

**Cc. Āśraya**





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**A Diary While Attempting to Read  
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta**

**Satsvarūpa dāsa Goswami**

**GN Press, Inc.**

Persons interested in the subject matter of this book are invited to correspond with our secretary.

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Today the ship is plying very smoothly. I feel today better. But I am feeling separation from Sri Vrindaban and my Lords Sri Govinda, Gopinath, Radha Damodar. My only solace is Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita in which I am tasting the nectarine of Lord Chaitanya's lila."

—From Śrīla Prabhupāda's Jaladuta diary, Friday, September 10, 1965



# INTRODUCTION

Writing while reading combines the potency of reading Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books along with the freedom and pleasure that I find in writing. Sometimes I may feel doubtful about my writing sessions because their very nature is to capture the “first thoughts” of the mind. Those first thoughts may sometimes be chaotic and not so Kṛṣṇa conscious, but then I try to steer them to Kṛṣṇa. I have faith in that process, but sometimes one wants to stay continually in the flow of *kṛṣṇa-kathā*, even though it’s not my normal flow of consciousness.

While it’s not a full-time writing occupation for me, writing while reading is definitely a genre that I recognize, approve of, and like to do from time to time. Because it draws directly from the process of reading the perfect scriptures, any reader of these pages will also be able to be sprinkled with the mercy of Lord Caitanya from Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja and Śrīla Prabhupāda in the Bhaktivedanta purports. I hope Lord Kṛṣṇa will inspire me to continue, at least from time to time, this valuable practice.



## AUGUST 29, 1996

I would like someone to come into this room and see me reading the best book, see me thinking the best thoughts, and to hear me repeating them: a devotee is not agitated, he always expects Kṛṣṇa's mercy. But I'm restless. I think of an excuse to get up and leave the room. Then I come back here and regret that I interrupted my reading where the nine symptoms of *bhāva* are elaborated on one by one.

In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Lord Caitanya teaches Sanātana Gosvāmī about life's ultimate goal. He describes the nine symptoms of *bhāva*—the ones by which we can assess ourselves rather than by measuring our bodily ecstasies.

The first symptom is forgiveness, the second, “concern that time should not be wasted.” We could look at this list every day and meditate on how to forgive, how to follow this path to its conclusion. Other symptoms: a taste for chanting the holy name, affection for those places where the Lord resides, absence of false prestige, hope against hope, and eagerness to attain Kṛṣṇa.

I tend to be disturbed by my physical pain. When one pain subsides, a new one arises. But, “If love for Kṛṣṇa in a seedling stage has fructified in one’s heart, one is not agitated by material things.” (Cc. *Madhya* 23.20)

Mahārāja Parikṣit was not afraid of death, which he knew would come in seven days with the bite of a snake-bird.

“A fully surrendered devotee always hopes that Lord Kṛṣṇa will be kind to him. This hope is very firm in him.” (Cc. *Madhya* 23.28)

A devotee at *bhāva* has an ardent desire to associate with the Lord. “Due to having great relish for the holy name, one is inclined to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* constantly.” (Cc. *Madhya* 23.32) Don’t waste a moment of time outside Kṛṣṇa’s service. Remaining fixed in service means tolerating the obstacles on the path of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It also means to not deliberately indulge in non-Kṛṣṇa conscious things.

After *bhāva* comes *prema*, which has its own increasing stages of intensity: *sneha*, *māna*, *prāṇa*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, *bhāva*, and *mahā-bhāva*.

I cannot enumerate the technicalities of *kṛṣṇa-prema* in a way that explains the subtle differences between them. I was able to do this when I was studying the details of *rāgānugā-bhakti* a few years ago. Since that time, I haven’t had enough interest to pursue the detailed study. The terms are all listed here in this chapter: *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, *sāttvika-bhāva*, *vyabhicārī-bhāva*, *sthāyī-bhāva*, and the categories of *vibhāva*



(*ālambana* and *uddīpana*). They are even better described in *The Nectar of Devotion*. There, Śrīla Prabhupāda translates the terms freely and doesn't comment on them too technically as he describes what they mean. Therefore, some of his followers have sought out *śikṣā* guides and esoteric books in order to better understand the science of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. I think the *essence* of spontaneous, pure devotional service is more important than the terminology, and practice is more important than theory. However, learning the terms is also useful.

## AUGUST 30, 1996

I dream, either awake or asleep, of a life in which I spend full time reading and writing and going within myself. Last night's dream was radical—about the adventures of a whole community hiding underground. Do I really want that? Is it even healthy? Isn't an hour or so of reading in the morning the normal course, with the balance of the day spent in active service? Lately, my days have been limited to whatever little I can eke out between bouts of pains.

Recently I read a statement by the chairman of the GBC, who said that we should take a risk and try to win Kṛṣṇa's recognition. What should we risk? He said that as we preach with vigor, we risk falling into the mode of passion. He also said that Kṛṣṇa would protect us as we try to serve Him. If I were to try for all-day reading and writing, the risk would more likely be the danger of falling into the mode of goodness. I call it a danger because it's possible to fall into treasuring solitude, peace, and private study over actual *bhakti*. I agree with the GBC chairman: Kṛṣṇa will protect me as I try to serve Him.

Lord Caitanya briefly describes all the states of *sambhoga* and *viraha* between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. He divides *vipralambha* into four: *pūrva-rāga*, *māna*, *pravāsa*, and *prema-vaicittya*. Sometimes I remember their meanings, and sometimes I don't. I never live in those states, being an unqualified disciple, so all I can do is read and appreciate whatever the Lord gives in the Vaiṣṇava *śāstras* and whatever Śrīla Prabhupāda gives in his purports.

Lord Caitanya next lists the sixty-four qualities of Kṛṣṇa and the twenty-five principal qualities of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. “Śrī Kṛṣṇa is controlled by these transcendental qualities of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.”

Lord Caitanya finishes these instructions with what He refers to as the fifth and ultimate goal of life: *kṛṣṇa-prema-dhana*, the treasure of love for Kṛṣṇa. The Gosvāmīs, especially Rūpa Gosvāmī, elaborated on this in books such as *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*.

Lord Caitanya ordered Sanātana to do several important things. He asked him to broadcast the revealed *bhakti* scriptures, to write a treatise on Vaiṣṇava behavior, and to establish the lost *tīrthas* in Vṛndāvana. Śrīla Prabhupāda states that the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is continuing in this same tradition: “Serious students of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement must understand their great responsibility to preach the cult of Vṛndāvana (devotional service to the Lord) all over the world. We now have a nice temple in Vṛndāvana, and serious students should take advantage of it. I am very hopeful that some of our students can take up this responsibility and render

the best service to humanity by educating people in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.” (Cc. *Madhya* 23.104, purport)

It is not necessary that the rules and regulations followed in India be followed in exactly the same way in America. Consider renunciation according to time, persons, and circumstances. For example, we do not follow the Indian caste system, which would forbid us from taking initiation. Rather, we follow Sanātana’s Gosvāmī’s edict that anyone can be raised to the brahminical status by proper training and purification.

Śrīla Prabhupāda doesn’t discuss in detail what might be permissible in the Western expression of Kṛṣṇa consciousness but which is not standard in India, but we can imagine some of it for ourselves. His spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, was a pioneer in the principle of *yukta-vairāgya* in India. He allowed *sannyāsīs* to wear sewn cloth and to ride in automobiles. On the streets (of Delhi, New York City, London, etc.), a *sannyāsī* no longer must wear wooden clogs and carry a water pot. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura taught the devotees to do what is practical for preaching while always maintaining awareness of the essence of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That doesn’t mean we introduce things extravagantly or whimsically, however.

Just fell asleep at my desk and in my dream, calculated that a Godbrother was eight or twelve years junior to me in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He told me that Śrīla Prabhupāda once told him to “pick up Satsvarūpa Mahārāja as your GBC.” Śrīla Prabhupāda recommended me as the best. How nice! Just a

dream, though (with head slouched forward on neck, fallen asleep while reading “Life’s Ultimate Goal”). It never happened. Prabhupāda didn’t tell him that. The dream producer has been sending me many strange tales and now this pleasant little deception.

Lord Caitanya (in Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī’s Cc. texts) quotes to Sanātana the last verses of the twelfth chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* where Kṛṣṇa describes those most dear to Him. Those verses list the qualities of a devotee. Prabhupāda defines both “nonenvious” and “friendly” by describing the preacher. He states that the devotee preaches Kṛṣṇa consciousness to everyone regardless of race or nationality. He is friendly to everyone all over the world.

When Lord Caitanya completed His instructions to Sanātana, Sanātana begged the blessing to be able to realize and assimilate such confidential teachings. “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu then placed His hand on Sanātana Gosvāmī’s head and benedicted him, saying, ‘Let all these instructions be manifest to you.’”

I have a collection of sayings I have distilled from Christian books on *lectio divina*. I’m going to place them from time to time into this diary and try to follow their advice, if applicable. Here’s one:

For when we pray, we ourselves speak to God, but when we read, it is God who speaks to us.

11:35 A.M.

Waves of optimism, along with waves of fear, desire, weakness, pass over me, move me. I can use them all in writing to express myself and to live the life I want to lead, to be myself and yet still make a significant contribution to Śrīla Prabhupāda's movement.

So write, spirit soul, and draw  
pictures, self-portraits and  
maybe one day pictures of  
beloved Kṛṣṇa of Mathurā and Vṛndāvana. Did you know Goloka Vṛndāvana is much, much bigger than all the Vai-kunṭhas combined? I just read that in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. In Goloka, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Nanda and Yaśodā, Śrīdāmā, and Sudama are the chief persons serving Kṛṣṇa in intimacy. Nondevotees are excluded.

Let this writing flow alongside the reading of the sacred book  
sacred brook  
my foolish heart.

Coming up now in our reading is *Madhya-līlā*, Chapter Twenty-four, "The Sixty-one Explanations of the *Ātmārāma* Verse." It may not be the most nectarean chapter of the Cc., but I'm sure if I pay attention to it, I'll be able to enter it and receive Lord Caitanya's *darśana*. Then everything will feel complete. I will be nourished by the Almighty, the abode of all love, and in the way that He and His representatives think best for me.

The Lord agrees to speak on the *ātmārāma* verse. “Generally by Myself I cannot give an explanation, but by the strength of your association something may manifest itself.” (Cc. *Madhya* 24.9)

Just before recording that Cc. quote, my *cañcala* mind went off to many places. Here is a partial record of where it went:

I thought about writing, and specifically about memoir as a writing genre. I have recently read an essay on memoir by Patricia Hampl. In the essay, she relates how her grade school teacher told her to write about what she knew. It occurred to her that what they actually meant was that she should write about what matters. Somehow or other, as if called by destiny, she became a memoirist rather than a novelist or other kind of writer. She states, “How did I come to believe that *what I knew* was also *what mattered*? And more to the point for the future, *is it what matters*?” These points are further developed in her essay.

Thinking about memoir led me to remember incidents from my own life. For example, I recalled for the first time in years how Ned Finley slapped me hard across the face in the rear of our homeroom at Tottenville High. Why do I still retain the shock and hurt?

I also recalled walking down the long road from school to the bus stop with Ned Finley. George Schermerhorn, who was about three years older than either of us, joined us. He had just been punched in the eye by Billy Daniels, who was at that time my sister’s boyfriend. George hadn’t fought back (just as I hadn’t fought back against Ned) because Billy was so much more powerful. Ned solaced George, and I remember feeling embarrassed and implicated because I was the younger brother of the

girl about whom they were fighting. It seems that George had made some remark about Madeline that Billy didn't like.

Then I remembered being in my room in our house at 125 Katan Avenue. It was night and I was preoccupied. Suddenly I decided to go downstairs, maybe to the bathroom or the refrigerator. My parents were out and it was dark downstairs. I walked through the living room and suddenly heard heavy breathing coming from the TV room where Madeline and her boyfriend were. I was shocked and backed away up to my room.

What is the meaning of these memories, and what is their place (out of place) in a diary focused on sacred reading? Hampl writes, "I've got the answer and the wild need to say it. . . . I'll burst if I can't give my answer. That's all I know for sure."

It does seem that we have the wild need to say what we know, even if what we "know" is a mundane memory that suddenly leaps into our minds by association or without reason while we are reading scripture. Perhaps a crow flies by the window or we hear its caw or some other noise in the house. Suddenly the mind has roamed over a dozen different thoughts before we even realize it has left the page. Śrīla Prabhupāda describes this when he tells of the cow that has experienced a fire. Whenever the cow sees red, she becomes mad with fear. Similarly, whenever we see certain words, our minds inevitably make mundane associations. We may read the word "red" and suddenly remember the fire in which we burned our hand forty years ago, and from there, on down the path of memories.



All we can do is to bring the mind back to the act of reading the *śāstra*. These high school memories suddenly came to me today while I was reading and I wanted to acknowledge them, not as an indulgence, but because acknowledgment seems to help me read by releasing me from the oppression the struggle to control the mind creates. We can't read as if someone is standing over us with a ruler: "Don't look up! Keep reading! It's your salvation." No matter what the stakes are, the mind will not be able to constantly pay attention to scripture. Therefore, I try to flow with everything in my life and stay with the scripture as much as I am able, even when there is an errant thought or a little excursion away.

The *ātmārāma* explanations revolve around the Sanskrit definitions of the word. Lord Caitanya's explanation of it displays His vast learning (remember, He was Nīmāi Paṇḍita of Nādia), and His focus on the personal form of Kṛṣṇa. In the end, He proves that all persons are attracted to Kṛṣṇa. As the *rasika* terms were theoretical and elusive to me in the previous chapter, this is even more so.

Some Sanskrit words have contradictory meanings. "The word *nirgrantha* refers to one who is liberated from the material knots of ignorance. . . . It also refers to one who does not have knowledge." Sometimes English words are also like that, I guess.

The little collie dog who lives here has suddenly become agitated by the many birds in the tree. He barks and jumps, and some of them fly away while others ignore him, aware that he can't reach them. The puffballs that come from the purple

wildflowers blow in the fresh breeze. There are few pleasure boats out on the lake today, although it's fair enough weather. Madhu is working on the van. He's in a good mood (and I should be too) because the Irish Motor Vehicle Bureau sent us a letter stating that we are exempt from paying the import tax on the van. I think I'll take a walk.

Some people may think that that I am not a serious student of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* because I can't always sustain the reading, but I'm stuck on it. It's my anchor, my polestar, what I find myself returning to, Cc. abiding.

Details from the *ātmārāma* verse: the word *krama*, as in Urukrama, means one who takes a great step or who achieves something great. Lord Vāmanadeva is the best example of Urukrama.

When one is attracted to Kṛṣṇa, nothing else attracts him. This is the real meaning of the *ātmārāma* verse.

I wish I could honestly say, "I wish I were attracted to Kṛṣṇa like the *gopīs*." But I can't. I do feel fortunate to be reading the Cc., even though I leave it for some time and then return. I leave because I need space for my "memoirs." What can I mean by that? Why don't I eliminate everything but Kṛṣṇa consciousness?

I know, honesty first, then the Absolute Truth. Or so I sometimes say. It just doesn't feel like it's enough to use my pen and arm to write that of the word *bhakti*, there is one meaning for regulative *bhakti* and nine for *prema-bhakti*. That doesn't make me such a rascal, like the man who heard the name "Rādhā" and thought of the barber's wife. It's not that I want to speak nonsense or to sully this page. It's a way.

“The word *guṇa* means ‘quality’. The qualities of Kṛṣṇa are transcendently situated and are unlimited in quantity. All the spiritual qualities are full of transcendental bliss.” (Cc. *Madhya* 24.41)

## AUGUST 31, 1996

Kṛṣṇa is *bhakta-vatsala*; He leans toward His devotees: “. . . He is so magnanimous that He can give Himself to His devotees.”

I woke up late, 12:30 A.M., because a headache was lingering. Now there's no time for sustained reading. Anyway, I don't have to fake it that I'm absorbed in *śāstra*.

Still, I'll write my bit, a word, “*bhakta-vatsala*,” Kṛṣṇa's most wonderful quality. Once we start traveling in the van, our routine won't allow me so much time for reading. Therefore, I had better grab a word like “*bhakta-vatsala*” and keep it with me as I drive on the dark highway.

The Kumāras and Śukadeva were perfected, Brahman-realized saints, but they became attracted to Kṛṣṇa's forms and pastimes. Out of compassion, Śukadeva Gosvāmī described Kṛṣṇa in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

The *gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa's queens were attracted to Kṛṣṇa's handsome form and qualities. “Lord Kṛṣṇa even attracts the mind of the goddess of fortune simply by vibrating His transcendental flute (*vaṁśī-gīta*).” *Vaṁśī*—that word reminds me

of the young Italian man who died in Vṛndāvana, Vamśīdhari. Devotees pass away and we don't always remember them actively. He was not as famous as Gaura-Govinda Mahārāja or Gaurī dāsī. Vamśīdhari—he was my disciple. After he died, I read from his diary and published excerpts from it in “Among Friends.” He was sweet, submissive, and intelligent, and he was forced to accept Kṛṣṇa's will, which was pressed on him heavily in the form of early death. Elderly Dīna-dayādhra dāsa cared for him up until the end, and now Dīna is paralyzed on one side of his body.

Write it down.

How was the serpent Kāliya so fortunate as to be touched by Kṛṣṇa? I wish . . .

This chapter is not a collection of Sanskrit definitions, but of verses describing the devotees who are attracted to Kṛṣṇa in different *rasas*. We have to give up our sectarian prejudices (“Kṛṣṇa is an Indian god”) and accept Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Our Swami has ordered us to do so.

The Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana lived for the service of Lord Caitanyadeva and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Follow them.

Even birds, animals, and trees are attracted to Kṛṣṇa's qualities in Vṛndāvana. Seek to be attracted. Remain open to it. Don't block your ear holes, don't deny yourself the *darśana* of the *arcā-vigraha*, and perform other favorable practices to inspire attraction.

If I say I cannot be attracted to Lord Hari because of my past sins, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* tells me that devotional service burns away all sins and their reactions. But don't go back and start new fires. Hari: He takes away sins and attracts us to Himself.

## SEPTEMBER 1, 1996

By speculation we can reach Brahman realization; by mystic yoga we can attain the Supersoul; by executing regulative devotional service (*vaidhi-bhakti*) we can become an associate of Lord Nārāyaṇa in the Vaikuṇṭhas; and “By executing spontaneous devotional service in Vṛndāvana (*rāga-bhaktye vraje*), one attains the original Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.” (Cc. *Madhya* 24.85) We want that *rāga-bhakti*, but we cannot imitate it. Surely Prabhupāda is leading us on the path to Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana, not to Lord Nārāyaṇa in Vaikuṇṭha.

Devotional service is the only path that yields results regardless of whether we are *akāma*, *sarva-kāma*, or *mokṣa-kāma* devotees. In his purport to *Madhya* 24.98, however, Śrīla Prabhupāda does not encourage us to remain on the materialistic platform. He states that we must hear about Kṛṣṇa from a pure devotee and then become pure devotees ourselves. Only in that way can we hope to affect others. Professional *Bhāgavatam* speakers cannot convert people to pure devotion.

“It is therefore important for all the preachers in our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement to first become pure devotees . . . If

a preacher behaves properly in devotional service, he will be able to convert others. Otherwise, his preaching will have no effect.”

Become perfect, be pure, rise early, chant Hare Kṛṣṇa on beads, follow the rules, then love of God will come.

Free of headaches at least for awhile, this fellow happily walks outdoors and plans how to continue reading in the shelter of Cc. while writing whatever notes occur to him.

Lord Caitanya explains all the words in the *ātmārāma* verse and describes the conclusive gems of devotional service. He says that Kṛṣṇa cares for His devotees and never awards them things that will entangle them further in material desire. He forcibly gives His devotees shelter at His feet.

“ . . . all these words are meant to enable one to taste the transcendental quality of Kṛṣṇa.” (Cc. *Madhya* 24.105)

I will do this

forever if I feel a little better and

draw little pictures of a

man walking and of two men

in a van. That van will

be ready to go one day soon. It seems that I ought to get into it and go with it. If I get headaches, I can lie down in the back. Doesn't seem like I'll get any more headaches on the road than I do in this house. Pain is pain. For now, though, I'll continue to grab a little time to read, stay in that shelter, and to write what comes.

Someone sent me two books by Alice Miller. She doesn't seem to believe in God. Her point is that parents abuse chil-



dren and that children are always innocent. When children are abused, they bury the pain of the abuse within themselves, and that pain poisons their lives. If they become fortunate as adults, they will find an enlightened person who can help them face old pain. Miller says that most psychoanalysts hide pain and blame the child. She is against Freud and wrote a long chapter called, "The Sufferings of Franz Kafka." She mentions that Kafka was narcissistic.

I found myself wondering if any of this applied to me, and then before I could get too far into it, I pushed the books aside. Maybe I do still carry the pain of my parents' abuse. Maybe it has crippled or limited me in some way. Miller says that artists who don't face and learn from the pain dip only into a small poisoned bottle of the unconscious (like Salvador Dali) rather than the unlimited consciousness (like Picasso, Miro, and Klee). Maybe my past still affects my writing. Who knows? It's all relative. I'm not going to a therapist to find out. I'm just writing these notes while reading my spiritual master's perfect books. In that respect, I'm miles ahead of Alice Miller.

## SEPTEMBER 2, 1996

Śacīnandana Swami wrote me, “May your transcendental pen never tire.” Thank you. I don’t want to tire of life itself—the wonder of the dawn sunlight reflecting on the lake’s ripples and my attempt to steer righteously and humanly to Kṛṣṇa. I *am* human. To some degree we have to deny or restrain the base parts of our humanity, but human we remain. I like to write about it,

through illness  
and jollity and doubt.

**4:35 P.M.**

The first step in spiritual knowledge is to know that there is life after death. When we know this, we don’t waste time pursuing material opulence because it doesn’t free us from the cycle of birth and death. With this beginning knowledge, we can go on to become pure devotees. Cc. mentions the three factors that help us give up bad association and rise to the level of

*bhāva*: (1) *sādhū-saṅga*; (2) *kṛṣṇa-kṛpā*; and (3) the nature of devotional service itself.

As I read and write, I look out the window at peaceful Lough Erne. A devotee is rowing from Inis Rath to Geaglun Quay. I leave here tomorrow. It will be a busy day of travel to Dublin and back up to Belfast. There won't be time for concentrated reading or writing in the shelter of *śāstra*.

Great Brahmavādīs gained the association of devotees and became attracted to Kṛṣṇa.

# SEPTEMBER 3, 1996

12:45 A.M.

Here is what I thought about while lying awake last night, although I know my conclusions are subject to change.

I drifted toward thinking I should immediately take a period of convalescence by staying in the extension of Manu's house. The outer reason is illness. I'm fragile. Sometimes when I go out the door, I glance at myself in the door's glass and see that fragility. Of course, an old man can still get around—Prabhupāda did—but right now I don't feel like getting into that van and traveling all over Europe for the next few months. At least that's how I felt as I lay awake last night. My thoughts seemed to be coming from a clearer and somewhat deeper place than usual.

