes there with a little food, they gather: '*Kaa, kaa, kaa, kaa, kaa.*' And after eating, they enjoy sex. That's all." If that's all a human being does, his life is no better. But in the first six chapters of *Bhagavad-gita* we learn that we are constitutionally spirit. "We are very minute sparks of the Supreme Spirit . . . minute particles of God . . ." We have the same propensities as God. We are both persons, although He's an infinite person and we are infinitesimal.

A large number of sheep are proceeding toward the right in single file on a distant hill. Their bleating reaches me here. I can also hear the occasional shout of the shepherd, who controls them all and will kill each and every one of them when it's time to make his profit. All this in a land I consider peaceful.

Real yoga, as described in the beginning of the *Bhagavad-gita's* seventh chapter, is to constantly engage the mind in thinking of Krishna. *Asamsayam samagram mam*. It culminates in love of Krishna. "For example, there are many nice paintings of Srimati Radharani with Krishna in Vrndavana. So you can always think of such a picture; then you will constantly be in *samadhi*."

Krishna's body is *sat-cid-ananda*. You have to hear about Krishna from a spiritual master who knows about Krishna, and you have to act according to his directions. If you have any doubts, clear them up by placing them before the guru.

* * *

3:45 p.m.

Long sun shadows. "World Series weather" it has been called. Cooling after the warm days. Mixture of feelings as I walked slowly, heavily, wearily over the boards and around the building. Greeted the flowers and young saplings, the laurel, hydrangea, holly, their name tags fading . . . Felt thin, perhaps sad, indecisive "yet not quite any of those. I have decided: I have decided to be here.

A young man and woman have decided to marry, and their parents have approved. They'll "associate," but even now he has decided to maintain himself as a book distributor. Thinking of them made me see how they are at the beginning and I am approaching the end.

My reverie was interrupted by a very fat yellow bee buzzing near my face. I drove it away, but heard it whoosh into the trees.

Go to the spiritual master who knows Krishna. Do I have enough energy to go into the art room during these last hours of my day? I would love to use that creamy paint and to see what colors and shapes it forms, only half-guided by me and the Prabhupada *bhajana*.

Tomorrow I will begin to approach Karttika and face my choice to remain settled here. The blessed routine will continue. My Krishna consciousness will continue, by Prabhupada's grace.

* * *

5:10 p.m.

Exhausted myself making bodies "grotesque, silly, happy, naively squat-faced bodies" in the art room while Prabhupada sang *dusta-mana* and *nitai-gaura*.

"Nitai-Gaura." The words made it onto the page again and again in thick, water-based paint, sometimes thinned so that it would trickle, but the hue would soften, smash, and smear, finally becoming love at work. The release felt good from the safety of Krishna consciousness.

All that done as quickly as possible, before M. and his son Colm Padraig returned. Just as I was cleaning the brushes, I heard the van pull in, then quickly ran upstairs to sit like an old grandmother in my room.

* * *

6:05 p.m., Night Notes, End-Volume

M. has his son chopping wood while he takes a shower and finishes up his evening services "giving me tomorrow's clothes, etc. Caranaravinda is coming over with whatever mail that arrived for me today. The sun is shining brightly through the green curtains in the bedroom, but I'm going to try to sleep anyway, since I can feel a twinge beginning. First, however, let me put Radha-Govinda in Their night outfit "His yellow-red, Hers blue-red. Let me also put Srila Prabhupada, my handsome mentor and personal savior, to rest. He told me that I'm not my body. He told me that at twenty-six, he expected me to live longer than him. He said that when he signed me on as a trustee. I accepted him then, and I accept him now.

* * *

9:00 p.m.

Neighbor keeping me up "all night" with his damned tractor. It's dark, but his tractor has headlights. He's circling round and round close to our house, ploughing. I can't sleep. My midnight rising is ruined. Plus I know his "farming" is simply killing, killing, killing innocent animals. Krishna consciousness is the answer and at least *I'll* take to it and speak of it.