I am now averaging three pills a day to help control the headache pain. Last week, I took more pills than I ever have. Daily headaches have become routine, and one pill is no longer sufficient to quell the pain. New health complications are arising aside from the headaches. This is not a time to extend my-

self in travel because out on the road, there's only me and Madhu and no support or backup. When we stay overnight at P-stops or even temples where I'm expected to lecture, I feel extra stress. Staying in one place, and in such a loving place as Geaglum-Inis Rath, seems to be the best thing to do while I'm in such a weak condition.

I say that this is the outer reason. By "outer" I don't mean "false." But there is an inner reason too.

It's simply this: I want to spend time reading and writing in a quiet location. I always like to do this, and now an especially good opportunity has come. It's an opportunity that doesn't require extra expenditure, and it's here in the association of devotees—but still private because these devotees respect my health limitations and don't expect me to attend the temple and give classes. Still, I feel like I am contributing to their community because of their favorable reciprocation. Furthermore, they wish me well but are also interested in my creative life. They like to see me reading and writing.

As I was thinking this last night, I realized that I could get bogged down by staying in one place. It's important to go out and preach because that's what Prabhupāda wants. Then I thought that even more important than wending my way through Europe giving lectures would be if I could gain a deeper attraction to *śāstra*. That's why even this diary entry has a place in *Cc. Āśraya*—because the inner purpose of the convalescent period would be to pursue the meaning behind my writing and reading. I won't use the time to write intensely and to produce or even read many pages. Rather, I will use it to

read and write in a regulated, steady way. I also want to lead a life conducive to thinking about the subjects of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Although I won't have an exciting world about which to write, I can turn to the *śāstra* and the life within.

This morning I would like to encourage myself to remain determined to carry out this decision. My external reason should be compelling enough—that can be the reason I present to others—but let me keep my inner reason alive. Even if I start feeling a little better over the next couple of weeks, or if I start getting “cabin fever,” or if Madhu tries to talk me into a more long-term version of recuperation, I still want to take this break now.

#### **4:20 A.M.**

Specific detail: when I said that the inner meaning of my convalescence would be to read and write, I am specifically looking forward to reading the newly published edition of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. I'm supposed to pick that up in Belfast on Janmāṣṭamī. I could work with the new indexes and reread the parts I like after the reading I'm doing now is complete.

I also have some attraction to becoming more acquainted with Rādhā-Govinda at Inis Rath. Just yesterday a photo of Them arrived in the mail. At first I thought it was whimsical. The note said, “Rādhā-Govinda on Their tenth anniversary.” I was the priest who installed them ten years ago. It's possible that while staying at Manu's house, I could make trips over to the island for *darśana* to develop more of a relationship with the

Kṛṣṇa Deity. Since I move around so much, I have not had time to develop a relationship with any specific Deity.

(While writing this, the doorbell rang. It was Bhakta John, asking for Arjuna dāsa. He had a strange cage with him. Later I found out that the cage contained nine rats. He had stayed up most of the night catching rats in traps set in the temple building. So much for the romantic, ideal setting.)

## SEPTEMBER 7, 1996

I'm physically here, returned from Belfast to the desk at Geaglum, facing the lake and Inis Rath, a picture of Rādhā-Govinda on my desk, and the new Cc. open and placed at a convenient angle for reading. (Actually, I really wrote, "Return to the desk at Geaglum, facing the lack.")

My eyes and brain drift over the two verses where I left off a few days ago in my reading. The Nine Yogendras are mentioned. Were they impersonalists? I don't remember. At one point they became attracted by the Lord's transcendental qualities.

So begin again, trial student,  
word loose associating,  
weak head, weak will,  
build up in your  
announced convalescence, your  
inner, barely formed day-  
wish, to enter Cc.,  
the *darśana*,  
because how much time will you  
have before you're too feeble  
to read?



Lust is what it is. A wave of it can come at any time, any place. It is not wrong, inhuman, or cowardly for me to deny and suppress lust. I must. Sense gratification does *not* lead to supreme happiness. Earlier today I heard Śrīla Prabhupāda explaining how people try their utmost to become comfortable in this life. Even if we can attain peace for a hundred years, if as a result of our misuse of human life we become a dog or a mouse in our next life, what was the use of that temporary comfort? Sex life is more than comfort—it's a peak bodily pleasure—but it ends in disappointment. Even after such disappointment, we try again and again, and as a result, we become entangled in degradation. God doesn't want us to behave in a degraded way. We are not meant for that, or for such unhappiness. Human life is meant for reaching the spiritual goal of ultimate bliss. This is the life of the celibate, the one who wants to stop karmic activity.

My writing won't discuss sex. It may occasionally veer toward matter, then grab hold of the steering wheel and bring us back to Kṛṣṇa, back to Cc., back to today and this attempt.

I'm grateful to Madhu, Manu, and all the others who are taking care of me here. They painted this room saffron while I was away. Prabhupāda is here. I like the new volumes of Cc.

Without devotional service we are lost. Other paths cannot give liberation. Real liberation means to attain a spiritual form (*svarūpeṇa vyavaṣṭhitih*). This is scholarship, to study *sid-dhānta*. I follow along.

Thinking at the same time of an essay through which I was browsing by Afro-American poet Kenneth McClane. He writes about his deceased brother. “If I have learned anything, it is that death is irrefutable.” No mention of God, though, by the intellectual poet-professor.

Better to turn back to my own row to hoe in this Geaglum room, under the well-executed painting of Śrīla Prabhupāda, signed, “P. Bhadra, Māyāpur.”

### 3 P.M.

If Manu’s pre-school children, Jayānanda and Sītā, can live on this small patch of land, mostly near their house, then why not me?

When I get bored indoors, I can take a walk around the quarter-mile lap that goes through the woods. Today two helicopters scoured overhead just as I disappeared under the trees thinking my thoughts.

I don’t (can’t?) read so slowly. *Ātmā* means the mind, and some *yogīs* attain Kṛṣṇa through that medium. “*Ātmā* also means endeavor . . . some saints make a great endeavor to come to the point of rendering service to Him.” (Cc. *Madhya* 24.168) I get the gist and move along. Lord Caitanya is explaining the *ātmārāma* verse: “Whichever meaning fits may be applied.” A tour de force of *bhakti* scholarship.

It is trusting faith that puts us into the presence of God and it is within this awareness that the monk does his reading.

Yes, we read with *śraddhā*, not otherwise. Don't criticize or think that *śāstra* is relative. Accept it as truth.

Try for *bhakti* and nothing else (*tasyaiva hetoḥ prayateta kovidō*), Nārada told Vyāsa. Even birds become enchanted by the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute, and bees follow Balarāma's path in Vṛndāvana.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's lecture on Queen Kuntī's request for calamities to come again and again so she can remember Kṛṣṇa struck me as timely. Śrīla Prabhupāda seems to be saying that I ought to not be afraid to travel and preach. I have already expressed my fears to Madhu. I feel older, weaker, more feeble, more often in pain. I'm afraid that when we travel, if anything happens to Madhu, I'll be forced into dealing with the world in a foreign country, a foreign language. I want more support, comfort, so that when the headaches come, I can rest and not have to face the stress and surprise that comes with international travel.

Prabhupāda says we have to tolerate. We are materially attached and therefore we suffer or become afraid. Prabhupāda wants us to do our duty despite the obstacles (*mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya*).

Then I have to ask, "Is it *my* duty to travel through Europe and give occasional lectures, or is it better I settle in one place and read?" Anyway, here I am for the next three weeks. Then I will go, either unafraid or at least prepared to tolerate the fear and grief.

Another meaning of “*ātmārāma*” is to enjoy one’s particular nature. “The original nature of every living entity is to consider himself the eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa.” I enjoy writing and being who I am as I discover it. That’s all right, but my nature must be dovetailed with my truest nature as the Lord’s eternal servant—*kṛṣṇa-dāsa-abhimāna*.

“Everyone is eligible to receive Kṛṣṇa’s mercy . . . ” In his purport to this verse, Prabhupāda strongly advocates preaching. “Those who claim to be devotees but do not engage in Kṛṣṇa’s service to elevate all living creatures to Kṛṣṇa consciousness are to be considered *kaniṣṭha-adhikārīs* (people in the lowest stage of devotional service).”

# SEPTEMBER 8, 1996

## EKĀDAŚĪ

Nārada told the hunter not to half-kill the animals. Prabhu-pāda then preaches on the evils of the slaughterhouse and says that great wars are the karmic reactions to animal slaughter. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is teaching people to stop sinful activities and to chant the holy names of God.

The hunter, through Nārada's association, became convinced of his sins and afraid of the reactions. Prabhupāda states that the Kṛṣṇa conscious preachers must follow the rules and regulations, and then like Nārada, we may have some effect on people when we speak to them. When we read, we become purified and strengthened.

This blank wall of memory. The desire to be special. Admittance I am not. The way I write. Yesterday driving from Belfast, I ate some of the warm apple turnovers given to us by Bhāgavata dāśī. It was nice driving again in pre-dawn up front in the van with Madhu. I saved him four turnovers and he ate them while he drove. I told him something I had heard about

the lives of Mozart and Beethoven, how they were all too human and how the fickle public accepted or rejected them at different times. We concluded that in ISKCON, we too seek honor, but we should not be attached to it.

Less headaches since Janmāṣṭamī. Now, average or less-than-average boy, read the purports and don't expect something to zap you. Everything wonderful is already here if you can only learn to notice it.

The monk puts himself in a disposition of listening to that word which the Lord wishes to address to him properly, perhaps today. This may be only one word, yet if this word makes him live, then “lectio” has already borne its fruit.

Keep even one word from your reading—“*tapasya*,” “Nārada.” Take the instruction you find. Don't be afraid of those who could harm you. See danger as another form of Kṛṣṇa sent to rescue you from this world. Don't you want to develop dependence on the holy name? Just one phrase: “Don't kill animals,” “by the grace of Nārada.”

A pure devotee like Nārada (or Prabhupāda) can deliver a sinful person from his karma. He does this as Kṛṣṇa's representative and says, “Surrender to Kṛṣṇa.” The sinful person who fully accepts the pure devotee's order is delivered from sins. The scriptural conclusions are opened to him.

What about me? Am I able to deliver a sinful person? Am I empowered by the Lord to do this?

Uh, I don't know. Maybe. Ask me later. Right now I have to read and limber up with my yoga exercises.

The hunter replied, "My dear sir, whatever you say I shall do."

"First of all, break your bow."

Nārada was heavy. Action first, then instructions and forgiveness. "Break your bow, your means of evil livelihood."

Thinking of right-wing ISKCON stuff. The "Back to Prabhupāda" movement claims that ISKCON has derailed our founder-*ācārya's* movement, so they have started their own movement and made Śrīla Prabhupāda the only guru. Hare Kṛṣṇa. Right- and left-wing are united at least in chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and in our mutual recognition that Śrīla Prabhupāda is our leader; we are all trying to serve him. I picture the mundane academics studying the schism.

Note this, it is crucial: the guru must be representing Nārada Muni in disciplic succession and not just officially. No cheating or hypocrisy. That empowered person performs genuine initiation. The disciple surrenders to him. *Yasya deve parā bhaktir*.

## 1975-76 MEMORY

We slept on the motel room floor. Drunken orgy in the next room, men and women laughing. Southern U.S.A. "We" means the six *brahmacārīs* on the library party. We rose at three when it was quiet and read *śāstra*, each one with his own book. Then a breakfast of granola with milk and sugar.

Then we dressed in suits. Mahābuddhi had a blond wig, Ghanaśyāma a black-purple Afro-wig—they were the top men.

I escorted them to the vans, to the University of . . . State College . . . the map . . . the map . . . the joy, the mission to please the master.

On Nārada's orders, the hunter and his wife built a small cottage and began to worship the *tulasī* tree and "continuously chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*." Nārada assured them he would send them their food every day. The devotee should consume only what he needs.

"When Parvata Muni saw the ecstatic loving symptoms of the hunter, he told Nārada, 'Certainly you are a touchstone (*tumi hao sparśa-maṇi*).'" (Cc. *Madhya* 24.277) Prabhupāda quotes Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as saying a Vaiṣṇava can be tested by how many Vaiṣṇavas he has made during his life. Prabhupāda: "There are many so-called advanced devotees who sit in a secluded place for their personal benefit. They do not go out to preach and convert others . . . Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu advised His followers to increase the numbers of Vaiṣṇavas."

Any doubt that this is what Prabhupāda and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu want? Can I do it by writing books? Very well, then, but do it. Beat the *br̥hat-mṛdaṅga*.

Kṛṣṇa, the original Personality of Godhead, the son of Mahārāja Nanda in Vṛndāvana, is attained by spontaneous love. His Viṣṇu expansions are attained by the execution of regulative devotional service. *Sādhakas* can rise up to pure, spontaneous devotional service (*sādhana-siddha*). All *ātmārāmas* render service to Lord Kṛṣṇa.



Uddhava dāsa proposed that he could build a wooden cabin in the corner of his field for me to use. He mentioned a letter I wrote him saying as I grow older, I may consider staying in one place. I'm already in one place at Geaglum and they're proposing another such place in Wicklow. Prabhupāda writes that we should travel and tell everyone we meet about Kṛṣṇa. In Wicklow I've written well.

Sanātana Gosvāmī was struck with wonder at Lord Caitanya's exposition of sixty-one meanings of the *ātmārāma* verse. He declared that Lord Caitanya was Kṛṣṇa Himself and only He could understand the confidential meaning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Lord Caitanya replied, "Why are you glorifying Me personally? You should understand the transcendental position of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*." (Cc. *Madhya* 24.317)

Sanātana Gosvāmī folded his hands before Lord Caitanya and said, "My Lord, You ordered me to write a directory about the activities of Vaiṣṇavas. I am a most low born person. I have no knowledge of good behavior. How is it possible for me to write authorized directions about Vaiṣṇava activities?" (Cc. *Madhya* 24.324–25)

Sunny day. Devotees row back and forth. Some were here from Dublin, now leaving, perhaps to arrive back in time for the afternoon festival. I can go on reading and noting with no schedule. Just come back to this a little at a time throughout the day. May some of it stick. May I come closer. This is written at 12:35 in the afternoon while expecting Ekādaśī *prasādam* at any moment. Take off Śrīla Prabhupāda's beadbag.

For a little material desire you'll have to be reborn. Kṛṣṇa wants you to have full experience (Prabhupāda says) that this material world cannot bring you happiness, so He liberally allows you to stay and try. But if one is sincere, then Kṛṣṇa's special mercy is to crush his material happiness. Devotional service is therefore dangerous; it's no bluff. Materialists keep away from it. Kṛṣṇa's devotee is *akiñcana-gocarah*, materially exhausted. Am I?

Lord Caitanya gave a synopsis for the book he wanted Sanātana to write. The first point was regarding the qualifications of guru and disciple. Prabhupāda dwells on the point that *brāhmaṇa* by birth is not a serious factor, but *brāhmaṇa* by quality and behavior is the criterion. Several times he mentions that the guru must be a *mahā-bhāgavata*. The definition given for *mahā-bhāgavata*, however, is not so extraordinary. And don't accept cheap disciples for personal gain or it will cause falldown.

“When you write on this subject, Kṛṣṇa will help you by spiritually awakening you.” (Cc. *Madhya* 24.345) Prabhupāda: “One cannot write on spiritual matters without being blessed by Kṛṣṇa and the disciplic succession of gurus.”

## SEPTEMBER 9, 1996

Humbly note what you read. I am beginning Chapter Twenty-five of the *Madhya-lilā*. The Māyāvādīs criticized Lord Caitanya in Benares, but the Mahārāṣṭrian *brāhmaṇa* thought, “If by some means I can assemble all the *sannyāsīs* together, they will certainly become His devotees after seeing His personal characteristics.” (Cc. *Madhya* 25.9)

In his purport, Prabhupāda quotes Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who states that one who can spread the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the world is empowered: “Such a personality is *kṛṣṇāliṅgita-vigraha*—that is, he is always embraced by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.”

Sad I cannot do more. Don’t know what that “more” would be. I’ve given up a more structured form as in *A Poor Man Reads the Bhāgavatam*. I’m not a scholar, except in a simple, ISKCON way, and not a writer like James Joyce. Why lament?

When I write something I usually think it is very important and that I am a very fine writer. I think this happens to everyone.

But there is one corner of my mind in which I know very well what I am, which is a small, a very small writer. I swear I know it. But that doesn't matter much to me. Only I don't want to think about names: I can see that if I am asked, "A small writer like who?" it would sadden me to think of the names of other small writers. I prefer to think that no one has ever been like me, however small, however much a mosquito or a flea of a writer I may be. The important thing is to be convinced that this really is your vocation, your profession, something you will do all your life. But as a vocation it is no joke. There are innumerable dangers besides those I have mentioned. We are constantly threatened with grave dangers whenever we write a page. There is the danger of suddenly starting to be flirtatious and of singing. I always have a crazy desire to sing and I have to be very careful that I don't. And there is the danger of cheating with words that do not really exist within us, that we have picked up by chance from outside of ourselves and which we skillfully slip in because we have become a bit dishonest. There is the danger of cheating and being dishonest. As you see, it is quite a difficult vocation, but it is the finest one in the world.

—From "My Vocation" by Natalia Ginzburg,  
*The Writer on Her Work*, Volume 2

Śrīla Prabhupāda was not recognized even by his God-brothers, who criticized him in the same way that the *sannyāsīs* criticized Lord Caitanya in Benares. Prabhupāda defends himself and I honor that defense. I write to carry out his honor, to always testify that whatever good I can do (as well as the good of all his disciples, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement) is a result of his mercy and training. May he accept me.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is gradually being spread to every town and village throughout the world, as Lord Caitanya predicted, because of the “solid logic and scientific presentation” of Śrīla Prabhupāda and his followers. Many people don’t accept it, but it is spreading gradually regardless.

One of the disciples of Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, who was as learned as his guru, spoke up in the assembly and praised Lord Caitanya’s teachings. He said the evidence of the *harer nāma* verse was solid: they should give up dry speculation and take to the devotional service of the Supreme Lord.

Manu wrote me that he’s praying I’ll be able to start writing. I wrote back that I am mostly reading. I said that this is in itself a worthwhile endeavor, but my writing-self does want something more. I said that I hope a synthesis will develop between the reading and note-taking on what I read, and the free-write diary.

He wrote: “Take as much time as you want . . . Your type of writing needs a good, lengthy, undisturbed spell for it to unfold in all its regalia.” He’s kind to wish me well in that way. Why be disappointed? Read and write and let it come and be as it will. There is no loss in this endeavor, and the gain is very great. (It can save you from the greatest fear at death.)

## 5 A.M.

I can understand what she means when she says don’t be flirtatious on the page, but I don’t agree that we shouldn’t sing.

“The bird doesn’t sing because he has the answer but because he has the song.” (Chinese proverb) Sing the song of God. Sing your realization. Sing your ecstatic tune in *kīrtana*. Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare—it’s singing, isn’t it? Sing the song of God.

Sing the song you are meant to sing. Maybe she means that we shouldn’t be fools and sing when we should be serious. We have a responsibility as writers to put the truth onto the page; we shouldn’t goof off. But I can’t say unconditionally, “Don’t sing when you write.”

In fact, that’s what seems to be missing so far in *Cc. Āśraya*. I am writing summary notes as I go along reading, keeping track of the narrative, and I am also keeping track of headaches and travel plans, breakfast, and how Madhu is managing the van. But what about writing-singing, songing, belonging?

When you chant, pay attention and hear the holy name. Be stricter, but also easier on yourself. By that I mean, don’t be rigid in your conceptions of how to surrender. Try to understand the best way for you to “go out” and preach.

I *know* I should preach. I preach to myself about it all the time. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is my life. I won’t leave it, I will be faithful, and I will sing. I will also complain, be who I am, and I won’t be proud or over-intelligent. But I don’t want to be rigid or dogmatic. As Prabhupāda said, facts are facts; transmigration is going on whether *you* believe it or not. You will have to die and be reborn. Therefore, it’s better not to listen to music or to do things that don’t specifically remind you of Kṛṣṇa, even if the materialists would mock you for it. At the

same time, you have to find the best way to preach, to surrender, to be a devotee.

Prabhupāda said that “Hare Kṛṣṇa” is now a “kitchen word.”

Hare Kṛṣṇas? You mean those kids in the orange sheets who ride on a flatbed truck around New York City? You mean those incapable

busters who approach you in the airports and parking lots?

You mean those anti-science guys? You mean those orchard *sārī*-dressed Indio-philes?

Them? I never see them anymore.

I thought they was dead.

I thought their leader was against women.

I thought they shaved their heads for the wrong reason.

I heard they are against sex and their

god is sexy. I heard that their books are boring.

Those people have shrunk up vocabularies.

They're on the list of unwanted sects in America,

rejected by the mainstream and most other streams too.

You mean a promising young fella like you got hooked up with *them*? Don't you ever disagree with *anything* your leader says? Where is your joy, your toy, your dream, your freedom? What are you doing to help humankind? You are against gays and femmes and frams and yet you people do all those sorts of things yourselves. You collect money and despise the heresies. You can't draw any pictures unless they look like your God. I don't mean to mock you, but no one believes that Kṛṣṇa is God nowadays. That's an old Indian idea. How can you permit yourself to be so archaic and beyond the pale? It's the dullest thing I can imagine.

Oh, no it ain't. You don't know what it is, buster. You have never chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa with us or seen dawn in Vṛndāvana while feeling the sands of Vraja under your bare feet. What do you know about serving the master or the Lord's *darśana*? Yeah, we want to escape this world. We admit it. The Lord says this place is a place of sorrow. It's temporary. We want to go to the spiritual world and leave this place behind.

Prakāśānanda praised Lord Caitanya as the Supreme Lord, "although You consider Yourself the Lord's servant." Prakāśānanda asked forgiveness for his offenses to Lord Caitanya and asked Him to briefly give the purport of *Vedānta-sūtra*. *Vedānta*'s natural commentary is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. The *catuḥ-ślokī*, originally spoken by the Supreme Lord to Lord Brahmā are the essence of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and Vyāsa elaborated on them in compiling *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

*Jñāna* and *vijñāna*, *sambandha*, *abhidheya*, and *prayojana*—all this is discussed in the *catuḥ-ślokī*. He is explaining it. I'm sitting looking out the window. I wrote a note to M. this morning saying that if I don't get a relapse, we could travel, but not before the end of September and perhaps not until the end of October. That will give me time to stretch out in the reading of scripture and the writing of notes and diary.

But do I want or need this much time? I could say that my reading is not vital because I don't read well, but I could make the same argument for my traveling and lecturing. I could even say that about my writing. Or, if the writing is vital, then I have



to admit that I will write in any case, whether I am sitting in a house or in the back of the van.

The fact is, when I travel, I can't read as much. After all the flurry of getting out and waving my flag, "Look, ISKCON, I'm traveling and preaching!" I don't get to spend as much time with my spiritual master's books. I'm beginning to think that it is a more solid contribution to spend time studying *śāstra*. It would be ridiculous to say that travel is spiritual action while reading is inaction or idleness. A few weeks or a month out of a life in which I usually don't read that much is well spent if it's spent reading.

This argument is meant to keep a fellow who seems to have ants in his pants from jumping up from his reading desk. Hold on and turn the pages and consider. I know I am not swooning at the *darśana* when I read, but I am reading peacefully and with interest. The ability to study peacefully is a privilege and a gift. I don't have to earn money for a family or manage a temple—things that would keep me away from reading.

Yeah, I see your point.

I'm making a general statement. Reading Cc. with the Bhaktivedanta purports is good for me. If I can trick myself into doing it, I'll be a winner and I'll be able to help the world, granted. Still, let me explore the specific points. For example, do I *like* to read Prabhupāda's books? Why don't I do it more no matter where I am? Is it all right to admit my desire to read other things? What about my writing? How is it a faithful following and expansion of the *paramparā*? If I write something different from *śāstra*, is it because I want to read something Kṛṣṇa conscious but different?

I hope to ease into these topics. I'd really like to receive the *darśana* (as I put it) of Cc. and the *Bhāgavatam*, to see Kṛṣṇa face to face. I would also like to be excited to read my spiritual master's words and to obey his orders, to *be with Kṛṣṇa*. Let the books speak to my soul and awaken me.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's books are very scholarly, very devoted, absolute, perfect, Vedic. They are presented for universal application in Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's *saṅkīrtana* movement.

I need some time to get somewhere with this understanding.

**11:45 A.M.**

"Real spiritual knowledge has to be received from revealed scriptures. . . . from the *paramparā* system and from the guru . . ." (Cc. *Madhya* 25.118, purport) That's it. Don't speculate. You can be yourself, wander about, feel pleasure and pain in the body, etc., but for knowledge of the ultimate you turn to *śāstra*.

How much of this is merely official to me? Is there some little self who seeks knowledge by *pratyakṣa* or *anumāna*? Maybe. But it must be confirmed by *śabda*.

Knowledge from *śāstra* is clarified by analogies, such as the example of the sun and the sunshine. I have heard such analogies many times. I want something more than the philosophy of "the Absolute Truth is a person." I want to *feel* it. Kṛṣṇa is demanding our emotional attachment. He gives Himself to His devotees, so we have to give ourselves to Him. We begin by performing *tapasya*, obeying the guru, and preaching.

My headaches usually begin their early stages around 10:30 A.M. That's when I take a pill and lay down. I often turn on a relaxation tape where the man tells me to breathe in deeply and think "warm," then breathe out slowly and think "heavy." At this time, it's too much for me to hear Prabhupāda speak the philosophy or to read. The philosophy is stern, uncompromising, rigorous, basic. I *agree* with it, but I keep asking myself for something soothing. I think of Western classical music, but it's not Kṛṣṇa-specific. Soft *kīrtanas* are nice, as Prabhupāda wanted to hear in his last days—soft, with a tiny pair of *karatālas*.

Lough Erne flows by. Just a few slow pleasure boats today. It feels good to be honest about my need for something to soothe me, as well as for writing that follows *śāstra*, is faithful to it, derives its power there—but is lighter and more personal. I have heard that *śāstra* is like the guru, drama is like a friend, poetry is like a lover—something like that.

I got rid of another book I had with me—Grizutti's *Accidental Autobiography*. She used to be a Jehovah's Witness. No autobiography writing for me, I say. And if I don't want *only śāstra* study notes, not only diary, not this and not that (*neti-neti*), then what *do* I want?

Soothing, excellent

hits. Top hits.

Write for no audience but  
score. Well that's impossible.

*Acintya-bhedābheda*

simultaneously one and different.

*Śāstra* and yet the world,  
Kṛṣṇa and yet me.  
Prabhupāda's stern order to preach  
and soothing relaxation.  
*Hari-nāma* on beads—  
I'd love to love it and  
tell others.

Kṛṣṇa, no demigods,  
but I can't pay the price.  
What? Amnesia.  
Want to score, not be  
a bore, or pose.  
Be chaste to guru yet  
yourself walk peacefully as  
you did on dusty back road  
of Gītā-nāgarī. No more.

Got a new place to walk—  
Geaglum path. And reading  
Cc.  
*a little at a time.*

*Lectio* is demanding:

I must be absolutely and completely open and attentive because the word of God [in scripture] may demand something of me today which it did not demand yesterday.

Hear what it says and be ready to at least admit it. You've got to do things you don't want to do—like grow old and travel and preach. Chant your rounds. So . . . so . . . precious.

I'll read more this afternoon. Now it's time for lunch. Śyāmānanda dāsa is bringing it. He's still in his twenties. I will try to repay them by writing good stuff.

Śacīnandana dāsa writes me from Bhaktivedanta Manor:

Your honesty is not in any way a weakness but rather a strength. You are often writing about how you think and feel in many "normal" situations, which gives us (me) an idea of a sight to set with how to think and act as I go through my life somehow or other trying to stay in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I'm only one tiny individual, but I'm very happy that there is a Satsvarūpa Mahārāja in my life and that he cares for us enough to share his Kṛṣṇa consciousness with us.

## **2:30 P.M.**

I'd like to read Lord Caitanya's praise of the *Bhāgavatam* and especially of the *catuḥ-ślokī*, but pressure is building in my head. I'd avoid taking a second pill if I could, but better to take it if I can get some reading hours in this afternoon. Otherwise, I can't do anything—not even take a walk—but sit and look out at the lake.

Devotional service is transcendental to all considerations of time, person, and place. It's applicable everywhere.

“Hari, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who destroys everything inauspicious for His devotees, does not leave the hearts of His devotees even if they remember Him and chant about Him inattentively. This is because the rope of love always binds the Lord within the devotees’ hearts. Such devotees should be accepted as most elevated.” (Cc. *Madhya* 25.128)

I would like to know that Kṛṣṇa loves me. I hear that He can only be reached by devotional service. I hear that if we have any material taint, we can’t go back to Godhead. He says in effect, “You don’t want Me badly enough; you still want to enjoy in this material world. Stay here and learn your lessons until you are ready to give up everything for My service.” His pure devotees tell us we must simply want to please Kṛṣṇa. That’s *prema*. When we want to please ourselves, that’s *kāma*. I find myself wanting to hear and know personally that Kṛṣṇa loves *me* despite my shortcomings. I know it’s true because He comes to rescue me from this material world. He lowers the rope into the well into which I have fallen. I just have to reach out and grab it, to do that much.

Would I prefer an easier way out?

Want to be given a hundred percent grade on the exam even though I did only fifty percent of the work?

What do I mean when I say I want to know that He loves me? Am I complaining that He is not acting enough on my behalf? Better to pray, “Please let me love You.”

“As soon as one attentively and submissively hears the message of *Bhāgavatam*, by this culture of knowledge the Supreme Lord is established within his heart.” (*Bhāg.* 1.1.2)

“We never tire of hearing the transcendental pastimes of the Personality of Godhead, who is glorified by hymns and prayers. Those who have developed a taste for transcendental relationships with Him relish hearing of His pastimes at every moment.” (*Bhāg.* 1.1.19)

In other words, a true devotee of Kṛṣṇa isn't interested in hearing, reading, or writing about things outside of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. He knows that everything can be used in Kṛṣṇa's service, and therefore he brings everything possible into his service. He doesn't unnecessarily hear topics of the mundane world, talks of men and women, however. “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu continued, ‘Always discuss *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and constantly chant the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. In this way you will be able to attain liberation very easily, and you will be elevated to the enjoyment of love of Godhead.’” (*Cc. Madhya* 25.154)

Walking on the woods path, it occurred to me I should be asking how I love Him, not whether or not He will show me that He loves me. Both sides of the question are valid, but I have to find the answers. Love of Kṛṣṇa is a hidden treasure. *The Nectar of Devotion* advises that we “dig on the Eastern side” to find it.

I am right not to be satisfied with a superficial, scholastic reading because such reading does not allow me to uncover my own love for the Lord. If I face that wrong attitude (my demand that Kṛṣṇa show His love for me), then I can go beyond it. And

I can similarly face doubts: perhaps I have been under the spell of a spiritual master for my whole life but it's not the truth. Or, maybe it is true, but I don't believe it. Maybe I am simply going through the motions. I don't want to look bad. I would rather look like a devotee and then die as if I were one. All right, I face that doubt, that maybe I don't believe, don't love. At least I don't do it deeply. I have very little realization. I know that this is the language of saints: "I could not attain Mathurā." I am not speaking as a saint. I don't feel pain that I miss the beloved of the *gopīs*.

In the section I am reading now, Lord Caitanya is explaining *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to Prakāśānanda. He has quoted many verses from the *Bhāgavatam* itself. One said that even if a devotee chants inattentively, the Lord is captured in his heart. What does that mean? Does he love the Lord very much in many ways, so perhaps he meditates on serving Kṛṣṇa in so many other ways that he chants negligently? Still, he is sold out to the Lord. There are many possible ways to understand, to approach. Ask Him to reveal Himself. Don't be afraid, "But if I surrender to Kṛṣṇa and call out to Him, He may ask me to become the president of the temple in New Delhi."

Flock of birds over the field rise and fall together like a handful of stones. On the forest path, sun patches and shade from trees. I come upon a man looking at the unused buildings and turn around quickly so I won't have to talk to him. If he were to ask me about the land or buildings, I would say, "I'm just a visitor here. I don't know anything about them either."



Walk back to the house and the book and my lack of taste. If I could develop a continuous sort of writing and reading, something unbroken, then things would start to happen.

The search for God in the written word is what constitutes this goal. The goal is therefore an encounter with a beloved Person, and this is never to be done feverishly and with agitation.

An important point: don't be like Vṛkāsura, who was ready to cut off his own flesh if Lord Śiva did not appear to him immediately. Take it easy during these quiet days in September. Just spend time with the book, and although you know what you're looking for (Kṛṣṇa), you can't demand or push feverishly for His *darśana*: "Show me You love me!"

After Lord Caitanya spoke to the Māyāvādī *sannyāsīs* and was alone again with His associates, He said laughingly, "I came here to sell My emotional ecstatic love . . ." There were no customers at first, so it appeared that He would have to carry His ecstasy back to His own country. Prabhupāda compares this to his own situation when he came to preach the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in the Western countries. "In the beginning we were very disappointed for at least one year because no one came forth to help this movement, but by the grace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, some young boys joined this movement in 1966. . . . We therefore pray for all the blessings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu upon all the devotees in the Western world who are spreading this movement." (Cc. *Madhya* 25.170, purport)

I am looking for a sign that Kṛṣṇa loves me? Don't you remember 1966? And is it not still continuing?

Yes, but one would think that after thirty years of practice, I would have more taste. At least we think like that sometimes.

“The readers should relish this wonderful nectar because nothing compares to it. Keeping their faith firmly fixed within their minds, they should be careful not to fall into the pit of false arguments or the whirlpools of unfortunate situations. If one falls into such positions, he is finished.” (Cc. *Madhya* 25.279)

Always chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and  
live in Vṛndāvana, Lord Caitanya  
told Subuddhi Rāya.  
Don't kill yourself.

Stay away from speculators and wrong talk. Of course, nowadays we can't just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and live in Vṛndāvana, at least physically, but Lord Caitanya recommended it to Subuddhi Rāya. Subuddhi then raised money selling dry wood in the forest and subsisted on one paisa's worth of fried chick-peas. With the profit he bought yogurt and rice for the Bengali Vaiṣṇavas when they visited Vṛndāvana, because they found it hard to digest the wheat *roṭis* served there. He also bought mustard oil to give them massages.

## NIGHT NOTES

I have again finished the *Madhya-līlā*. It ends with the purport where Prabhupāda says we must read all the books that

have been published or we will fall down, along with his last “note” about pigs and dogs who don’t appreciate the work of the *ācārya*. Now I move on to the *Antya-līlā*. *Madhya-līlā* is the longest section. Lord Caitanya traveled for six years, then returned to Purī for the last eighteen years of His pastimes. There, He mostly chanted with His devotees and stayed in the Gambhīrā with a few intimate associates, speaking of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Breeze not cold. Bluish skies all day. Ireland isn’t always raining. The puffballs are huge now; no purple visible. The field is one big, ghostly puff. Sometimes one of the filaments floats into the window. Looks like a silky spider moving along the floor near the altar. Everything is connected to Kṛṣṇa. The ripply water.

I saw Manu before he went to give his *Bhagavad-gītā* class tonight. He said that his class was scheduled for five o’clock Irish time. He talked to me until 5:10, then started to walk toward the shore to get a boat. Even Irish time has its limits of delay.

A few raisins and a few strawberries for a snack with cranberry juice at 5 P.M.

I will be reading again the second meeting with Rūpa Gosvāmī, the opening chapter of *Antya-līlā*, tomorrow morning. Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa.

## SEPTEMBER 10, 1996

Living with shortcomings. Regarding offensive chanting, Prabhupāda writes that we shouldn't think that the holy name is sometimes offensive and sometimes clear of offenses. It is the devotee who commits offenses. Similarly, the chapters of Cc., the assertions of *śāstra* regarding God and His pure devotees, are not faulty or exaggerated. It is we who see faults where there are none. We aren't pleased by this, but we go on anyway.

I have often said that this chapter, "Rūpa Gosvāmī's Second Meeting with the Lord," is a favorite of mine because it's literary. The writer reads from his works and pleases the Lord and His devotees. It has to be read with care. Printed words on a white page made shiny by electric lamp—the brain has to unscramble them by intellectual process and make sense—and not get bored or find fault.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī writes, "My path is very difficult. I am blind, and my feet are slipping again and again. Therefore, may the saints help me by granting me the stick of their mercy as my support." (Cc. *Antya* 1.2) He prays to the Six Gosvāmīs "that all impediments to my writing this literature will be annihilated and my real desire will be fulfilled." (Cc. *Antya* 1.4)

Prabhupāda: “I am trying to finish the translation of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* as soon as possible, but before finishing it, I have given my readers the book *Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*, so that if I die before finishing the whole task, they may enjoy this book, which is the essence of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.” (Cc. *Antya* 1.11, purport)

“There is no harm in taking birth again and again. Our only desire should be to take birth under the care of a Vaiṣṇava. . . . We may conclude that even as dogs we must take shelter of a Vaiṣṇava. The benefit will be the same as that which accrues to an advanced devotee under a Vaiṣṇava’s care.” (Cc. *Antya* 1.24, purport)

There is nothing to accomplish but genuine devotional service. Don’t produce useless paper currency, but something of real value. Can you? Everything is up to the will of the Supreme Lord, yes, but what is your desire? He will reciprocate with that. You want to do some snazzy writing? (Don’t talk slang in front of the Deity.)

I want . . . I want . . .

I am blind and slipping again and again,

the saint’s mercy is my stick of support.

Where are you trying to go, blind man?

Why are you still trying to

gather possessions and reputation?

What good will it do you in the next world?

Why don’t you ask yourself

these things?

The dog favored by Śivānanda Sena was fed by Lord Caitanya and he chanted the name of Kṛṣṇa and danced. “Everyone should be given a chance to take *prasāda* and thus be induced to chant the holy names Hare Kṛṣṇa and also dance in ecstasy. By these three processes, although performed without knowledge or education, even an animal went back to Godhead.” (Cc. *Antya* 1.32, purport)

*Lectio divina* is a matter of *studied practice* as much as of *prayer*.  
At *fixed* hours one should have leisure for fixed *lectio*.

Therefore, I rise at midnight. I still don’t like to be woken by a loud alarm, so I turn it off and keep glancing at the clock. It’s too much of a shock. Today I got up around 12:05. Lucky. Better submit to the alarm. “At fixed hours one should have leisure for reading.” When we do follow a schedule, we can read without pressuring ourselves about reading a quota of pages. It’s studied practice. You just do it and expect that the mercy will be given (as it happened to the dog that followed the devotees from Bengal). Sit up and read. You learned how to read when you were six years old. Now keep practicing and perfect it.

Yes, I believe in that. Go on, go on, but in a leisurely way. I know you say you can’t study, can’t hit the books in an analytical way, but at least notice what’s passing, the gorgeous and valuable (instructive) scenery. As in this chapter, the opening verses, prayers to Madana-mohana, Govinda, and Gopīnātha. The desire to be a devotee of Lord Caitanya. The description of the avid followers of the Lord from Bengal, how they walked

each year to be with Him. When they reached the bridge outside Purī, the Lord sent His men to greet them. He went with them to the Jagannātha temple and sat and ate with them that day.

#### 4 A.M.

Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote two dramas. He started making notes and writing while he was traveling from Bengal to Purī. Writing and traveling. But then when he got to Purī, he wrote more and that's when Lord Caitanya asked him to read the work in progress. He was therefore able to write in different places, while traveling, while in Jagannātha Purī, and while in Vṛndāvana. I will also have to write on the move. Madhu has almost completed fixing the van, and now all the legalities are in order. We are ready to move.

But I have come here to convalesce and to read Cc. Still, seeing the van ready makes me think, “Why not?” Why not? Because I won't be able to read so well. I may write as I travel, but I will have to write about the material world that I perceive with my senses—the highway, the tensions, the gas stations, the overnight parking, and then the temple lectures I will have to prepare.

When I travel and write, what is it like? Is it necessarily more shallow? I'm here in one place right now, and there is shallowness here. However, it is regulated—the studied practice. Rūpa Gosvāmī was writing his drama while living with Haridāsa Ṭhākura in Jagannātha Purī and I am telling about it.

O Lord of the universe, kindly be visible unto me and tell me what to do. When we go to Purī, I could write little poems while going and coming back from visiting the *tīrthas*, but sometimes those poems are too journalistic. That is, they capture the spirit of time and place but not the “haiku moments.” Poetry should touch something, not simply be travel notes. Travel in itself is not opposed to writing; whether staying in one place or traveling, a writer has to capture the moments under the surface.

The Lord told Rūpa Gosvāmī, “Do not try to take Kṛṣṇa out of Vṛndāvana.” Rūpa Gosvāmī was surprised. He had already received a vision from Satyabhāmā asking that he write a special drama about her. That meant he had to write two dramas, one for Vṛndāvana and one for the Dvārakā pastimes. The Lord confirmed this. When we write of Kṛṣṇa outside of Vṛndāvana, we write of Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa. Vraja-Kṛṣṇa does not leave Vṛndāvana even for a step. Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa is an expansion of Vraja-Kṛṣṇa.

Rūpa went on writing. He wrote in Sanskrit in a special ink and with a pen appropriate for those days. He observed Lord Caitanya at Ratha-yātrā chanting a *śloka* which only Svarūpa Dāmodara could understand. Rūpa Gosvāmī also understood it by the Lord’s grace, and he composed a verse similar to it but specifically mentioning Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The Lord found this verse in the thatch of Rūpa’s hut and became ecstatic. He asked how Rūpa could know His mind. Svarūpa Dāmodara affirmed that the Lord must have empowered him.

After Ratha-yātrā, the devotees from Bengal returned home, but Rūpa Gosvāmī stayed on for some time, writing and living



in Purī, and spending time with Haridāsa Ṭhākura. One day, Lord Caitanya arrived with His associates and asked Rūpa to read from his current writing of the two plays, *Vidagdha-mādhava* and *Lalita-mādhava*. Rūpa was shy at first, and he didn't want to read.

This is good stuff. I cannot compare myself to Rūpa Gosvāmī, even though I also write, but it's a saving grace to hear of *this* poet rather than a nondevotee poet, to hear *his* poetry rather than the poetry of a Robert Creeley reading from some coffeehouse. And to write after him in this *sampradāya*, even though I am unqualified, is also a gift.

Lord Caitanya picked up a palm leaf of the book Rūpa Gosvāmī was writing. He was pleased to see his handwriting, which He said looked like a row of pearls. When He read the verse, "I do not know how much nectar the two syllables 'Kṛṣṇa' have produced . . . " (*Vidagdha-mādhava* 1.15), He was overwhelmed with *prema*. When He chanted it, Haridāsa Ṭhākura became jubilant.

The next day, Lord Caitanya came with the great devotees, such as Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, Rāmānanda Rāya, and Svarūpa Dāmodara. He asked Rūpa Gosvāmī to read some of his excellent verses, but Rūpa Gosvāmī was too shy. Therefore, Svarūpa Dāmodara began reading the verse, "*Priyaḥ so 'yaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ saha-cari.*"

"Although its wood may be ignited by a low-class man, fire can nevertheless purify gold. Although I am very low by

nature, this book may help cleanse the dirt from within the hearts of the golden devotees.” (*Vidagdha-mādhava* 1.6, quoted in Cc. *Antya* 1.139)

There is a generous selection of *ślokas* translated from *Vidagdha-mādhava*. We used to read this literature more. Rāma-rāya dāsa asks me if and when he can again read *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, *Vidagdha-mādhava*, and other such books. We can read some of it in these chapters. We have to read privately and with an appropriate mood. Is it possible for us? If we can concentrate, we are fortunate.

Planning to be in Purī sometime with a few devotees. What Cc. will we sample at that time? Can I project to them a mood of *caitanya-līlā*, or within that, the *rasa* of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as tasted by Lord Caitanya in the Gambhīrā? Or, if I feel I am not qualified, then what will we discuss? Don’t center on the faulty self.

“Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya further inquired, ‘How have you described Vṛndāvana, the vibration of the transcendental flute, and the relationship between Kṛṣṇa and Rādhikā? Please tell me all this, for your poetic ability is wonderful.’ After offering obeisances to Rāmānanda Rāya, Rūpa Gosvāmī gradually began answering his inquires.” (Cc. *Antya* 1.156–57)

Oh, I don’t know how much nectar is produced by the syllables “Kṛṣ-ṇa”. I don’t know when to take a pill for ease, or whether to avoid it for now until the pain builds up. I’d like to take a walk around 10 A.M., but do I dare? Oh well.

## SEPTEMBER 11, 1996

This is a partial record of my attempt to read. Yesterday much time was wasted with a headache. The book lay unopened on my desk. I intended to read aloud again those verses that Rūpa Gosvāmī recited from his plays. Instead, I sat and watched the lake or laid down with a wet rag on my forehead.

Yesterday afternoon, an ISKCON preacher arrived at Inis Rath, and they say that Jayapātaka Swami will also come for a day at the end of the month. Those devotees may see me here trying to gain health. Since they are traveling preachers with their own service intentions, and that's what I might also be, it occurred to me that my intention now, to read *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, is good. I *could* travel widely and join the list of *sannyāsīs* who arrive and leave temples, and that would be good service too, but simply staying here to read is not nothing.

“If one tries to render his best service to the Lord, the Lord gives him the power to do so . . . *teṣāṁ satata-yuktānāṁ* . . . Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu bestowed His special favor upon Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī [by which Rūpa was empowered to write extraordinarily nectarean and conclusive verses] because Rūpa

Gosvāmī wanted to serve the Lord to the best of his ability.” (Cc. *Antya* 1.197, purport)

“A pure devotee, free from the reactions of the material modes of nature, executes devotional service with tolerance like that of a tree. He also feels humbler than the grass. Such a devotee, who is called *niṣkiñcana*, or free from all material possessions, is always absorbed in emotional love of Godhead. He is reluctant to perform any kind of sense gratification. In other words, such a devotee is free from all material bondage, but he engages in Kṛṣṇa conscious activities. Such expert devotional service is performed without hypocrisy.” (Cc. *Antya* 1.202 purport)

I too would like to be “empowered,” at least in a small way, to influence people toward Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I’d like to do it in writing. It’s happening to some extent. I must endeavor at it. Everything material may be used in Kṛṣṇa’s service. I’m writing simply and directly of my own endeavors at service and what happens. Best, I suppose, is to practice at this regularly. The writing of many timed, freely written, diary-like works may be compared to the efforts of the sparrow who tried to empty the ocean with her beak. I’m trying to write the best literature “against” the ocean of worldly and devotional and scholarly writers—or I am trying to distinguish myself among them—but it will only be possible if Kṛṣṇa sees my efforts as sincere and sends help through Garuḍa.

Lord Caitanya also asked Rūpa Gosvāmī to offer prayers to the lotus feet of all the devotees present. That's another recommended approach if we want blessings to write.

Worldly poets and scholars cannot write about Kṛṣṇa or Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If they do, the result is as poisonous as the milk touched by the lips of a serpent. I can write about Kṛṣṇa from within my limits. I can say, "Rādhā-Govinda are the presiding Deities at Inis Rath. I wish to see Them and to serve Them. Their devotees gather for Their *darśana*, dress Them in gorgeous clothes, and serve Them good *prasādam* as ordered by Śrīla Prabhupāda." These are not imaginary or tainted statements. With me, when I write in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, I also feel impelled to admit my faults. Some say that confession is not necessary or desirable. All I can do is to continue and to work to improve, and to tell you more of what the book is saying and how I am faring in my attempts to read it.

"Although I am the lowest of men and have no knowledge, the Lord has mercifully bestowed upon me the inspiration to write transcendental literature about devotional service. Therefore I offer my obeisances at the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who has given me the chance to write these books." (BRS 1.1.2, quoted in Cc. *Antya* 1.212)

Cassian: You must by all means strive to get rid of all anxiety and worldly thoughts, and give yourself over continuously to

sacred reading until continual meditation fills your mind and the scriptures fashion you, so to speak, to Their own likeness.

It certainly describes what I would like to achieve. Various anxieties reach me like waves touching the shore, but I can remain aloof from them as far as possible. Don't imagine that people are criticizing or attacking you, and don't fall prey to the notion that reading is a waste of time. Fight against the fact that your attention is feeble and your devotion is sometimes nonexistent. Be careful of the influence of nondevotional literature, although you sometimes look at it to see how wonderful writing skill is being made use of, especially by fellow Americans. I wish I had such skills to use in Kṛṣṇa's service. Most of all, however, give yourself over to continued sacred reading until the scriptures fashion you in Their own likeness. Little by little you'll find yourself thinking more about the persons in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, the reality, the devotion to Lord Caitanya, the central figure, and Lord Caitanya's absorption in Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. It's a worthy endeavor. The monks of olden times used to make reading scripture their main meditation in a life of simplicity and austerity. One trusts the absolute world of the scripture and prays to come close to it. You can enter the Kingdom of God that way—*caitanya-līlā*, *kṛṣṇa-līlā*, and not the "*līlā*" of this temporary, unhappy, material world.

Now I'll start Chapter Two of *Antya-līlā*, "The Chastisement of Junior Haridāsa." His offense was that he spoke intimately with a woman, although he was in the renounced order.

#### 4 A.M.

Somehow the travel plans have become clear. I don't think I'll get much worse in the van, so the decision whether or not to travel is not a medical one but a mental one. I think I will begin traveling at the beginning of October. That gives me about eighteen or twenty days here to "complete" the Cc. Don't rush it, please. Don't even think you have to read the whole *Antya-līlā*. Do stay and read at your desk when you're not actually forced away by head pressure.

As for notes to make along the way:

Nṛsimhānanda Brahmācārī brought Lord Caitanya from Vṛndāvana to Bengal by the strength of his meditation. He offered *prasādam* to the Lord in three dishes, one for Lord Caitanya, one for Lord Jagannātha, and one for Lord Nṛsimhadeva, but Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu ate them all, showing Nṛsimhānanda Brahmācārī that He was Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu, all.

Yesterday, I had head pain and took rest after lunch, but I forgot to put Śrīla Prabhupāda to bed for his nap. I'm sorry. I tried to tell him something—to please rest anyway even though I didn't wrap his sleeping *cādar* around him. I hope he will excuse me. I know he will become distant if I don't take care of him.

A devotee named Bhagavān Ācārya was surrendered to Lord Caitanya, but he had a brother who had studied Māyāvādī philosophy and Bhagavān Ācārya saw no harm in that. Svarūpa Dāmodara reprimanded Bhagavān: "Hearing this kind of commentary breaks the heart and life of a devotee."

Then the incident of Choṭa Haridāsa begging rice from Śikhi Māhiti's sister, Mādhavīdevī. She is described as elderly, a *tapasvīnī* and a *paramā-vaiṣṇavī*.

Lord Caitanya told Govinda not to allow Choṭa Haridāsa to approach Him anymore. The confidential devotees of the Lord asked Him why. The Lord replied, "I cannot tolerate seeing the face of a person who has accepted the renounced order of life but who still talks intimately with a woman." (Cc. *Antya* 2.117)

Even though a saintly person vows to control his senses, the senses are sometimes perturbed by sense objects. The sense objects—form, sound, smell, taste, and touch—are always attractive to the senses—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin.

We can become attracted to music, for example. Any sense attraction can lead to the others. Women are attractive. A renounced person (*sannyāsī*) claims by his vows and his saffron dress that he has no intimate connection with women. If he cheats on this simple vow, he falls down. No one will appreciate such duplicity.

What is "intimate contact" with a woman? He means contact for sense enjoyment. Choṭa Haridāsa's exchange with Mādhavīdevī seemed simple and not illicit, but Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu saw offense in it and wanted to set a strict example. He can be like a thunderbolt. "*I had better be careful*" is the natural conclusion one has on reading this chapter.

*Markaṭa-vairāgya*, monkey *sannyāsa*. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī defines *markaṭa* as "restless." Such a *sannyāsī* can't be



steady. Rather, he wanders around gratifying his senses. “There are eight different kinds of sensual enjoyment with women, including talking about them and thinking about them. Thus for a *sannyāsī*, a person in the renounced order, talking intimately with women is a great offense.” (Cc. *Antya* 2.120, purport)

Later, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī also points out that Choṭa Haridāsa did not commit a great offense. Lord Caitanya punished his dear devotee in order to set an example for other *sannyāsīs* not to associate intimately with women. Don’t be puzzled or misjudge Lord Caitanya as cruel. This pastime is grave and has to be understood in the right way. Choṭa Haridāsa was chosen to serve the Lord in this way. One could say, “Why not set the example with someone who was a rascal and who actually committed the mistake? It would help us to understand better the Lord’s chastisement. As it is, the pastime is confusing.” But it is not our place to speculate. The Lord chooses whom He wants to use to set an example. In this case, He chose a dear devotee. And because He chose a devotee, the punishment is that much harder. If even for a slight infraction this is what happens . . .

“After all the devotees saw this example, a mentality of fear grew among them. Therefore they all stopped talking with women, even in dreams.” (Cc. *Antya* 2.144)

“In connection with *strī-sambhāṣaṇa*, talking with women, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura says that talking with women for the purpose of mingling with them for sense gratification, subtle or gross, is strictly prohibited.”

September 11, 1996  
Manu's house, Geaglum

Dear Madhumaṅgala,

I think you'll agree with my resolution to leave this convalescent's room. Manu dāsa and others have requested me to stay for a long time in one place. That stage may come, but it hasn't come yet.

Since I'm not getting stronger or better, other disciples may ask you, "Why are you taking our spiritual master out in the van to travel?"

What I'm hoping we can do is to manage to travel in a semi-invalid state. That means traveling slowly, taking breaks each day, and going to places where the devotees understand my condition so that if necessary, I can cancel all obligations and simply rest.

There is an advantage to my staying here. I can read and write, but whenever I feel weak, I can stop working and simply sit back or lay down in bed in a quiet environment. It would be folly to go out from here if we were going to take on a lot of chances, stress, and social obligations. I am willing to travel, and if it doesn't work out, we can return here or go somewhere else.

On the other hand, we must face risks. I have a tape I'd like you to hear where Śrīla Prabhupāda tells devotees that life will inevitably offer dangers and we must tolerate them and depend on Kṛṣṇa. It's inspiring to hear him say it—pulling no punches about the nature of our stay in this world in this

body, but assuring us that Kṛṣṇa is working on our behalf for our ultimate deliverance.

Yours in the service of Śrīla Prabhupāda

The only atonement for a *sannyāsī* who again entertains sense gratification with a woman is to commit suicide at the confluence of the Yamunā and the Ganges.

“He kindly accepts His faithful devotees and teaches them how much tribulation and disturbance can be produced by even a slight deviation from the strict principles of devotional life.”

Choṭa Haridāsa proved his elevated devotion to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and ultimately he went back to Godhead.

Those who kill cows and brahminical culture are called *yavanas*. Lord Caitanya was anxious to deliver the *yavanas*. He asked Haridāsa how the *yavanas* could be saved. Śrīla Prabhupāda states that all followers of Lord Caitanya should be compassionate to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the fallen souls. Am I?

How do we do it? The persons who are now practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness were mostly *yavanas* before taking to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, so it is as much preaching to help them maintain their status as it is to preach to outsiders. Neither should we ourselves “again become a mouse.” This point links us to the chapter about Choṭa Haridāsa: don’t fall down. Even a little deviation . . .

Life is short and we should not sit around. We may think that there isn’t much we can do; we may not feel capable of becoming

great preachers. We should simply do what we can, and follow the principles without deviation.

(As I write this, Madhu is working in the van and a German-born devotee is next door putting up shelves in the room. The housewives are taking care of their children.)

Hare Kṛṣṇa. It starts with the chanting, as we will hear from the words of Haridāsa Ṭhākura. You need to chant as effectively as possible. Then you can tell others the glories of the holy names. Tell them what you experience. Then it will not be hypocrisy.

O Lord, O energy of the Lord, I chant Hare Kṛṣṇa day and night. Now I have a candle to light the way through my early morning *japa*, when I do eleven rounds. Please Lord, let me be serving You then.

Dāmodara Paṇḍita was simple but impudent in daring to advise the Lord to behave more strictly as a *sannyāsī*. The Lord sent him to live with Mother Śacī and the devotees in Navadvīpa. It is a great privilege to live close to the Lord. If you are not fit you may be sent away. The pure devotee goes on serving Him wherever he may be.

Today is blowy and that makes it difficult to row across the lake to the island. I have agreed to see devotees here on Saturday. They will come to this room. I will choose some section from Cc. about which to speak. I could choose something that seems applicable to them, or I could choose an exalted pastime even if we cannot immediately turn it into a lesson for the

average struggler. I don't want to lecture on Choṭa Haridāsa. It's too tricky to apply to an audience, fifty percent of whom are women and none of whom are *sannyāsīs*. I might like to talk about Rūpa Gosvāmī's reading his dramas to Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya in the company of Lord Caitanya, but that may be too esoteric. No, I think I'll read it anyway because it reveals the wonderful relationships between the devotees.

That section's practical application would be to repeat what Śrīla Prabhupāda writes at the end of the *Madhya-līlā*: unless we read, we will fall down. We need the *śāstra* as much as we need to eat food grains. I don't want to harass the devotees about reading, but I'll open with that and then speak some *kathā*. We'll also talk about chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa because Haridāsa Ṭhākura expounds the glories of the holy name in this chapter. There are many lessons to be found in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. A big lesson: don't blaspheme devotees who are trying their best to spread the cult of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

## SEPTEMBER 12, 1996

Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura was chanting 300,000 names daily while sitting before the *tulasī* plant. Śrīla Prabhupāda “request[s] the members of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement to follow Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s example rigidly.” One may think Śrīla Prabhupāda is recommending only a token following of Haridāsa Ṭhākura when he says that we shouldn’t try for the same high quota of rounds but that we chant our sixteen rounds daily and offer respects to Tulasī-devī. Śrīla Prabhupāda is an *ācārya* and knows what is best for us. Most of us prefer the easy, low quota, but we shouldn’t lose the spirit of chanting with devotion and rigidly keeping the quota. We should also know that the more we accept this spirit, the more we will like to chant, even if we cannot imitate the *mukta-puruṣa*.

Again last night I forgot to wrap Prabhupāda in his sleeping *cādar*. He was comfortably warm during the night, even without my care, but I was negligent. As soon as I got up and realized my neglect, I offered him both his *cādar* and his dictaphone.

When Prabhupāda mentions ISKCON’s enemies in the Cc., he often relates them to those who are envious of his own work

of spreading the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement (he wrote these purports in the 1970s). We should honor his work and be faithful. We should see ISKCON—despite its apparent faults—as the fulfillment of Lord Caitanya’s prediction that the holy name be spread to every town and village. Nothing is pure in the beginning. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura states, “From imperfection, purity will come about.”

Haridāsa told the prostitute to wait while he completed chanting his quota of rounds. He could have left the place, but he wanted to save her, so he exposed her to his chanting. “Please sit down and hear the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* . . . Then your desire will surely be fulfilled.”

The difficult pastime of Haridāsa being beaten by the Muslims in twenty-two marketplaces is not told in Cc. but in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*. Haridāsa went through many tests but continued to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and to be protected by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

In one sense, we can say that it was his vow of numerical strength that protected him. We’re also protected by our vow every day, and by keeping it strictly, *māyā* will not be able to attack us.

If we cannot suddenly respond to Kṛṣṇa’s request to surrender to Him, then we should take to chanting the holy names. “In our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we are teaching our followers to chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra continuously on beads. Even those who are not accustomed to this practice are advised to chant at least sixteen rounds on their beads so

that they may be trained. Otherwise, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu recommended: *ṭṇād api sunīcena* . . . *Sadā* means ‘always.’ Haridāsa Ṭhākura says *nirantara nāma lao*: ‘Chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra without stopping.’” (Cc. *Antya* 3.137, purport)

The contemplative makes himself silent in order to understand God, and the more he is this silence, the more he receives God. He wholly makes himself a total receptivity, an ear strained for the word.

This method of straining for the word in total silence seems too strenuous for my reading program. I’m not that austere or single-minded. I’m content to at least read along throughout the day and to pleasantly get through the book while taking a few notes. At least I realize that the monk’s reading was a more intense endeavor to hear God speaking through scripture. I’m not opposed to that idea on principle. Rather, I’m attracted to meeting Kṛṣṇa through *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Still, my capacities are limited by attention that is neither prolonged nor deep. May Lord Caitanya sprinkle His mercy upon me as I go on reading even though imperfectly, sporadically, and casually, and may I sometimes remember this deeper mood and silently call to Kṛṣṇa within: “My dear Lord, I’m exposing myself to You directly by reading the scriptures. Please come to me in this form. Please let me hear You through the sound vibration of the holy book.”

“This *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is as brilliant as the sun, and it has arisen just after the departure of Lord Kṛṣṇa to His own abode,



accompanied by religion, knowledge, etc. Persons who have lost their vision due to the dense darkness of ignorance in the age of Kali shall get light from this *Purāṇa*.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda states that Kṛṣṇa’s devotees “go to great pains to engage the possessions of prostitutes, or persons who are more or less like prostitutes, in the service of the Lord and thus free them from sinful reactions. . . . A pure Vaiṣṇava thinks himself unfit to help free even one person from the reactions of sinful life, but he engages one’s hard-earned money in the service of the Lord and thus frees one from sinful reactions.” (Cc. *Antya* 3.139, purport)

I used to quote this purport at meetings of our *saṅkīrtana* parties to those who were selling paintings on behalf of Gītā-nāgarī. There was imperfection in those days. We pushed the devotees too hard and denied them the full morning spiritual practices. Those were passionate times. The general principle, however, is that taking people’s money and using it for Kṛṣṇa is actually a way to free them from sinful reactions. It’s obvious, then, that it’s important that we spend the money on Kṛṣṇa consciousness and that it not be used by the devotees for their own sense gratification. “Misspending” also includes mismanaging the funds, being negligent with money or properties, or simply building Kṛṣṇa conscious projects in a foolish way. This purport doesn’t give the impression that we should stay away from money or that we should not be interested in taking contributions from nondevotees. If we spend the money properly in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then we are actually

working to purify others. In fact, the purport states that the Vaiṣṇava guru does not think that he can personally free others from their karma, but when he takes their money, then they become purified. In the case of the prostitute who came to Haridāsa, her giving money was incidental. The main thing was that she became a pure devotee by hearing the holy names from a pure Vaiṣṇava.

#### 4 A.M.

“A spiritual master is recognized as an actual guru when it is seen that he has changed the character of his disciples.” (Cc. *Antya* 3.143, purport)

Rāmacandra Khan got his comeuppance for his offense to the Vaiṣṇavas. I am a little too tired to read it right now. Instead, I have been looking at some writing I did myself in a little book called *Faithful Transcriber*. I’ll spend some time with that, then turn back to Cc.

It might be nice if my October travels had some structure to them, a theme to help the writing. I don’t want to make one up if it’s not true to life, though. I would prefer to write what I am able about the adventure of driving the van to Italy. Madhu put in a seat for me in the back, but it’s not so comfortable while we’re moving. Also, the bunk is too short to stretch out on with a wet rag on my forehead, but when I lay on my side to sleep, I can bend my legs a little and it’s okay.

For now, I have two weeks left of September, during which there are the usual holidays. I plan to stay here in this room

almost all the time on the plea of convalescence. I won't even go to the temple. I have a picture of Rādhā-Govinda on my desk.

Everything is an excuse. I am not really writing or living or worshipping or preaching. I am trying to get through life with my excuses about why I don't have to do the real thing. Do I think providence will allow me to get away with that? None of us can escape reality for long. Sooner or later we all have to pay our dues. If we try to avoid actual life, then we will taste the substitute but cheat ourselves in the end. I'm telling you. Imagine. He chanted only an outer covering of the holy name, not the real thing. He got the husk after the paddy was removed and was satisfied. He didn't want a needle in the arm, so he took a shot of gin instead (and even that, only in dreams). In daydreams he listened to music that led him away from the *kīrtana* of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, saying, "This is also Kṛṣṇa conscious music, what this man plays on his horn."

It's all right, you have your IRL sticker, your license plate, your tax sticker, your insurance—the works. Madhu seems to be in good enough health and it's almost time to leave.

Terrible things happened to the blasphemer of the devotees. Haridāsa Ṭhākura was not malicious. He told the prostitute to stay in the room and to always chant. She followed his instructions and ate only the alms she was offered. She was austere. People honored her. It doesn't matter what you were before you became a devotee. People should care more for the symptoms of devotion than what we were in the past.

(There are many good books but we have to discipline ourselves, “A definite stripping.”) The work of a monk is not to know a great deal about things, but to take the time to assimilate and thus to live in all those texts which speak to him more in the heart.

This is similar to Lord Caitanya’s instruction to Sanātana Gosvāmī not to read many books only to gain a reputation as a lecturer. It’s better to become expert in a few books and to read them thoroughly than to have only a surface knowledge of many books. Because of my service, I read poetry and writing books along with *śāstra*, but I try to keep it to a minimum. Otherwise, it can contaminate my reading of Cc. I’ll read some junk written by an *asura*, then turn to Cc. and even unconsciously judge that the Cc. is one kind of writing and the other guy is writing another. Cc. is not something about which we can make relative judgments. Therefore, a monk should not think he has to know a great deal about things. Henry James, and I think Hemingway, say just the opposite about a writer. According to them, a writer is supposed to know as many things as possible. Then when he writes about the style of a hat or the technicalities of a bull fight or whatever else, he will know what he is talking about and be able to be convincing. A monk doesn’t require to know many things about the world; he doesn’t even need to know many things about Kṛṣṇa. All he needs to know is that Kṛṣṇa is Śyāmasundara, the son of Nanda, and a few other things. All he has to do is to keep reading and taking in whatever he can, even when he is not sure the book speaks to his heart. It does. He reads on that faith.

The first hint of offenseless chanting is like the first light of dawn. As the first light dissipates fear of thieves, ghosts, and demons, so *nāmābhāsa* drives away the reactions to sinful life.

The description of Haridāsa Ṭhākura's humble speech to Advaita Ācārya illustrates Prabhupāda's attitude toward his Western disciples. Haridāsa Ṭhākura was afraid that Advaita Ācārya might become implicated for associating with a low-born person. Although Haridāsa was generally regarded as a great Vaiṣṇava, the *brāhmaṇas* criticized him. Śrīla Prabhupāda says we have to follow in the footsteps of Advaita Ācārya and not care for people like Rāmacandra Khan. "At present, many Vaiṣṇavas are coming to our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement from among the Europeans and Americans . . . Although they are not as exalted as Haridāsa Ṭhākura, such Americans and Europeans, having accepted the principles of Vaiṣṇava philosophy and behavior, should never be excluded from Vaiṣṇava society." (Cc. *Antya* 3.220, purport)

We get the feeling that no one among the Indian Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas was able to open their hearts as fully as Prabhupāda did to live with and fully accept the Western-born devotees. In fact, Prabhupāda almost abandoned Hindi and other Indian association. He spoke in English, even when he was in India. He rarely deferred to his Hindi-speaking audiences. He was preaching worldwide, and out of love for his disciples from various countries who were pushing on Kṛṣṇa consciousness under his instructions, he spoke to facilitate their understanding. He saw them as agents of Lord Caitanya, and as their

master he reprimanded them and pointed out their faults, but he never excluded them from Vaiṣṇava society, especially the most important society—his own personal audience and intimacy.

As far as I have observed, those of Prabhupāda's Godbrothers who have accepted Western followers do so within the context of the Indian milieu. They stay within the Gaudiya Math, which is predominately Indian, but make room for Westerners. Śrīla Prabhupāda turned that around completely, despite the fact that he was criticized. Whenever he got the chance, Prabhupāda gave evidence from *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and other scriptures that what he was doing was not concocted but was the way of great *ācāryas* such as Advaita Ācārya, Nārada Muni, and others.

## NOON

When Māyādevī came to Haridāsa Ṭhākura's cave to lure him, she found him immovable "for he was deeply determined." Māyādevī was no ordinary prostitute, and she exhibited various feminine postures that could bewilder the mind of Lord Brahmā. Haridāsa Ṭhākura was so absorbed in thoughts of Kṛṣṇa and the holy names of Kṛṣṇa that "the feminine poses the woman exhibited were just like crying in the forest." (Cc. *Antya* 3.246)

Māyādevī begged Haridāsa Ṭhākura to give her the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.

In the mail, a Sheaffer pen from Dāruka and Caraṇaravinda inscribed with the words, “Memories, SDG, Wicklow 1996.” They are concerned for my health and invite me to come and stay there. They’ll be surprised when they hear we’ve decided to travel. I *could* stay here longer—I have a good excuse in the daily headaches—but the headaches don’t get better here anyway. Maybe if we travel gently (is it possible?) it won’t get worse and I’ll be able to fulfill travel duties, see disciples—and what?

Am I bored staying in one place? Oh, I don’t know. I just don’t see the point in staying here if I’m not getting better.

Strange day. Have to admit I don’t have much interest in anything—not in reading Cc., not in writing this (or something else). I think of our decision to travel to Italy and find that right now, I don’t have much interest in that place. Not interested in staying here either. Madhu was called to the telephone and he has been gone a long while. What if there is some terrible news impending? What if I were suddenly extradited from Europe and had to appear in America as a culprit? Or any crazy thing? I’d snap out of this lassitude of “I’m not interested in anything.”

Maybe the lassitude comes from too much leisure. Earlier in the summer I used my time well by pounding out many pages.

Bonhoeffer writes about scriptural reading:

How can we bring any real help to a brother in distress or in trial if it is not with the word of God? We quickly exhaust our own words. He who can speak by dipping into the treasury and consolations of the scriptures, such a man can drive out demons by the power of God’s word and bring real help to his brothers.

This is certainly true. Of course, the brother has to do more than just cite passages from *Bhagavad-gītā*. I know one brother who just rattles them off for various occasions. If you have to tolerate something, then he quotes *mātrā-sparśās tu kaunteya*. In another situation, he quotes something else. A living, walking index. But Bonhoeffer's point is true. If you just speak on your own and say, "You should be a man, you should be yourself, just swing with it, etc." then that's not enough. We need something guided by *śāstra*, but from a person who is realized in it.

Practical, spiritual guidance is a great gift if someone can give it. I know it is my duty to advise younger devotees. Therefore, I try to base the guidance on *śāstra*. Especially when I meet with devotees in a group, I can't get away with saying only how *I* feel. I have to give some relevant scriptures. That's one reason why it's good for me to read.

But I don't know . . . I've read these books quite a few times already. I don't know how much more I gain by reading once again about Sanātana Gosvāmī's visit to Lord Caitanya and what the Lord said about the body, and so on. The information is vital: Lord Caitanya asserts that we can't reach Kṛṣṇa by committing suicide; Kṛṣṇa can only be reached by devotional service. That information would be lifesaving if given to a brother who is considering suicide or even just despondent. The problem is that I know it. That sounds smug, doesn't it? I already know it.

I don't know anything even when I think I do, but do I gain anything by yet another reading of it? Does it add yet another layer? Is there any value to being able to say, "I read it again"?



“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu told Sanātana Gosvāmī, ‘Give up all your nonsensical desires, for they are unfavorable for getting shelter at the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa. Engage yourself in chanting and hearing. Then you will soon achieve the shelter of Kṛṣṇa without a doubt.’” (Cc. *Antya* 4.65)

Only by devotional service. Sanātana fell at the Lord’s feet and asked, “If You keep me alive, what will be the profit?” Lord Caitanya responded, “I have to do all this work through your body . . .” Later, Haridāsa congratulated Sanātana and said that he himself was worthless. Sanātana then encouraged Haridāsa by reminding him that the Lord had incarnated to spread the holy names, and that He was doing so through Haridāsa.

Kṛṣṇa works through His devotees. In ISKCON, Prabhu-pāda also works through his devotees.

Sanātana’s chapter  
is being read by me in  
my head

and heart a bit—I walked on wooded path sorry that I have no love or great desire in the spiritual realm. Calling out hurt mantras and thinking that this too is good.

## SEPTEMBER 13, 1996

Sanātana Gosvāmī honored the Vaiṣṇava etiquette that the *pūjārīs* of the Deity should not be touched by unclean persons (such as himself). It was with this in mind that he walked bare-foot across the hot beach instead of on the main road. Such humility made him eligible to receive Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mercy and to write Vaiṣṇava books.

I've been thinking it might be nice to go over to the island to see Rādhā-Govinda, perhaps in the afternoons. I have my Prabhupāda *mūrti* in this room, but I have a special opportunity to go over and see Rādhā-Govinda. They may help me overcome my indifference and make my purpose while traveling clear to me. I'll ask the devotees to row me over to the island when the weather is not so bad and the water not too choppy.

The desire for reading ought to lead us to the desire for God Himself.

Yes, and He is available in the pages of Cc. They are one and the same, Kṛṣṇa and the revealed scripture. Hear *kṛṣṇa-kathā*

and desire to be with Him, to serve Him, as did Sanātana Gosvāmī, Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Jagadānanda, and the many devotees who were sometimes with Lord Caitanya in Jagannātha Purī. I can be with Kṛṣṇa in my heart, in His name, in the *arcā-vigraha*, in service to Him performed even while in a distant place, in hearing and serving the order of the spiritual master. All this I gain from reading *śāstra*. Reading is not an ordinary act. When I read with the wrong intent or mood, it leaves me feeling disinterested. Kṛṣṇa is a treasury of bliss. Why don't we feel it while we read?

The words “*prabhu-datta deśa*” are mentioned in *Antya* 4.144. Sanātana Gosvāmī's *prabhu-datta-deśa* was Vṛndāvana. In ISKCON, devotees serve Prabhupāda in many Western countries. For them, Hungary, New York City, or Japan is as good as Vṛndāvana because they are able to serve Kṛṣṇa and guru there. In his purport, Prabhupāda refers to going to many places all over the world. For a *sannyāsī*, he may be obligated to preach in many places, not just on one farm or in one city or even one country.

I sometimes think my “*deśa*” is the writing notepad or wherever I can write books. In that sense, *prabhu-datta deśa* is as much a mental climate as a physical one. I have to qualify for my service, as Sanātana Gosvāmī became qualified when he honored the *pūjārīs* and walked the hot beach. Right action, humble action, will allow me to write better and to appreciate the *śāstra* more.

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted to spread the *bhakti* cult all over the world . . . Therefore devotees in the line of Kṛṣṇa

consciousness must go to different parts of the world and preach, as ordered by the spiritual master.” (Cc. *Antya* 4.144, purport)

This indicates travel, a traveling writer.

A devotee uses his body for the Lord’s happiness, whereas a *karmī* thinks his body is an instrument for material enjoyment. That’s the difference between material and spiritual bodies. The topmost devotee doesn’t think of his body as spiritual. Rather, he feels fallen. He doesn’t like to accept worship from others.

O Kṛṣṇa, please educate me in all these matters of Vaiṣṇava thought, sentiment, and behavior. I am a foolish fellow, nursing his material wounds. Please let me write books fitting for a devotee and beneficial to others.

“A Vaiṣṇava should be indifferent to material enjoyment and renunciation and should always hanker for the spiritual life of rendering service to the Lord.” (Cc. *Antya* 4.179, purport)

Lord Caitanya said He felt like an affectionate father to His dear devotees and saw no offense in their behavior. Therefore, He embraced Sanātana without being repulsed by his oozing sores. The Lord then tried to convince Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Sanātana Gosvāmī that the body of a devotee dedicated to devotional service should never be conceived as material.

#### **4 A.M.**

When dormant spiritual consciousness awakens, we may say the devotee has a spiritual (or spiritualized) body even while living in this world. We mean that he is serving in his spiritual

identity. We don't have to sprout two extra arms or three more heads to prove our devotion. Therefore, *The Nectar of Instruction* counts thinking that a pure devotee's body is material as Vaiṣṇava *aparādha*.

After Sanātana Gosvāmī left Jagannātha Purī, he traveled to Vṛndāvana, passing through the same paths and places where Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had walked. This is a good hint for a visit to Jagannātha Purī. "A devotee should make a point of visiting all the places where Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu performed His pastimes. Indeed, pure devotees of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu even want to see the places He simply visited only for hours or minutes." (Cc. *Antya* 4.211, purport)

To educate someone to *lectio*, to meditation, is to educate him to a struggle.

I concur. It's a struggle, especially in the early morning when I have been up for over four hours, chanted twelve rounds, and have sat down to read. I'm sleepy at that time. I did relish the discussions between Lord Caitanya and Sanātana. The Lord taught Sanātana that a devotee has a spiritual body. He miraculously cured Sanātana's body, and Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, "This is Your pastime. My dear Lord, You made Sanātana Gosvāmī drink the water of Jhārikhaṇḍa, and You actually generated the consequent itching sores on his body. After thus causing these itching sores, You examined Sanātana Gosvāmī. No one can understand Your transcendental pastimes." (Cc. *Antya* 4.202–205) Those two great devotees then talked of Lord Caitanya. Sanātana stayed in Purī for a year.

I'm reading it, taking it in. What does it mean? It must be real. That's what I want. To see the scripture as real. The *lectio* remark that reading is a struggle is a real remark.

It's not that we are escorted onto a red carpet that floats up into the clouds, or we open the book and by magic we are with Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya partaking in Their pastimes. No, we have to struggle past doubts, past sleepiness, past pain and Western prejudice and all kinds of obstacles.

I welcome the acknowledgment of the struggle. Maybe every step of the way will be a struggle. Still, there are a few boosts along the way and we're glad enough for them. Uphill and downhill we walk and read, read and gain, gain the nectar, get pricked by the thistles, the thorn in the rose, the bitter *nīm* we need to drink. Sanātana walked on the hot beach and burned his soles, but he didn't feel the pain. I feel every pinch because I'm materially attached. I remember walking on the beach at Purī wearing new rubber thongs. They cut my feet and I couldn't bear it. When some goon yelled out mockingly from the Vijaya Hotel, "Hare Kṛṣṇa," I was disturbed. Foolish things disturb me. I'm a bundle of nerves and disturbances.

Reading is a relatively peaceful activity, but we cannot so easily get at the nectar because Kṛṣṇa guards the secret. Therefore, we have to struggle.

The Lord tested His dear devotees and they passed. Imagine being tested and failing. Even then you gain, but it's still better to pass. Pray to Kṛṣṇa, "Keep me going, please, Lord. We intend to always remain Your servants, sometimes reading the

holy books, sometimes lecturing, sometimes traveling in the van, sometimes finding new ways to write the scriptural truths.” Read and hear, chant and hear. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

As the feeling of hunger is the sign of a healthy body, so a live desire to hear the holy word is the surest mark of a soul’s good health.

Yes, that hunger is also mentioned in the verse by Rāmānanda Rāya. You need hunger in order for food to become meaningful. When you are hungry, you must eat or die. A live desire. I have it although it gets interrupted. Still, I am punching with desire to combat obstacles, such as finding fault with the pure devotee who is speaking or having my desire overcome by the sands of sloth. We overcome obstacles by being determined to continue. We go back to it again and again.

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, moving to a new chapter. The day is already growing old. Soon it will be time for our yoga exercises, then time to try to write a poem by squeezing it out of my life (another struggle). I have a live hunger for the *Bhāgavatam*. I’ll continue with it because Kṛṣṇa is blessing me, canvassing all of us, “Come on, think of Me. Be My lover, bow down to Me, and come to Me.” Yes, Kṛṣṇa is calling me. I will answer the call. The sound of the flute is still faint, but I do hear *something* and I’m heading in that direction. Hare Kṛṣṇa. I admit I struggle; although the process is easy, we foolishly resist.

I read to Madhu from an earlier passage in this *Cc. Āśraya* about laying awake one night and coming to the conclusion

that I want to enter an indefinite period of convalescence. The inner inspiration for that, aside from the physical illness, was that I could go deep into the *śāstras* and write my notes. Now that indefinite period has been redefined and shortened, and there are only two weeks left to it.

Today Madhu said that maybe the vision I had of going deep in the *śāstras* as the most valuable thing I could possibly do, more valuable than travel in Europe or India, more valuable than delivering many lectures, and so on—maybe that is a glimpse of a stage that I will reach but haven't yet attained. I thought his remark was perceptive. I could stay here indefinitely, but I seem to lack the patience and inspiration for it. I don't think I can dare to say that Kṛṣṇa is telling me I don't have to remain active a little longer, but certainly Kṛṣṇa wants me to do whatever is best for my Kṛṣṇa consciousness. I'm trying to figure out what that is.

I'm certainly gaining from this period, brief as it is, reading Cc. I think it will help me to build up a taste for doing it wherever I go. Maybe it's a first installment of something I'll want to take up again before too long. Having said this, I still have the inspiration to physically travel not only to Europe, but to India for a special rendezvous in Jagannātha Purī. I pray that wherever I go, I don't lose touch with Prabhupāda's books.

I'm reading *Antya-līlā*, Chapter 5, "How Pradyumna Miśra Received Instructions from Rāmānanda Rāya." There's sublime information in this chapter, and I was able to read some of it with attention. A *brāhmaṇa* named Pradyumna Miśra went to Lord Caitanya and asked to hear *kṛṣṇa-kathā*. Lord



Caitanya sent him to Rāmānanda Rāya. One line I particularly liked was when they finally got to meet and Rāmānanda Rāya asked him what kind of *kṛṣṇa-kathā* he wanted to hear. Pradyumna Miśra replied, “Kindly tell me about the same topics you spoke about at Vidyānagara.” I thought it was brilliant and daring of Pradyumna Miśra to ask to hear the same things that Rāmānanda Rāya discussed with Lord Caitanya at Vidyānagara.

I also noticed, as if for the first time, that Rāmānanda Rāya was acting in his body as a maidservant of the *gopīs* (*dāśī-bhāva*) when he personally instructed the beautiful young girls in how to act in his drama for Lord Jagannātha. Although the purport gives a full warning that no one can imitate this, it’s equally an assertion of that stage of perfection where one can meditate purely on his *siddha-svarūpa*. The *degree* to which Rāmānanda Rāya attained this stage of perfection, however, is only attainable by him. Although he was in the material world, he did not think as a male. Rather, he was absorbed in the conception of himself as an assistant of the *gopīs*.

When Pradyumna Miśra inquired from Lord Caitanya about Rāmānanda Rāya, Lord Caitanya quoted important verses about how hearing about the *rāsa* dance will remove lust from a person’s heart. Prabhupāda underlines that such hearing has to be done with great faith.

This section is yet another example of how we can be satisfied by reading Prabhupāda’s books. All the nectar is there—as much as we can expect to take—along with the warnings.

Rāmānanda Rāya drowned Pradyumna Miśra in *kṛṣṇa-kathā*. The two of them didn’t even notice that a whole day had

passed until the servant came in and said, “The day has already ended.” That evening Pradyumna Miśra went to Lord Caitanya and expressed his great happiness at having heard about Kṛṣṇa from Rāmānanda Rāya. He said, “Rāmānanda Rāya is not an ordinary human being.” Rāmānanda Rāya had told Pradyumna Miśra that whatever he had spoken was not coming from himself but from the higher intelligence of Lord Caitanya. To this Lord Caitanya remarked, “This is a natural characteristic of those advanced in devotional service. They do not personally speak of their own good qualities.” (Cc. *Antya* 5.78)

## NOON

Books such as *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* teach one hundred percent surrender to Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda lectures on that standard also. This is one of the main distinguishing features of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, aside from the specifics of Kṛṣṇa worship, Vṛndāvana-līlā, and so on. The devotees are trained in an uncompromising philosophy. Even the basics of the four rules and sixteen rounds are extraordinary as preliminary initiation vows for all devotees. Many religious systems allow for many more compromises and even teach compromise as part of their theology.

This sometimes creates an actual gap between what the members of ISKCON are able to do and what they preach as their standard. This can lead to hypocrisy. Nevertheless, the standard is clear, despite failures and hypocrisy. It’s sometimes

hard to bear and hard to hear: one should not allow any pleasure for his own gratification but should live simply for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. Yet we are taught that love of God is easy and that it can be achieved just by singing, dancing, and taking *prasādam*—if done in the right attitude.

### 3:30 P.M.

Seems like I'm always/ often  
going to get sick during the day,  
head fog and that's the end of  
physical clarity, strength.

Then I can't write but only think about it for the next time  
when I'm clear.

Sing of the fog—it's like a vise closing slowly. The pill relaxes it. How many am I up to per day?

I read with at least a liking  
and like to tell you about  
the ecstasy of great devotees—  
Rāmānanda Rāya and Pradyumna Miśra—  
conversing about Kṛṣṇa all day long.  
They didn't even notice that the day  
had passed  
whereas I would have noticed  
after one hour  
the fog, the vise in the head,  
or glanced at my wristwatch,  
“How long is this going to go on?”

*Kṛṣṇa-kathā* in small bits  
and segments surrounded by  
rest in bed,  
restless to go outside the house  
but can't say to others what's  
on my mind—  
I'd like to be strong  
to love Kṛṣṇa and *śāstras*.

I read in small segments not only because of physical weakness but because I lack *bhāva*, hunger. Acknowledged. I move on and return. Cc. journey by one who ain't so great. Tomorrow, we'll schedule a gathering at which I will read and comment to them from *Madhya-līlā*'s "How All the Residents of Vārāṇasī Became Vaiṣṇavas"—how Lord Caitanya praises the *Bhāgavatam*. I'll also tell them to read regularly. I'll say, "I do."

## ALMOST 6 P. M.

Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara really reprimanded the *brāhmaṇa* poet from Bengal. Called him condemned, bound for hell, etc. He had written a drama with the opening verse declaring that Lord Jagannātha was made of wood and that Lord Caitanya was an ordinary living being. It makes me aware that writing Kṛṣṇa conscious literature is a heavy responsibility. In my case, I make mistakes and admit it. It's part of my imperfection. I hope I have been sufficiently trained by Prabhupāda, however,

not to make a mistake in *siddhānta* when I'm trying to present the perfect philosophy.

Seeing that the Bengali poet had become speechless, Svārūpa Dāmodara kindly gave him some good advice. He told him to study the *Bhāgavatam* with expert devotees and to associate regularly with Lord Caitanya's followers.

This afternoon at 4 P.M., Śyāmānanda rowed me across the perfectly calm lake to Inis Rath. I went to see Rādhā-Govinda. My first impression of Them was a spontaneous attraction to Their beauty—the gorgeous dress, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's lovely features, Kṛṣṇa's supreme maleness. I was happy to be in the newly constructed temple room with the pinewood floors made by Aniruddha dāsa and everything neat and clean. I had intended to sit there and write, but the *pūjārī* was playing a Prabhupāda lecture. After staying in the temple for awhile, I visited some other places, did a *parikrama* of the island, and then came back over here. Perhaps I'll do this on a daily basis, visit Rādhā-Govinda and pray to Them to guide me.

## SEPTEMBER 14, 1996

Can't stop the flow of days. Reading again of Raghunātha dāsa. I like to picture him in my mind as real. He's as real as those persons I knew in my life, my Uncle Jimmy and the others. They were so ordinary and materialistic. I never knew anyone like Raghunātha. Since I met Prabhupāda, of course . . .

I like to hear of this young man who left his worldly opulence (as great as Indra's) to join Lord Caitanya. He had to run away. Got the mercy of Lord Nityānanda, and that enabled him to escape. Apply this in my life? I can't imitate, but I can offer prayers to him, the Raghunātha of Svarūpa Dāmodara.

I am just a tiny fellow of diminishing days. Getting ready to go out and live in the van again. Spending time turning the pages of Cc., but perhaps not reaching the essence. Going slower might help, but I know the story of Raghunātha well and am too restless to spend a long time on each verse.

The great chipped rice festival was held outdoors as a picnic. Raghunātha bore the expense and fed Lord Nityānanda and His many companions. Hundreds of *brāhmaṇas* attended and

each was given two pots containing chipped rice, milk, yogurt, bananas, and condensed milk. Lord Caitanya came, unseen to most, and took part in the festival along with Lord Nityānanda. Later that night, Lord Nityānanda and Lord Caitanya attended another feast at the home of Rāghava Paṇḍita.

Raghunātha was able to see Lord Caitanya. The Lord's presence assured him that he would attain His mercy and be able to leave his home to join Lord Caitanya in Jagannātha Purī. I suppose there's no point in scratching out another little résumé of these events. My reader knows them well. Pray to appreciate them. There's no need to hear of other saints and *sampradāyas* outside of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. We may appreciate others from a respectful distance, but our heart is with Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda. Pray to be delivered from attachments and become fortunate devotees, free to serve Lord Caitanya's lotus feet.

Read it and see it in your mind's eye, like a film. More than a film, it's eternal *līlā* going on. I have to overcome this idea of already knowing these pastimes. The repeated attempts and hearings are not futile. Gradually it becomes more real to us. While describing how Lord Caitanya came to take part in the festival in Bengal, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja writes, "The Supreme Personality of Godhead always resides either in the heart or in the home of a devotee. This fact is sometimes hidden and sometimes manifest, for the Supreme Personality of Godhead is fully independent. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is all-pervasive, and therefore He resides everywhere. Anyone who doubts this will be annihilated." (Cc. *Antya* 6.124–125)

When I read this this morning, I balked a little at the word “annihilated,” but it’s true. We’ll be thrust into the ocean of birth and death if we don’t have faith in the pastimes. Therefore, listen and try to visualize how Lord Caitanya came there in a form unseen to many, how He and Lord Nityānanda walked together and took a morsel from each person’s pot. Lord Caitanya put a piece of rice in Lord Nityānanda’s mouth and made Him eat, and Lord Nityānanda put a piece of rice in Lord Caitanya’s mouth. They danced at Rāghava Paṇḍita’s house to “Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.”

#### **4 P.M.**

Reading is not sufficient in itself. Our reading should be done prayerfully.

I think the main prayer is the request to Kṛṣṇa and the higher authorities that we can read the scriptures with devotion. We can say, “Read prayerfully,” but how do we do it? We can only pray if we have the blessings to pray from Kṛṣṇa and guru. Therefore, we pray for prayerful reading.

What about the verses I read earlier this morning? I read quite a few of them, the whole story of the Pāṇihāṭī chipped rice festival. Was it prayerful reading? I think prayerful reading means always asking for a better understanding and not being complacent as we breeze through. We should ask Kṛṣṇa to help



us appreciate the immeasurable value of the scripture. We're passing through it by reading and we know we're not going to be able to give it full justice, but we can ask for *something*. I was reading a scholar's introduction to a book of poetry. He was urging us to take care and not try to skip through the poems. "Although a certain surface sensuality gives itself easily enough, it is impossible to read M.'s work quickly at depth. Time must be taken to envision what is indicated, to link visions with the poet. Reading his words without making an effort to engage their visual and visceral potential is an exercise in page turning; a postcard in place of a sunset."

If this is true of an ordinary, non-*śāstric* poet, then how much more true it is of a divinely composed work such as *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. I did try to visualize some of the scenes—Raghunātha running away from home and stopping at night in a cowshed, for example. As for gut reaction, I am left only to confess my shortcomings. I wish I could enter a more profound and intense state.

Reading is similar to *japa*. We are asked to take time out from the mechanical production of mantras, or in reading, the sight and brain work that we refer to as "reading." Take time to remember the spiritual and personal essence of this service you do for Kṛṣṇa and your spiritual master.

Oh, I am telling you, we are lucky to be in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That's what Lord Caitanya told Raghunātha. He said that we should always be grateful to Kṛṣṇa that He lifted us out of the pit of material life. The material world is compared to a pit

into which people pass stool. We have escaped by Kṛṣṇa's grace. In our case, we weren't lifted out of opulence as Raghunātha was. We were starving and dying on the Lower East Side, illusioned by taking drugs, overcome by vanity, and with no clear idea of God. We were saved.

Kṛṣṇa is kind to have given us a place in the service of a master. One of the services, pleasures, and means of enlightenment He offers us is to read the books. The books say the "same thing," but we can meditate even on one line—think and *feel* it. Reading is not enough; it should be done prayerfully.

Anything less than daily reading is likely to lead to spiritual malnutrition.

Keep that in mind when you're not in a period of full-time reading. Even fifteen minutes a day is a lot better than no regulation at all. For me, I'm such a reader that if I don't read *śāstra*, I'll be reading something else, and that will lead me astray. Keep the anchor in: read Prabhupāda's books daily.

### 3 P.M.

Lord Caitanya praised Raghunātha's renunciation. Śrīla Prabhupāda defines his renunciation as detachment from sense enjoyment and full engagement in Kṛṣṇa's service. Some Cc. statements are stark invitations to a "*bābājī*" life that we know Prabhupāda does not allow in practice, but they stand as testimony to what can be practiced, at least by someone.

“As stated in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* . . . a well-to-do householder Vaiṣṇava cannot live like a person in the renounced order who completely takes shelter of the holy name. Such a householder should chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa in the morning, at midday and in the evening. Then he will be able to cross beyond nescience. Pure devotees in the renounced order, however, who fully surrender to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, should chant the holy name of the Lord with great love and faith, always thinking of Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet. They should have no other occupation than chanting the holy name of the Lord.” (Cc. *Antya* 6.223, purport)

Along with this chanting goes control of the tongue (no fancy eating or hankering for varieties of food).

Then there are the famous instructions spoken directly by Lord Caitanya to Raghunātha Gosvāmī (usually Svarūpa Dāmodara instructed him). These instructions are not for everyone, not even for all renunciates, but they are the Lord’s immortal words. He said, don’t listen to *gramya-kathā*, don’t eat palatable foods or dress “nicely,” don’t expect honor but honor all others. “Always chant the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and within your mind render service to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana.” (Cc. *Antya* 6.237) These words must have made Raghunātha happy, and certainly he molded his life around them. It appears that after hearing these instructions, he began to follow Svarūpa Dāmodara’s instructions to serve in his spiritual form. “Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī was formerly Lalitā-devī. Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, who was among his assistants, now also began to serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa within his mind.” (Cc. *Antya* 6.241, purport)

Between the sustained reading of a long passage or entire books of scripture and intense reflection of a few words, lies the kind of reading that should form the basis of our daily reading of scripture. This reading is characterized neither by desire to cover a certain amount of material, nor by an attempt to milk the last ounce of meaning from every single verse. It is careful reading, which pauses to reflect on the meaning . . . It is slow reading, leisurely reading, reading with attention to detail and nuance.

This is a description of what I would like to be doing now. It's almost too good to be true. To be able to read not too slowly and yet to catch the nuances. That happened when I noticed and appreciated Pradyumna Miśra's saying that he wanted Rāmānanda Rāya to speak what he had spoken in Vidyānagara. The word "Vidyānagara" and the conversation of which it reminded me suddenly struck me as attractive. And what about these purports where Lord Caitanya says that a *sannyāsī* should always chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, should live in a renounced way, and should serve Kṛṣṇa within? I know they're not something I can imitate, but they are part of my reading. What does that mean?

Read and hear the nuance of what is being said. Don't hold yourself to a quota of pages or chapters. Pay attention, reflect, be at leisure with the book. It's not that we have to *do* something other than read it nicely. Let Kṛṣṇa speak to you in this way.

While I was in Belfast, I stayed at the flat of a congregational member who had many books, mostly Karl Marx's literature. I also found there an Irish book, and on the back cover there

was an advertisement for a book called *Portraits of the Artist in Exile*. It described itself as a collection of memoirs on James Joyce by Europeans. Manu and I have sometimes discussed literature from a Joycean point of view—the concept of the artist as alienated or in exile from his society. Sometimes I can relate to that concept. Anyway, I ordered the book and it came yesterday, but how strange to read it after reading such sublime literature as Lord Caitanya’s instructions to Raghunātha Gosvāmī.

I read the italicized introduction to each of the memoirs but skipped the memoirs themselves. I noted that Joyce was self-centered and was always trying to use people in the service of his book publishing ambitions, to increase his reputation, or to get favorable reviews. I hope I’ll not be guilty of such one-sided relationships. One writer states that Joyce treated people as if they had nothing better to do than to serve his art.

Madhu comes in and says Manu wants to buy me a small prefab shed that he can set up in the nearby woods. There will be no electricity; it will be like Śamīka Ṛṣi’s shack. Would I like it? Yes, but I’m only going to be here for two more weeks. If they set it up, I’ll use it when I return. I like those sheds because when I go out there, there’s nothing to do but write. I need that kind of discipline.

On my walk just now it occurred to me that I tend to give a mild and favorable view of myself in the little word portraits. Don’t tear into myself. That’s okay, but I shouldn’t be afraid . . .

I’ve been reading that a pure devotee doesn’t allow himself any sense gratification. “When sense gratification enters the mind of a devotee, he is contaminated.”

Lord Caitanya was pleased as Raghunātha made further and further steps into *vairāgya*. He gave him His own Govardhana-śilā and *guṇja-mālā*. Raghunātha dove deep into ecstasy while worshipping the śilā and *guṇja-mālā*.

Prabhupāda: “The spiritual master gives different orders to different people.” Get your order and carry it out strictly. That is the way of success.

### 6:30 P.M.

Tired of writing garbage. Want to be a bayonet of truth? This-tles all big puffballs in field. If the reader can’t understand . . .

Listen, I read Cc. I walk in fields to see where to place the shed and I try to be virtuous. Ban bad thoughts. Shove them out.

The thistles, I was telling you—some got into my boot and cut my flesh. We found a site for a shed. How will it be heated? I’m not obliged to stay here forever just because of this shed. In 1968, Śrīla Prabhupāda lectured that we waste fifty percent of our lives in sleep. A man asked, “Can you reduce sleep by yoga?” Yes, Prabhupāda said, but he added, “Whether you sleep more or less, still you cannot live peacefully in this body. Nature is so cruel it kills you.” Last years spent in invalidity—twenty years wasted that way. Better read before we go blind.

## SEPTEMBER 15, 1996

We should pray to be relieved of doubt and cynicism when we read Cc. Whatever the author states, we should accept it wholeheartedly. This is not a book about which we reserve judgment or even pass judgment. Whatever Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has written he has heard from Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī or Svarūpa Dāmodara, and the text has been dictated to him by Śrī Madana-mohana. We are not agnostics. Holding out in favor of agnostic thoughts will get us nowhere.

We can't read ideally without the Lord's grace. He's in our hearts, so we can appeal to Him despite our lack of purity: "Please make us devout and enthusiastic readers and speakers of Cc. (and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *The Nectar of Devotion*, etc.)

When Vallabha Bhaṭṭa makes his famous statement *kali-kalera dharma . . . kṛṣṇa-śakti*, you know Prabhupāda will allude to the fact that he too is acting as an empowered preacher. How else could he have spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement? He needs to assert this fact since even his Godbrothers criticized his work of giving Kṛṣṇa consciousness to Westerners.

“You have spread the *saṅkīrtana* movement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Therefore it is evident that You have been empowered by Lord Kṛṣṇa. There is no question about it.” (Cc. *Antya* 7.12)

Actually, however, although Prabhupāda asserts this elsewhere in his purports, he doesn’t do so here. But he knows and we know and Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī knows that it’s true.

When Vallabha Bhaṭṭa eloquently praised Lord Caitanya, the Lord replied that He is a *sannyāsī* of the Māyāvāda school with no chance of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. He then praised His great devotees—Advaita Ācārya, who can convert meat-eaters, Lord Nityānanda, who is always intoxicated with *kṛṣṇa-prema*, Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, Rāmānanda Rāya, etc. Lord Caitanya also praised the *gopīs*, parents, and friends of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana-līlā.

We think about what we are reading as we are reading it—and this requires that we read slowly.

I sometimes find this difficult when reading material with which I am too familiar. For example, this morning I read this verse: “The servant, friend, superior and conjugal lover are the shelters of the transcendental mellows called *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* and *śṛṅgāra*.” (Cc. *Antya* 7.25) I say I am too familiar with this information, but the fact is, I have no direct experience of anything being said in that statement, although I long to understand it. Therefore, I have to be patient about the surface familiarity and just brush it aside. Pray to approach it new and fresh. The same is true if Kṛṣṇa or Prabhupāda describe



*varṇāśrama-dharma* and tells us the four divisions of each or any of the items of *bhakti* knowledge.

Reading slowly helps us to do this. When we read too quickly, we begin to think more of the ground to be covered than of the heart of what is being said. It is similar to Madhu stepping on the accelerator to pass another car on the highway. We are not in that kind of hurry. We don't *have* to finish a chapter or even a book, but we need to stay immersed in appreciative thought and feeling while reading.

Lord Caitanya said He learned about spontaneous love from Rāmānanda Rāya and the mellows of conjugal love from Svarūpa Dāmodara.

Just now my mind lost attention—at such a nectarean point in the narrative. Lord Caitanya was saying that Svarūpa Dāmodara taught Him about conjugal love. My mind suddenly thought of a letter I wanted to write about an editing matter to Gītā-nāgarī Press, and I actually began to dictate it. Then I came back to reading Cc. but couldn't re-enter immediately. Lord Caitanya was quoting verses from the *Bhāgavatam* on the glorious position of the *gopīs*, but my mind wasn't clicking on to why He was speaking like that. Had I lost the context? Then I began to read aloud and remembered, “He's saying that Svarūpa Dāmodara taught Him this. He's telling the essence of the *gopīs*' devotion to Kṛṣṇa, which is even worshiped by Uddhava. He's quoting Uddhava's praise of the *gopīs* from *Bhāg.* 10.47.”

Do I *want* to hear about the conjugal *rasa*?

It's here in Prabhupāda's books. I like to read whatever he gives. Now he praises Mother Yaśodā, now he defends

ISKCON, now he condemns the materialists, now he discusses the *gopīs*. Stay and hear it all and we will be satisfied.

Lord Caitanya praised Haridāsa Ṭhākura—said He had learned the glories of the holy name from him.

(This is a wonderful section to share with devotees, how Lord Caitanya referred Vallabha Bhaṭṭa to all of His associates and mentioned their particular contributions. We may speak similarly of the individual contributions of the ISKCON devotees. Sometimes such praise sticks in our throats due to envy or over-familiarity with what we see as others' faults. Anyway, it's helpful to my reading and writing to sometimes speak on Cc. topics as I did yesterday. Because of my daily reading, I was able to speak freely and go from one *līlā* to another. Did I “use up” my ammunition? Keep reading and get more. And don't be afraid to repeat. And go to new audiences. Tell everyone you meet . . . )

Lord Caitanya mentioned all His devotees because He knew Vallabha Bhaṭṭa was proud in heart. “One should not proudly think that one can understand the transcendental loving service of the Lord simply by reading books. One must become a servant of a Vaiṣṇava.” (Cc. *Antya* 7.53, purport)

In my own writing I should also be humble. I am “officially” humble because I know that my writing is not on a standard of great Sanskrit scholarship, but I say “officially” because it's possible to be proud to admit faults, to search for honesty, proud of free-writing, proud of breaking ground in writing as if nobody else is doing what I'm doing and therefore I'm special.

If I catch myself with this pride, it doesn't mean I should stop writing (my service). It means I should strive for true hu-

military. And I should write, ply the trade, as much as possible in this honest way of exposing myself, my thoughts, in a Kṛṣṇa conscious way.

#### 4 A.M.

Free-writing means to write whatever comes. Then learn to select. “Harum-scarum surrealism,” someone said. James Joyce had a surrealist friend, but Joyce wrote in just the opposite way, taking great pains to compose his words. His great work in progress, his goatee, his blindness, his lunatic daughter, his anguish over that, his devotion to family, his knowledge of the Church but ignorance of God, his cynicism—he was a scholar-egoist extraordinaire. The war . . . one friend of Joyce’s stayed in Paris (although it was dangerous for a Jew) to await his son’s graduation. On that very day, the Nazis captured him and sent him to a concentration camp where he died. These things are footnotes to the story of James Joyce in Trieste, Zurich, and Paris, but what about Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya and beating the big *mṛdāṅga*?

What about my own writing? Well, what about it? We will be traveling by the beginning of October, although one wheel is off the van and M. has tried repeatedly to fix a leak in the plumbing.

What about the prayers I read? I heard you had a *lectio* quote on that. Well, yes, I do.

Now that Raghunātha's chapter is finished again, the Lord is dismantling Vallabha Bhaṭṭa's pride.

I entered the dark room on the way to the bathroom in this house and saw the red light on, signifying the electric heater by M.'s mattress. Didn't wake him. Went quietly into the bathroom and didn't use the tape recorder, although I would have liked to listen to Śrīla Prabhupāda while I was in there. Instead, my thoughts roamed over a variety of subjects, such as when I come out of this period of convalescence, I'll do some free-writing, and happily, yesterday there was only one headache, one pill.

When he read to me from the notes I made while reading *Bhagavad-gītā*, there were regular occasions when the honesty was so sharp I became afraid, "What is this writer going to say next?" He admits that the reading sometimes seems like dogma to him and that his knowledge of God is theoretical, but then he saves himself and his reader from being agnostic by asserting God consciousness and faith just in time. It keeps you alert while hearing it, and waiting for the next time, almost nervously, when again he'll be honest with us. I liked that. Sometimes we need something like that to keep our attention focused when basic *Bhagavad-gītā* instructions are the main fare.

Manu says he wants to stay home and make his money and live here if possible. He said he could grow food and sell it, or have a bakery or restaurant if people would come out here. Who knows? Anything is possible. Prabhupāda says that people used to live that way, close to the land. Heard him in a lecture given in 1968 saying *varṇāśrama* isn't possible anywhere in the world now. India has the degraded form of it in the caste

system. Therefore, Lord Caitanya says we should just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa.

What about Prabhupāda's saying that fifty percent of his work is unfinished? Devotees get a lot of mileage out of that statement to support what they feel is most important. I do it too, looking for encouragement in writing or reading, chanting, or being alone. Someone goes to his statements to prove that book distribution is most important or that we shouldn't attempt to practice *rāgānugā-bhakti* or that rural development is vital. It's better to read openly.

But what does that mean? It means that Lord Caitanya is bursting the pride of Vallabha Bhaṭṭa and that because we too have pride, He can also burst ours. He did it expertly by telling him, in effect, "You are approaching Me directly without knowing who I actually am. You should approach humbly through My devotees and be like them. You are not one of them. You are thinking that you are a great Vaiṣṇava and that is your problem. One should not think he's a great person of any sort." O Lord, the tiger and gun, the sun, the morning has not dawned yet. I wish to stay at Your lotus feet in what I do this mild day of repose in Geaglum, and then travel with all four wheels attached and rolling and me praying in the back for not too many headaches or breakdowns, disruptions, emergencies, unforeseens, accidents, deaths on the highway, embarrassments in Italy where I can't say anything back in Italian.

Prayer before reading: It need not be lengthy; in its simplest form, we can merely pray and ask, "Lord, speak to me."

Our reading of Scripture is not reading for the sake of reading. It is reading for the sake of listening to Him who loves us.

When we listen to someone we first of all have to pay attention to him, and not to whatever else may be going on around us.

If we are particularly distracted by cares and concerns, we may have to sit quietly for a few minutes, relaxing, putting distractions out of our mind.

Sitting in rows in the courtyard, the many Bengali devotees honored *prasādam*. Svarūpa Dāmodara and other great devotees took charge of distributing the *prasādam*. Not that Svarūpa Dāmodara insisted on eating first, alone with Lord Caitanya. Servants. Accepting the *prasāda*, all the Vaiṣṇavas chanted the holy names, “Hari! Hari!”

Whomever saw Lord Caitanya at the Ratha-yātrā was astonished at His ecstatic dancing and singing. One year Rūpa Gosvāmī came and saw, then Sanātana Gosvāmī, then Raghunātha Gosvāmī. Now Vallabha Bhaṭṭa, who was like a glowworm, was able to watch. He concluded, “Here is Lord Kṛṣṇa, without a doubt.”

Vallabha Bhaṭṭa asked Lord Caitanya to hear his *ṭīkā* on the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Lord Caitanya said that He couldn’t understand *Bhāgavatam*.

Vallabha Bhaṭṭa then begged the Lord, “I have tried to describe elaborately the meaning of Kṛṣṇa’s holy names. Kindly hear the explanation.”

Still the Lord refused, “I know only that Lord Kṛṣṇa is Śyāmasundara and Yaśodānandana. That’s all I know.”

Read because we may be pulled out of this life at any moment. We may do our research reading, but don't do it for sense gratification. Always be serving the Lord, your guru, and the Vaiṣṇavas.

“When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu rigidly declined to hear his explanations, Vallabha Bhaṭṭa went home feeling morose. His faith and devotion to the Lord changed.” (Cc. *Antya* 7.89)

Here we see how it's important for an author to have someone take his writing seriously. We poor authors cannot live unless at least one person will listen to what we have written. We are proud. Since Lord Caitanya wouldn't take Vallabha Bhaṭṭa seriously, no one else in Jagannātha Purī wanted to hear from him. Lord Caitanya smashed Vallabha's pride. Finally, he approached Gadādhara Paṇḍita.

“Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was actually always merciful within His heart, but He was sometimes externally negligent of His devotees. We should not be preoccupied with His external feature, however, for if we do so we shall be vanquished.” (Cc. *Antya* 7.168)

I need to keep this instruction in mind in my relationship with Śrīla Prabhupāda. When I hear his pastimes or read his books or hear him speak in lectures, or even when he appears in dreams—if he appears harsh with a disciple or does anything that I find hard to understand—I shouldn't become preoccupied with it. I should simply have faith that he is right, always right, because he is empowered by Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda was a general fighting a battle. Therefore, he sometimes

had to behave strongly, and he was also taxed by the weight of the responsibility to lead a worldwide movement of beginners in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Better to look at his inner purpose and to worship his feet, just as I did when he was here.

When the Lord seemed to neglect Gadādhara Paṇḍita because of his hearing from Vallabha Bhaṭṭa, Gadādhara Paṇḍita made no protest. He said, “I can tolerate whatever He says, bearing it on my head. He will automatically be merciful to me after considering my faults and attributes.” (Cc. *Antya* 7.158)

I still have two weeks left here, but I think I can sum up how it’s going so far. My outer purpose has been achieved—to settle in for convalescence at Manu’s house with no other obligations. However, my headaches have not been cured by staying in one place. As for the inner purpose, to read *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, that has also been achieved (although I’m not finished yet). I also had a faint intuition of an inner, inner purpose. That is, I wanted to enter more deeply than I ever have into absorption in the scripture. I wanted it to become my reality and my constant interest. That I have not achieved. I’m simply not ready for such exclusive-minded devotion to the word of *śāstra*. Not yet.

At least I can be pleased with whatever little I have gained, and let it be a sign of promise. I promise to try for more of these exclusive reading times where even writing and all my other duties are minimized so I can devote myself to reading Prabhupāda’s books.

While reading early this morning, I heard the noise of a car approaching. It’s unusual to hear a car here so early in the



morning. In the back of my mind I began to fantasize that it was an attacker, perhaps someone connected with the “trouble” in Northern Ireland. Someone would come and machine-gun us all. I didn’t really take the fantasy seriously, but it played on like a dream. Then I realized how important it is to keep reading. Surely one day, some kind of attacker will come, if only the “attacker” of death. Death can’t be *so* far away. It would be best to be found reading sacred scripture when it comes. It’s the safest place. It’s where we want to be. “He died while reading the *Antya-līlā*, right in the middle of a chapter.”

Here’s another outstanding verse from this chapter, spoken by Gadādhara Paṇḍita. It occurs when Vallabha Bhaṭṭa forced himself on Gadādhara Paṇḍita and began to read his writings with great force. Gadādhara Paṇḍita felt that he could not forbid Vallabha Bhaṭṭa and thus began to pray to Lord Kṛṣṇa for protection. “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is present in everyone’s heart, and He will certainly know my mind. Therefore I do not fear Him. His associates, however, are extremely critical.” (Cc. *Antya* 7.98)

This verse is a typical example of why we love *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. It seems so close to our own ISKCON experience. We may remember this verse when we are sometimes criticized, and we may strive for the same faith that Kṛṣṇa knows our good intentions. Of course, confidential relationships among devotees where devotees also understand our intentions are encouraging. Prabhupāda called it “love and trust.” But this is an example of how Kṛṣṇa becomes the devotee’s last

resort even when his Godbrothers seem to abandon him. The reason our Godbrothers are capable of misunderstanding us is that they are only human and cannot always penetrate into the innermost heart. Kṛṣṇa, however, is omniscient. He is also all-forgiving. This verse not so much minimizes the devotees as glorifies the special friendship we all have with Kṛṣṇa in the heart. Even if Kṛṣṇa Himself seems to censure us, as happened when Lord Caitanya neglected Gadādhara Paṇḍita, the devotee remains steadfast: “He will automatically be merciful to me after considering my faults and attributes.”

Next is the story of Rāmacandra Purī. He naturally offended the Vaiṣṇavas as a result of offending his spiritual master. His latent impersonalism came out and he developed material desires. His spiritual master, Mādhavendra Purī, strongly rebuked him when he criticized Mādhavendra Purī during his very last hours.

I may think that I am certainly *not* an offender to my spiritual master and that he always thought well of me, but we can fall into error at any time, even after the guru’s disappearance. Offense means disregarding the spiritual master’s order, either subtly or grossly. That is the third offense in chanting the holy names, “To disobey the orders of the spiritual master”—and it is *guru-aparādhā*.

## SEPTEMBER 16, 1996

Īśvara Purī tenderly and steadfastly served his spiritual master and was always ready to perform menial service and to help his guru remember the holy name and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa at the time of death. Mādhavendra Purī embraced and blessed him to become a great devotee and lover of Kṛṣṇa. One disciple flourished and another (Rāmacandra Purī) was ruined by the benediction and punishment of the guru.

Mādhavendra Purī achieved *kṛṣṇa-prema* by his feelings of separation from Kṛṣṇa.

These notes are partly student exercises (to help me retain information), and partly a way to spell out the messages taught by everything the great devotees do. I may spell out what that message means to me or how other readers may apply it, or I may not spell it out. In either case, we should be aware that “Mādhavendra Purī instructed the entire world by presenting these two examples” (of how he dealt with Īśvara Purī and Rāmacandra Purī).

It's interesting that Rāmacandra Purī's criticism of devotees centered on their eating. In a previous chapter we read that Lord Caitanya's devotees were not accustomed to eating only a little, but they ate "*ākanṭha*," up to the neck. This appears like a green light for us to "eat more," as Swamiji invited. Rāmacandra Purī was a spoilsport for criticizing everyone. He began by inducing Jagadānanda Paṇḍita to eat as much as possible, and then he immediately criticized him for eating too much.

He examined Lord Caitanya's habits either directly or by gathering information from others, with the intention of finding faults. I must be careful not to have that intention when I ask, "How many rounds do you chant? When and what do you eat? What is your service, Prabhu?"

Rāmacandra Purī criticized Lord Caitanya for eating sweets. It was an imaginary criticism: "Last night there was sugar candy here. Therefore ants are wandering about."

Lord Caitanya took the positive, instructive value of what Rāmacandra Purī was saying that a *sannyāsī* should eat only as much as he requires. However, Lord Caitanya began eating half of what He actually needed. This made all His devotees unhappy.

Rāmacandra Purī is portrayed as an ugly character in the ISKCON painting of him. We sometimes hear a devotee say, "I'm acting like Rāmacandra Purī," or "I have a Rāmacandra Purī within myself." He is the prototypical faultfinder, and although we dislike him, we are often like him too, unfortunately.

When Rāmacandra Purī left Jagannātha Purī, everyone was jubilant and happy, and the Lord resumed His normal eating, chanting, and dancing with the devotees.

It would be unwise to give up reading Scripture because it seems to be dry and unrewarding. We can learn much and profit greatly even on those days when nothing seems to be happening as we read.

Well said. When a day goes by and we don't read scripture, it's like a day without physical exercise. The longer we go without it, the more out of shape we will find ourselves. Each day we neglect it, the harder it becomes to return to it. We have to have an abiding trust that it's always good for us, even if we can't find the nectar or we're not attentive at the time. Whatever we do will leave an impression on us. We may die at any moment. The *Bhagavad-gītā* says that our next life is formed by whatever impressions are present in the mind at death. Therefore, it's vital to lay down layers of mental impressions from the scriptures every day. I cannot judge the value of reading by how much I like a particular section or how dry I find it. Such subjectivity is often based on temporary things such as physical health, the weather, and so on. The threefold miseries make it difficult for us to enjoy scripture, but that doesn't mean there is no transcendental benefit. More important than our temporary moods is the absolute act of trying to contact (and actually contacting) the powerful medium of *brahma-śabda*. Reading *śāstra* is all good.

Starting a new chapter, "The Deliverance of Gopīnātha Paṭṭanāyaka."

I wince whenever I read the description of the *cāṅga*. It's a medieval method of execution. They throw a man down from a

platform onto stationary, upright swords. Of course, modern tortures and methods of execution are no less horrible. The body is capable of experiencing extreme pain, especially because we are attached to it and rascals take advantage of this attachment to inflict pain on others.

We are disturbed to read this and to find Lord Caitanya and His blissful devotees and pastimes threatened by this legal and violent entanglement. The same can happen to devotees nowadays. We want to read, write, chant, cook, and give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others in peace, but sometimes something happens in this world of danger and our peace is destroyed. Then we are tested: what is more real, the *śāstra* and the holy names or the king's son and his *cāṅga*? And how can we stay clear of the *cāṅga*?

#### 4 A.M.

We say that these are the Lord's pastimes. They are not subject to the law of karma. But it is frightening to hear how Gopīnātha was placed on the *cāṅga* and how Vāṇīnātha was arrested along with his family. Gopīnātha had failed to pay the government. You know the story—I needn't tell it here—but thank God that government officer, Haricandana, went to the king and told him that the prince was maliciously going to kill a faithful servant. Of real interest is Lord Caitanya's response to all this.

The devotees, headed by Svarūpa Dāmodara, repeatedly asked the Lord to do something to save Gopīnātha, but the

Lord replied, “I am a beggar. It is impossible for Me to do anything about this? Why are you asking Me?” We will hear more about this when the Lord says that He finds the whole incident disturbing. I have always appreciated Lord Caitanya’s response, and I have used it to support my own desire to be aloof from politics and disturbing entanglements with worldly people. A *sannyāsī* is not supposed to get involved in such things.

Yesterday I spent more time down with headache pain than usual. I finally had to go to bed by 5:30 P.M. Even three pills during the day didn’t stop the pain. Much of the time I found it too difficult to read or write, so I sat there or laid down with a wet rag on my forehead. I know I’ve mentioned this previously, but I am noting it again. Today is a new day. I am like a cow tethered to a pole. On some days my rope seems longer and I can think about being better and doing as much as I like in my service. (I am immortal, but sooner or later I feel the tug. Foolish boy.)

Lord Caitanya is a real person. He comes off the page into our consciousness as we submissively read the words He actually spoke. Why disbelieve? His pastimes are taking place before our eyes, our minds, and yes, our imaginations. Just picture the Lord being approached by the devotees, who are falling at His feet. Can you see the people coming and going? Hear Lord Caitanya’s saying He wants to be alone, or His expression of wanting to be with His devotees. He is always the independent Supreme Lord, but He accepts a dependent role.

If one of the devotees invites Him to lunch, He feels obliged to accept the invitation because He wants to please them all.

We live under a similar obligation in our own tiny ways. When devotees want us to visit their temples or to see them, we should make an effort, even if we can't always comply. For me this year, it means going to the Caribbean and Vṛndāvana and the Northeast U.S. While I'm there, it's almost certain that some people will take the opportunity to disturb me. There is always risk whatever we do.

But we can't go with nothing. Reading is therefore the best preparation and the best thing we can do for others because when we are filled with *śāstra*, not in a stuffy way but with feeling, we truly have something to share.

Fiery poets don't make sense. William Stafford at eighty years old wrote wonderful poems but I can't understand most of them. I don't have to judge him, but without God and the soul . . . such poets and writers want proof. They think the religionists live in an imaginary world. The devotees are different. We are on the inside with Jīva Gosvāmī, our spiritual masters, and the devotees who do need to hear *śāstra* as we do. We don't need to argue in favor of *śāstra*; we have already accepted it. We want only the pastimes and instructions themselves. The science of God has its own logic and arguments. Just come and read.

Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa only, day and night—will we ever reach that stage?



Sometimes our problems of dryness may stem from a seeming overfamiliarity with a given passage . . . We should realize that it contains more depth of meaning than we already understand.

Yes, our mistake is to think that our overfamiliarity means we have plumbed the depth of the *śāstra* and now there's nothing left. We think we have understood it entirely and now we're bored; we want something else. This is a mistake. Admittedly, it takes a lot of patience to read because it *seems* like we have been over the same territory many times and that we understand what is being said. Our minds boggle at having to read what we think we already know. This is the test. To continue reading the same book, therefore, we will have to learn to read creatively. *Śāstra* is not ordinary and cannot be approached as if it is. We have to have faith that the *śāstra* contains depths of meaning that are not yet open to us. We do have to admit that if we look at any verse, we haven't really understood it at all. For example, let me open the *Bhagavad-gītā* at random: "The *yogī* whose mind is fixed on Me verily attains the highest perfection of transcendental happiness. He is beyond the mode of passion, he realizes his qualitative identity with the Supreme, and thus he is freed from all reactions to past deeds." (Bg. 6.27)

I understand this only in a theoretical sense. Something incredible is being stated, something completely beyond my sensual or mental experience. It may even be hard to accept for those of us who have been contaminated by skepticism. But

the truth of it is wonderful, most wonderful. We are eternal, we can enter into the Supreme, and we can do it by fixing ourselves at Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. "Thus the self-controlled *yogī*, constantly engaged in yoga practice, becomes free from all material contamination and achieves the highest stage of perfect happiness in transcendental loving service to the Lord." (Bg. 6.28)

So-called overfamiliarity is a ruse. It is *māyā*'s trick. It's the Devil speaking into our ear, "Come on, you've already read this scripture. Why don't you go on to something else? You already know about God."

"As a beggar *sannyāsī*, a mendicant, I wish to live alone in a solitary place, but these people come to tell Me about their unhappiness and disturb Me." (Cc. *Antya* 9.64)

Upon hearing Lord Caitanya speak this way, Kāśī Mīśra tried to solace Him. He said, "Why should You be agitated by these affairs? You are a renounced *sannyāsī*." Addressing Lord Caitanya as the Supreme Lord, Kāśī Mīśra said that anyone who worships the Lord simply to please Him will achieve perfection, but if someone worships Him with material motives, he is fool number one.

Prabhupāda lashes out at materialistic motives in serving God. Sometimes even so-called devotees of Kṛṣṇa worship him with the wrong motive. Prabhupāda alludes to persons and places well known to him, with references to his own life experiences in trying to carry out his spiritual master's mission. We should not worship Kṛṣṇa to make a living; we should do it for His pleasure. We should also trust that He will maintain us.

Such discussion makes us turn to ourselves: What about me? Am I materially motivated in my service? “Although such persons may call themselves preachers, live in Vṛndāvana or Navadvīpa, and also print many religious books, it is all for the same purpose, namely to earn a living to maintain their wives and children. They may also professionally recite the *Bhāgavatam* or other scriptures, worship the Deity in the temple and initiate disciples.” (Cc. *Antya* 9.69, purport)

You know who he’s talking about, don’t you? He means so-and-so. And here I am, identifying with Lord Caitanya as the one who is disturbed by materialistic persons. I can look at it the other way too, and face myself to see whether or not I am one of those materialistic persons who disturbs the Lord, even though seeming to possess all spiritual intentions.

The author of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* says that it is not easy to understand the mercy that Lord Caitanya bestowed on Gopīnātha Paṭṭanāyaka and the family of Bhavānanda Rāya (his five sons). It appears that Gopīnātha gained materially because Lord Caitanya was partial to him, but the opulence he received was only a side effect. The real mercy bestowed on him was his attachment to Kṛṣṇa in the form of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. That’s why they were happy, not because Gopīnātha’s income was doubled. Gopīnātha told Lord Caitanya that he would like to renounce the world as his brothers Rāmānanda Rāya and Vāṇīnātha had done, but Lord Caitanya encouraged him, “Someone has to bear the expenses for your large family.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda indicates that one may be a pure devotee whether he's in the renounced order or not. I think I will quote this purport to Mādhava dāsa of Gītā-nāgarī Press. He is sometimes distressed by the austerity of having to work for the *kar-mīs*. But he has to work in order to maintain his family. Maybe Śrīla Prabhupāda's words will encourage him: "Taking *sa-nyāsa* and dealing in pounds, shillings and pence are both external affairs. One should always consider how to please and satisfy Kṛṣṇa. . . . As soon as one forgets that he is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, he becomes involved in material attachments. However, if one is always conscious that Kṛṣṇa is always the supreme master and that he is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, he is a liberated person in any condition. Entangling material activities will not affect him." (Cc. *Antya* 9.141, purport)

Another point is that spiritually advanced devotees may not always be materially expert. King Pratāparudra made this observation when discussing Bhavānanda Rāya's sons: "Inform Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu that all the sons of Bhavānanda Rāya are especially dear to me. I consider them like members of my family. Therefore I have appointed them collectors in various places, and although they spend the government's money, eat, drink, plunder and distribute it as they like, I do not take them very seriously. I made Rāmānanda Rāya the governor of Rā-jamahendri. There is practically no account of whatever money he took and distributed in that position." (Cc. *Antya* 9.120–22)

Earlier in the Cc. we also read that the *mahā-bhāgavata* Vāsudeva Datta was not a good manager. Therefore, Śivānanda Sena was put in charge of handling his affairs. But in terms of

pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness, hardly anyone ranks higher than Rāmānanda Rāya, and Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura ranks Vāsudeva Datta as more advanced than Lord Jesus Christ.

It's nice to take a break from reading and to go for a walk along a forest path here at Geaglum. It's a great treat to be able to walk on property owned by devotees and to know that I won't run into someone's barking dogs or other distractions that make walking impossible for me except at dawn. Here at Geaglum, I like to schedule two walks a day, one around 9:30 A.M. and one around 4 P.M. The nicest part of the walk is the privately enclosed forest path. It has been sunny, and the sun filters through the leaves and exposes the beauty of the old, vine-covered trees and the late summer greenery. I think of Wordsworth's line, something like, "Up, up, my friend, and quit your books!" He invites himself and other scholars to get out from the musty study room and see nature. Of course, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is never a dry study, but still, to get away from the sitting down and peering into the book and to go out and bathe in God's natural colors and fresh air rejuvenates us to go back for yet another reading session. And while walking in an almost unconscious way, the thoughts and flavors of Cc. move through us and we get new insights and confirmations.

## NOON

Arrived in the mail: an advance copy of my *Churning the Milk Ocean*. I hold it and love its heft, its big print and good

binding done in India. Wrote a letter of thanks to all the devotees who produced it. I placed it on the altar beside Prabhu-pāda, where it sits now.

Also in the mail was Volume Three of Thomas Merton's journals, *A Search for Solitude*. For me, the editor's or scholar's introduction to a book is often the most important part and sometimes the *only* part I read. There were good things in this introduction and I think I may find it useful in my writing to at least read some of the journal. Externally, there are so many similarities between Merton's position and mine, but again and again, when I get to the heart of his diaries, I don't find a completely kindred spirit. Still, I can't deny that he was onto something important for a monk—and relevant to me—in a number of ways.

The editor of this volume writes, "It is important to note that when he pursued his readings in everything from literature to Marxist philosophy, he did so with this imperative question in mind: how can a contemplative monk in the twentieth century not be concerned with these issues? In fact, it was his preoccupation with the question of what it meant to be a monk in his own time that gives this journal its most lasting value, both because it does honor to monasticism in its own right, and because it is instructive for all who value the contemplative life."

Although I am not interested in world politics, this reminds me of my own search to push beyond what is usually expected of a Kṛṣṇa conscious devotee. For example, how can we not admit to the fact that we are born and raised Westerners, yet we have taken to the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava way of life? How can we

pretend that we are eternal Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇavas, or even Bengalis? I'm certainly not as interested as Merton was in various intellectual climates, but I do have my own enduring interests and can't seem to give them up. From Merton's point of view, it was a positive undertaking to remain solidly situated as a Catholic monk and yet understand other things. If we completely avoid this, Merton thought, we run the risk of being irrelevant to most people, even those who would be interested in spiritual life.

### 3 P.M.

I'm following my own advice and starting from point zero at each session. The more accustomed we are to the discipline, the quicker we may move forward with interest and benefit.

“Let me offer my respectful obeisances unto Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is always pleased to accept anything given with faith and love by His devotees and is always ready to bestow mercy upon them.” (Cc. *Antya* 10.1.)

O Lord, please accept this writing and reading.

It's another year and the devotees from Bengal are joyfully marching to Nīlācala to be with their Lord. Lord Nityānanda is with them, although Lord Caitanya ordered Him not to come. “If one carries out Kṛṣṇa's order, Kṛṣṇa is certainly pleased, but if one sometimes breaks His order due to ecstatic love, that gives Him millions of times greater happiness.” (Cc. *Antya* 10.8)

Rāghava Paṇḍita came carrying bags full of food cooked by his sister Damayantī. It was a year's worth of eating for Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. The author of Cc. lists the pickles!

“Do not neglect *sukutā* because it is a bitter preparation. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu derived more happiness from eating this *sukutā* than from drinking *pañcāmṛta* [a preparation of milk, sugar, ghee, honey and curd].” (Cc. *Antya* 10.17)

Śrīla Prabhupāda loved it too. Called it “*shukta*,” or at least that’s how I heard him pronounce it. I learned to cook it for him from his sister until Prabhupāda said it was standard and even asked Yamunā dāsī to learn it from me. Happy days, you fool.

(Sometimes a passage or chapter seems obscure or irrelevant).  
The best strategy in such cases is simply to peacefully pass over what is obscure, or what seems to lack relevance to one’s life today. Often when we reread this passages a year later it will take on meaning for us. But rather than focus now on what we do not appreciate or understand, we should focus on what does have meaning for us.

That’s all right. I would also advise someone not to get hung up on chapters in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that cause a road block in our enthusiasm, such as the lists of dynasties or “Calculation of Time According to the Atom.” But Lord Caitanya proclaims that each and every verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is glorious. If we do skip anything, we should do it humbly, realizing it’s what we have to do to keep up interest. We should do whatever it takes to keep reading, and we should not make a perpetual habit of skipping those sections that would leave significant gaps in



our knowledge, such as never learning what *sāṅkhya-yoga* is or something like that. We might also keep problematic sections in mind and someday, when we meet an especially kind and learned devotee, we can ask for clarification for help in gaining entrance.

When is the last time I read completely and carefully the “Teachings of the *Vedas* Personified” from the Tenth Canto?

Govinda crossed over the Lord’s body to enter the Gambhīrā for service—to massage the Lord—but he would not cross over the Lord’s body to exit and go for his *prasādam*. He could transgress etiquette to serve Kṛṣṇa, but not for his own interests.

Lord Caitanya ate as much as a hundred men could eat at one sitting when Govinda complained that the devotees were constantly bringing food for the Lord but He wasn’t eating it. They would ask Govinda, “Have you given Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu the *prasāda* brought by me?” and Govinda felt he had to lie to them. He was suffering from this. Lord Caitanya said to him, “Why are you so foolishly unhappy? Bring here to me whatever they have given you.” Govinda carried it in, preparation by preparation, and introduced each offering by saying, “This is from Advaita Ācārya,” “This is from the residents of Kulīna-grāma,” etc.

Imagine! Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu ate enough food for a hundred persons with no problem.

The author of Cc. tells this matter-of-factly and then goes on to the next incident—how Lord Caitanya took just a little each day from the *rāghavera-jhālī*, the bags of Rāghava Paṇḍita.

After reading about the Lord's eating, I'm sitting here wondering about my own cranberry juice. M. usually brings Prabhupāda and me a cup at 5 P.M. It's 5:15 now and there is no juice in sight. He's probably preoccupied with his third attempt to build plumbing in the van that won't leak. Should I go out and ask him for juice? If it's just for myself, no. But I can think, "It's for Prabhupāda also." I'll go ask.

### **9:30 P.M.**

Lying awake after a fearful dream. I began to think of some of the things I was reading in the Cc.

Partly because of the dream, when I woke and turned to secure things again, I remembered Cc. Then it occurred to me that I may not be reading desperately enough. Then I thought, "Oh well, even if my reading is somewhat complacent, it's the best thing I can do. I hope that if I am ever put into a desperate position (as Prabhupāda was while aboard the *Jaladuta*), I will turn to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* for solace."

Lying awake I thought of two sections: the one about Gadādhara Paṇḍita and the one about Lord Caitanya's servant, Govinda. About Gadādhara Paṇḍita, I thought of how he was so submissive to Lord Caitanya. Later in the Cc. we'll hear even more about Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, who was in contrast to Gadādhara Paṇḍita. Jagadānanda Paṇḍita was in the mood of Satyabhāmā, and he often quarreled with the Lord. Gadādhara Paṇḍita, however, was in the mood of Rukmiṇī. Therefore, he

was fearful of the Lord's opulence and his love was mixed with respect.

We tend to consider the “fighting” spirit more intimate, but it seems more appropriate for a disciple to have a completely submissive attitude and I worship Gadādhara Paṇḍita's example for that. I know I am fearful in my relationship with Prabhupāda. I don't think that it is a bad thing. Gadādhara Paṇḍita saw the Lord as omniscient, and he would not dare to speak back to Him as if they were equals. He didn't repress his feelings; he actually felt that way. When we are fearful and repressing our resentment, that is a different thing.

I also thought of the chapter about Govinda. Several times, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī and Śrīla Prabhupāda say that this is a difficult pastime to understand, but even if we can't understand it, we will benefit by hearing it. My tendency is to think that there is nothing difficult about it and that I understand it perfectly well. The lesson is that for our own sense gratification, we cannot transgress the etiquette, but for Kṛṣṇa's service we can. It reminds me of the old library party days when I traveled as a *sannyāsī* but the party was led by Ghanaśyāma and Mahābuddhi. They were bold in their book-selling tactics, and they used to “impersonate” regular book salesmen. In some ways, all *saṅkīrtana* devotees transgressed ordinary ethics, but we dared to do so simply to please Prabhupāda. And he was pleased.

In both these cases—that of Gadādhara Paṇḍita and that of Govinda—I realized that the Lord's pastimes are deep and that I really cannot understand them thoroughly. There's much

more to understand, and in future readings and years, I can hope to understand them better. Understanding comes not just when we sit to read, but when we experience different things in our service and later reflect on them. The *śāstra* reflection won't come, however, unless we read. Therefore, even if our present reading does not immediately gives us earth-shattering realizations or if it's done in a protected environment, still it's of tremendous benefit to us both now and in the future when we need it or when Kṛṣṇa enlightens us further for deeper understanding.

I don't like lying awake and missing sleep, but I'm grateful for these insights that came and I look forward to more reading in the Cc.

## SEPTEMBER 17, 1996

Beginning reading Chapter Eleven. “I do not know how to write properly, but I am purifying myself by writing this description.” (Cc. *Antya* 11.10)

He writes this after offering many beautiful prayers to the Lord and His associates and begging for the chance to serve them.

Haridāsa Ṭhākura appeared ill while lying on his back when Govinda brought him *mahā-prasādam*. The next day, Lord Caitanya visited him. Haridāsa Ṭhākura said, “I think that quite soon, my Lord, You will bring to a close Your pastimes within this material world.” He requested that he pass away before then: “Kindly let my body fall down in Your presence.” This chapter describes the fulfillment of his wish, and Haridāsa leaving his body while chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, his eyes fixed on Lord Caitanya and the Lord’s feet on his heart.

It may seem strange or morbid for a person to want to die, but when you grow old, you begin to face the fact that you will have to die sooner or later. Our goal shouldn’t be to hang on as long as possible, but to depart under ideal conditions. No one

can live forever in this body, in this world. Haridāsa's wish and its fulfillment are actually a great triumph, and to hear of them is both sobering and liberating.

Haridāsa Ṭhākura, Lord Caitanya—they are real persons. I wish to remember their words and actions. The Lord said, "But whatever happiness is Mine is all due to your association. It is not fitting for you to go away and leave Me aside."

"My Lord," Haridāsa said, "do not create an illusion! . . . If an insignificant insect like me dies, what is the loss? If an ant dies, where is the loss to the material world?" He insisted on his desire.

The next morning, Lord Caitanya brought His devotees to see Haridāsa Ṭhākura. They held *kīrtana* in the courtyard, and Lord Caitanya felt great pleasure in praising Haridāsa Ṭhākura's transcendental qualities. Then just as he desired, Haridāsa Ṭhākura gave up his life air in the Lord's presence.

I heard that Harikeśa Mahārāja read this chapter aloud to Śrīla Prabhupāda in Mauritius when Prabhupāda returned home wounded after a car accident.

Chanting, chanting. Don't get tired. Rise to the occasion. Spill over the brim with tears of ecstasy. At least hear the Lord's pastimes favorably. Consider your own departure from this world and how to prepare for it.

The Lord bathed Haridāsa Ṭhākura's body in the sea and said, "From this day on, this sea has become a great pilgrimage site." I was able to bathe in that sea beside Śrīla Prabhupāda and his disciples in 1977.

We are not trying to become an expert about a book, but to listen to the word of God speaking to us.

In a sense, I would like to become an “expert” on *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, but not in the sense that I would consider myself a master of it, a professional reciter. Don’t presume as Vallabha Bhaṭṭa did when he spoke proudly to Lord Caitanya about his *Bhāgavatam* learning. We have heard that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura spent most of his later days reading *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Certainly he was an expert in explaining its verses and in entering its *rasa*, but he didn’t present himself in that way. He listened to the Lord’s pastimes while entering more and more into them.

I don’t want to become an “expert” on the chapter about Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s passing away, but I want to keep hearing it, listening to the word of God speaking to me.

Lord Caitanya gave the benediction that anyone who attended the festival celebrating the passing away of Haridāsa Ṭhākura, anyone who put sand on his grave, anyone who honored the *prasādam* at the *mahotsava*, or anyone who chanted there with the devotees would very soon attain Kṛṣṇa’s favor. Prabhupāda tells of the whereabouts of Haridāsa Ṭhākura’s tomb (near Ṭoṭā-gopīnātha temple). He also mentions Bhaktikuṭī, a small house constructed nearby by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. I may be able to see and touch all those places again. I know my touching them will be external—I’ll be noticing how my head feels, and my feet, aware of the persons I am with and

the Indians who are observing us, the animals there and me searching for words to write. There will be some kind of internal sense also. It is an austerity to travel to India to visit a holy place. All we can do is tell ourselves that this is the actual place of one pastime or another. We are alive in these bodies for better or worse, and because we insist on perceiving Kṛṣṇa consciousness through our material senses, we may have such a limited, sensual perception of the *tīrtha*. At least we can pray—we came for that—and remember that our main association with Lord Caitanya will be through scripture.

All glories to Haridāsa Ṭhākura who taught the world the importance of chanting Kṛṣṇa's holy names. Lord Caitanya said that Haridāsa Ṭhākura was the crown jewel on the head of the world. Now the world is bereft of that jewel. With mixed feelings of happiness and distress, Lord Caitanya returned to His home.

Taking shelter of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Śrīla Prabhupāda stood at the rail of the Jaladuta at sea. In his difficulty he read that book. What section? I don't know. It is all sublime.

Whoever participates in the festival of Haridāsa Ṭhākura's passing away will soon obtain Kṛṣṇa's mercy. In what form? Kṛṣṇa may take away our material honor and give us refuge at His lotus feet, as he did for Haridāsa Ṭhākura and Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmīs. Stand by, chant, and pray to be delivered.

Now reading Chapter Twelve.

*śrūyatām śrūyatām nityam  
gīyatām gīyatām mudā*



*cintyatām cintyatām bhaktās*  
*caitanya-caritāmṛtam*

O devotees, may the transcendental life and characteristics of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu be always heard, chanted and meditated upon with great happiness.

—Cc. *Antya* 12.1

I read about Śivānanda Sena leading the devotees, getting delayed while he pays the toll, Lord Nityānanda becoming angry with him and kicking him . . . Śivānanda Sena was happy to receive Lord Nityānanda's kick and thanked Him. The Lord then embraced him in love. I know my reading is light. I say it's because I can't take pressure—I get headaches. Still, I know I'm doing the right thing in excluding other activities and staying with the book *because I want to*.

Dear Lord, I pray that my casual reading, apparently with no deep *bhāva*, will nevertheless fructify. If I show You that I have no other shelter and no other desire but to read books like the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, then You will increase my devotional sentiment. I promise to share what I read with the devotees.

In this chapter it begins: descriptions of the Lord's intense feelings of separation from Kṛṣṇa. During the day He was happy to talk with the devotees, to accept their lunch invitations, and to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa with them, but at night He became transcendently morose and withdrew, along with His intimate companions, into the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in separation from Kṛṣṇa. When I began reading and writing this

diary, I thought I might stop before reaching the later chapters describing the Lord's madness. Now it looks like I will have time to finish the whole *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. It is unfortunate that I read casually and too lightly. This will be especially true for these later chapters. In this case, it's because I can't grasp much of it. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī encourages us to read it anyway, even if we fail to understand. I'm just like a child attending a lecture and not being able to understand what the speaker is talking about. When the speaker becomes grave, I may become grave, and when he laughs, I may too, but it is all over my head. Nevertheless, as Prabhupāda used to say, the transcendental vibration alone is purifying.

In this section, there's a memorable discussion where Lord Caitanya thanks the devotees for coming every year from Bengal. He acknowledges that it must be difficult for them to come, although He just stays in one place to receive them. The exchange becomes intense and the devotees and the Lord cry and embrace. The devotees become so affected by this that they cannot return to Bengal and they stay for another week. Only when Lord Caitanya calms them down are they able to leave. "The Lord bound everyone by His transcendental mercy. Who can repay his debt for the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu?" (Cc. *Antya* 12.83)

Jagadānanda Paṇḍita went on a mission to Bengal to see Mother Śacī and the other devotees of the Lord in Navadvīpa. When they gained Jagadānanda's association, the devotees thought that they had directly gained the association of the

Lord. He told them many intimate pastimes that the Lord had performed. They were blissful to hear them and they kept Jagadānanda Paṇḍita in their homes without letting him go.

With the help of Śivānanda Sena, Jagadānanda Paṇḍita prepared a large clay pot filled with scented sandalwood oil. You know what happened when he delivered this to Govinda for Lord Caitanya's use. If the occasion arises naturally, tell someone about it. Tell them especially about Jagadānanda Paṇḍita's anger, his fasting, and how Lord Caitanya called him after three days to cook for Him. Repeating these pastimes is good for everyone; they can make us forget the material world and draw us to the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya and His devotees. Or would we prefer to be dogs or playthings of *māyā* with her myriad of interests and topics?

## NOON

I'm feeling more satisfied about the combination of reading and writing. Perhaps it comes from lowering my sights. I'm not so ambitious as to think I'm going to attain an extraordinary, permanent *samādhi* in literature. Not yet. Similarly, I don't expect some extraordinary combination of free-writing and reading to take place. Furthermore, my time is stolen by headaches and that makes me grateful for when a headache clears and I get free time to read and write. Therefore it's precious.

For almost two weeks since I've been here the weather has been mild and sunny almost every day, which is unusual for

Ireland. How long can it hold out? It doesn't really matter. We have a stout house, so I am undisturbed by wind and rain. If it gets too stormy, however, I won't be able to cross the lake to go and see Rādhā-Govinda. In any case, I have the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. I pray that this book is not taken from me. Even if it were taken from me (as happened to the pilgrim in *The Way of The Pilgrim* when he lost his *Philokalia*), I pray to remember the pastimes and incidents. I know that's not enough: I want the precise and recent touch of the words and details; not images floating up from a faulty memory but straight from Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī and Prabhupāda. In Kali-yuga we need books. Books are the basis. "Without reading, how can you preach?"

Lord Caitanya gave Jagadānanda Paṇḍita instructions for his visit to Vṛndāvana. He told him not to associate intimately with the devotees of Vṛndāvana and Mathurā, who were on the platform of *rāga-mārga*, so as not to become disrespectful toward them. He also told him to stay always in the company of Sanātana Gosvāmī. "You should remain in Vṛndāvana for only a short time and then return here as soon as possible." Prabhupāda comments, "... those who have not attained the stage of spontaneous love for Kṛṣṇa should not live in Vṛndāvana very long." This is because "familiarity breeds contempt."

In the incident of Lord Caitanya running toward the female singer who was singing *Gīta-govinda*, the Lord had lost external consciousness. At the last moment, Govinda caught up with Him and said, "It is a woman singing!" Lord Caitanya then thanked Govinda, "You have saved My life."

“My dear Govinda, you should stay with Me always. There is danger anywhere and everywhere; therefore you should protect Me very carefully.” (Cc. *Antya* 13.87)

I feel like this too—aware that there is danger everywhere and wishing that an assistant would protect me. I want to be protected from loud, slamming doors, from police, from robbers on the highway, from complications that arise when we cross borders, from the encroaching feebleness of old age, and the encroaching dangers of Kali-yuga. How can I possibly expect this protection from another human being? The only recourse is to take shelter in Kṛṣṇa, and part of taking shelter is helping others to understand Kṛṣṇa’s shelter too.

In every chapter and on every page there are valuable instructions. I cannot attempt to note them all here in my diary, but if I keep reading Cc., I’ll be able to give valuable advice to others at crucial times.

For example, there is the unavoidable purport where Prabhupāda says that generally those who get married cannot make much advancement in spiritual consciousness. Lord Caitanya advised Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa not to get married but to go home and serve his aged parents. Prabhupāda comments that the advice to take care of parents was only because they were Vaiṣṇavas. “One might ask, ‘Why shouldn’t ordinary parents be served?’ . . . parents who cannot enlighten their offspring in Kṛṣṇa consciousness cannot be accepted as a real father and mother. The following verse from the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* confirms the uselessness of serving ordinary parents . . . ” (Cc. *Antya* 13.113, purport)

Lord Caitanya also advised Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, “Try to study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from a pure Vaiṣṇava who has realized God.” I think we may take that as an instruction to read Prabhupāda’s *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* purports. If we are enthusiastic to do so, in the mood of Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa following Lord Caitanya’s order, then one day we may become eligible to recite *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* directly for the Lord’s pleasure.

After Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa’s parents died, he went to Lord Caitanya and surrendered in the renounced order. After eight months with the Lord in Nīlācala, Lord Caitanya sent him to Vṛndāvana. “In Vṛndāvana you should chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra twenty-four hours a day and read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* continuously. Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, will very soon bestow His mercy upon you.” (Cc. *Antya* 13.121)

How expert and wonderful is Lord Caitanya in giving specific instructions to each of His devotees. Exactly why He does so is His own business, yet it is also the best method for each devotee’s deliverance.

Another characteristic of Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī is that “He would not listen to blasphemy of a Vaiṣṇava, nor would he listen to talk of a Vaiṣṇava’s misbehavior.”

Prabhupāda remarks that even if someone is misbehaving and is serving *māyā*, in a higher sense he is still a servant of Kṛṣṇa. The *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee has this vision.

When I hear about Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa’s faithful following of his guru, Lord Caitanya, I think of the wonderful results we receive from following the guru. And when I hear how he took the *tulasī* garland and *prasādam* of Lord Jagannātha that Lord Caitanya gave him and worshiped them, I think of the benefit

and efficacy of worshiping my Prabhupāda *mūrti*. One who does these things with faith will receive inestimable benefit. We don't have to invent some extraordinary method to make advancement. We simply have to *capitalize on whatever mercy we have already been given by the guru*.

In *lectio divina*, God speaks to and addresses each person individually, and the reader must give himself as best he can to the word of God . . . the monk is not only a reader. He's also a listener—he hears and welcomes the word in his own heart.

The *śāstras* are written for everyone, and in that sense, they are general instructions. For example, in *Bhagavad-gītā*, although Kṛṣṇa speaks individually to Arjuna, His words are meant for everyone.

But who is this “everyone”? Each of us are individuals. If we perk up our ears nicely, we can hear Kṛṣṇa talking to us individually. Individuals. We never give up our individuality. Kṛṣṇa is capable of personally speaking to each of us because He has expanded into everyone's heart.

The so-called general instructions of *śāstra* may be personally embraced, but this is not always easy. Most of us remain general readers of the instructions of Kṛṣṇa or we hear the pastimes in a distant way and don't identify with them or embrace them. We don't get inspired in an individual sense. We don't dare.

We have to learn to listen carefully and pray to understand the instructions in a personal way. This is not the same thing as interpreting the *śāstras* or thinking we have become God or

even advanced devotees. Nevertheless, Kṛṣṇa's *śāstras* are like the sun that shines everywhere, or like the moon that shines even in the home of the outcast.

#### **4:30 P.M., TEMPLE ROOM**

Dear Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa  
please give me strength to  
serve in the movement of  
Lord Caitanya as ordered by Śrīla Prabhupāda.  
I'm afraid of rats, mice, thugs . . .  
get headaches and wince.

Please let me tolerate,  
not jump or cave in  
or blaspheme or neglect.  
I have millions of miles to  
go to attain even an ounce  
of genuine spontaneous love.  
But You can grant it.

Please give me strength.  
Please bring me to You, to  
see You in Your temple.



(Today Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa wear pinkish outfits with a slight purple tint, flouncy and shapely dress of Rādhārāṇī and Kṛṣṇa's *dhotī* blowing in a breeze as He plays His flute.)

In the silent, empty temple room I hear the wind moving and the building creaking. Elsewhere in this building, someone is playing a tape and I can hear the sounds of people moving. I don't want to become overfamiliar, so I keep my visits short. I pray to never leave Them, but to always serve Them and Their pure devotee, to become courageous and to tolerate my fears.

## 6 P.M.

With Chapter Fourteen of *Antya-līlā* there is an irrevocable change in Cc. as Lord Caitanya's feelings of separation are described. From here on, Chapters 14–20, this is the one subject, with increasing intensity: madness and transcendental pain. The Lord's devotees became distressed to see Him in this condition. He was actually expressing the highest bliss. The bodily transformations of transcendental ecstasy were never manifested to this degree by any other person. We who dare to read on from here must do so with care. Never presume to understand it fully and never disbelieve or treat it cheaply. It is an unusual mercy, this glimpse Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī and Śrīla Prabhupāda have given us.

"I shall now describe a very small portion of the activities performed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu with His mind, intelligence and body when He was bewildered by strong feelings of

separation from Kṛṣṇa.” (Cc. *Antya* 14.1) The notebooks of Svarūpa Dāmodara and Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī are the authority for these pastimes. They were eyewitnesses.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s emotions exactly corresponded to those of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī feeling separation from Kṛṣṇa. “Although Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa Himself, He assumed the complexion and emotions of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and remained in that status.” (Cc. *Antya* 14.14, purport)

Prabhupāda makes the point that Lord Caitanya’s ecstasy was unique and no one can experience it but Him. Yet He also set an example. “Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu manifested Himself to show that cultivation of love for Kṛṣṇa in separation is the easiest way of success for all living entities.” Some speculators say that this may be easy for Kṛṣṇa, but it’s difficult for anyone else. Therefore we can approach Kṛṣṇa in any way we like. “To nullify this idea, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu demonstrated practically how one can achieve love of Kṛṣṇa by adopting Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s mood in separation from Kṛṣṇa.”

I don’t know exactly what this means in terms of practical application, but certainly Prabhupāda is keeping the field open for devotees to follow what Lord Caitanya demonstrated. Specifically, he means that we should not see Lord Caitanya as Kṛṣṇa Himself, which would be a disturbance to His mood. Rather, we should see Him in the mood of the *gopīs*, especially Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, in separation from Kṛṣṇa. Furthermore, as directed by the spiritual master, devotees in our line may cultivate separation from Kṛṣṇa as a bonafide path of expressing

love of Godhead. Prabhupāda sometimes says that we should never think that we have become Kṛṣṇa or even claim that we have seen Kṛṣṇa; we should serve Him in separation. “Don’t try to see Kṛṣṇa, but act in such a way that Kṛṣṇa will see you.”

There are ways that even a neophyte devotee can serve in separation, such as when he serves the guru’s *vāñī*. This is an area in which it is easy to make mistakes, so we should be careful to understand the guru’s instructions and to not concoct.

## SEPTEMBER 18, 1996

Lord Caitanya dreamt that He saw Lord Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī dancing in the midst of a circle of *gopīs*. Lord Caitanya thought, “Now I am with Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana.” He was somewhat unhappy when Govinda woke him and He understood that He was only dreaming.

It seems now that there is nothing to write except a review of the book. Then the reader of this diary might as well read the book him or herself. If I make no comments on the text, I will be left to write of my little life: “Reluctant to rise at midnight when the alarm went off. Was dreaming of riding on a train with no home or destination. Put that behind you and try to read. The collie is barking in the night.”

Lord Caitanya called Govinda *ādi-vaśyā*, “uncivilized man,” when he ordered the woman to get down from the Garuḍa-stambha after she had stepped on it and onto Lord Caitanya’s shoulder. I think of the times Śrīla Prabhupāda used harsh words to reprimand his servants. I think he uttered the word “rascal” when Hari Śauri almost spilled a bottle of

mustard oil. He had that power. His use of such words did not mean that he hated or abused his disciples. Lord Caitanya was expressing something, not condemning. He was pointing out that Govinda was wrong to check the enthusiasm of the woman devotee. It humbles a servant and puts him in his place, provided he can accept the reprimand submissively without his false ego getting in the way. "Let my master use a word like 'rascal'," he thinks. "It's all right." Śivānanda Sena was happy to be kicked by Lord Nityānanda and he said, "Today You have accepted me as Your servant and have properly punished me for my offense."

Yet the enthusiastic woman did disturb the Lord's mood. He had been seeing Lord Jagannātha as Lord Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana playing His flute, but after seeing the woman, His external consciousness returned and He saw the Deity forms of Lord Jagannātha, Subhadrā, and Lord Balarāma as they appeared at Kurukṣetra.

This was the second time in the day that He had seen Lord Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana and then lost the vision. He became morose and when at home, He sat and was blinded with tears. "I found Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of Vṛndāvana, but I have lost Him again. Who has taken My Kṛṣṇa? Where have I come?" (Cc. *Antya* 14.37)

We watch this from afar as if watching a brilliant star in the sky. Prabhupāda invites us to hear this, even from our lowly position. "Unless one is a very highly advanced devotee, he cannot understand these intricate feelings. The author of *Śrī*

*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, however, has tried to explain this *divyon-māda* as far as possible, and it is our duty simply to appreciate it as far as possible. Therefore the author has made the following request in verse 11: . . . ‘My dear readers, simply try to hear this description with faith and love. That will help you to understand transcendental ecstasy, and at last you will achieve love of Godhead very easily.’”

Again Śrīla Prabhupāda mentions that Lord Caitanya “showed by His practical example” how we can cultivate the mood of the *gopīs* in separation from Kṛṣṇa. The “example” of being in the mood of Rādhārāṇī is not something to follow—only Lord Caitanya could have the *abhimāna* of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī—but one can follow the servant of the servant of the servant (a thousand times removed) of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. This is the example, rather than worshipping the Lord in His Vaikuṇṭha opulence or by impersonal merging in Brahman.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī gives us an inside view of Lord Caitanya’s consciousness. By the miracle of reading submissively, we can understand what even most devotees of Lord Caitanya who were associating with Him could not see in detail. This is similar to reading *Kṛṣṇa* book, where we are allowed to see that it is actually Kṛṣṇa who kills the demons in His babyhood, even though the residents of Vṛndāvana cannot understand it. Of course, it is much better to be a resident of Vṛndāvana than to be a poor-hearted reader of scripture, but if we can possibly open up wholeheartedly to scripture, then by the great mercy of the transcendental authors, we may be transported into an intimate view of Kṛṣṇa or Lord Caitanya.

Yogamāyā can work on a reader so that he thinks that the scripture is actually unfolding before his eyes and that external events in his life are less consequential. We saw this in the example of the *brāhmaṇa* devotee of Lord Rāma who sat morose and refused to cook because he was thinking of Rāma in separation from Sītā.

How mistaken we are when we think, “I have read this chapter before. I know about the Lord’s madness in separation.” If we actually knew what we were reading, we would lose interest in our bodily activities and errant mental life. We would cry tears on hearing of Lord Caitanya’s tears. Still, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, although knowing that almost all his readers are not up to this, invites us to hear with faith in a simple way. Thus with great mercy he tells us, although we are not qualified, how Lord Caitanya would reveal to Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya the feelings of His mind.

Lord Caitanya felt that He had suddenly acquired a precious gem but then lost it. Recalling the attributes of that gem He lamented. “. . . ‘Alas, where is My Lord Hari? Where is Hari?’ Finally He became restless and lost all patience.” (Cc. *Antya* 14.42)

At moments like this Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya were expert in easing the Lord’s lamentation. They acted exactly like Rādhārāṇī’s intimate associates Lalitā and Viśākhā.

Lord Caitanya felt all ten bodily transformations of ecstasy in separation from Kṛṣṇa which Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī felt, as described by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* (*Antya* 14.53, purport).

## 4 A.M.

It seems more inappropriate than ever to introduce thoughts other than Cc. now that I am reading the last chapters of *Antya-līlā*. Shall I pretend that I think of nothing else? Or shall I at least spare the page from my thoughts, which may detract from the notes on Lord Caitanya's separation? Is it unholy to intrude with the other? My whole writing approach has been to allow for mixtures in the name of honesty. I don't think I should give that up now. We will have to go from the sublime to the ridiculous and back to the sublime until we attain *samādhi*. But yes, I shall try to refrain.

If I do nonsense acts, then I may feel impelled to report them. If I don't indulge in nonsense, then there will be no need to record it. Lord Caitanya is in the Gambhīrā and I am reading about it. On the side I'm also looking through *Churning the Milk Ocean* and occasionally at Merton's journal. I'm hoping to finish reading Cc. before the mail arrives. I don't want to rush the reading, especially now, because Lord Caitanya's pastimes are a continuous wave from the fourteenth chapter on. I want to respect that wave.

Because of paying attention to Cc., and especially because of my weak health, I told them I would not give the lecture at the temple on Rādhāṣṭamī, but now I think I could give a lecture without having to prepare for it separately because I have been reading Cc. I can describe Lord Caitanya's feelings in the mood of Rādhārāṇī. There are strings of verses where He spoke exactly as if He were Rādhā in madness. For example, when He tasted



the *prasādam* and then talked of the flute which tastes Kṛṣṇa's lips: "Where is Kṛṣṇa?"

Reading is, more accurately, a "listening" and a "hearing", attuned to the inspired word and attentive to the Speaker . . . In all, my goal is to personalize the words, to real-ize them, as God speaking to *me now*.

In other words, it's a personal reciprocation. In the case of Cc., there is certainly a speaker. The author is speaking and often Lord Caitanya Himself speaks directly. Now Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is speaking through Lord Caitanya. All these personal voices are vibrating and we simply have to hear them. Therefore, it's nice to break out of the old mold, the old conception of reading, and refer to it as listening, hearing.

Make the words personal and real. This is not a concoction. It's already personal, but I tend to take it as impersonal or inattentive. I don't realize I am being spoken to. I like the opening up of the word "real-ize" to show that it means "to make real." I often think like that, that I wish I could understand the reality of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, the reality of Kṛṣṇa. It becomes unreal, or we think it's mythological, so to realize means to make it real for us—true, as actual events.

Of course, when we hear of Lord Caitanya's ecstasies in the Gambhīrā, that's not so easy to personalize. It's not something we can apply in a utilitarian way. We must be careful not to take it cheaply like the *prākṛta-sahajiyās*. Still, such pastimes are personal in the sense that they wake us up to the goal of

spiritual life. These pastimes are coming to our hearts. We are meant to read them and be nourished by them, to follow them according to Prabhupāda's directions. That is, to hear faithfully and to take in whatever we can, according to our capacity.

Let's repeat that *lectio* point: "My goal is to personalize the words, to real-ize them," as Kṛṣṇa speaking to me now. The opposite of this goal would be to read the words impersonally, to think of them as unreal, not to think that God is speaking to us, and to think that whatever is in the scripture happened long, long ago somewhere else and is no longer relevant.

Reading about the ten bodily transformations Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī experiences is not light reading. We say too easily, "Although it appears to be sadness, She is experiencing the highest transcendental bliss." Sometimes we think of "bliss" in a neophyte way as something we experience while we still have material desires. It was a "blissful" feast because there were so many palatable preparations, ending with a dessert of hot *halavā* and cold sweet rice. It was a "blissful" *kīrtana* because it didn't last too long or stir the emotions of painful separation. It may be that a good portion of our "bliss" came from the fact that we were dancing with abandon and not devotion, or that we liked the beat. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's unhappiness in separation, however, produces extreme conditions of thinness, sleeplessness, disease. "My dear Lalitā, kindly hear Me. I cannot bear suffering the fever of separation from Kṛṣṇa, nor can I explain it to you. . . . This fever produces more distress than poison, and it is more piercing than a thunderbolt. I suffer exactly

like someone almost dead from cholera. To be giving Me so much pain, this fever must be very strong indeed.”

After his visit to Vṛndāvana, Uddhava reported to Kṛṣṇa that all the *gopīs* were afflicted like mad persons, and they had become thin and immersed in pain. “Because of separation from You, all the *gopīs*, especially Rādhārāṇī, appear like dried-up water holes under the scorching heat of the sun.”

The *gopīs* risked everything to love Kṛṣṇa, and it appears that they lost when He left them. Actually, they are the winners, the most fortunate of all—but what they go through is incomprehensible to me. I think we fear having similar experiences, just as we fear other miseries and dangers. Only those who actually enter this *rasa*, such as Lord Caitanya’s intimate friends, Svārūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya, can understand what is going on.

The chapter describes a time when Lord Caitanya left His inner room, even though the three doors were locked. Devotees found Him at the Simha-dvāra gate. He was unconscious and His body was elongated. By chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa into His ear, they brought Him back to consciousness. He looked around, surprised. They brought Him back to His room and explained what had happened. Lord Caitanya said that He did not remember any of what they described. All He knew was that “I saw My Kṛṣṇa, but only for an instant. He appeared before Me, and then, like lightning, immediately disappeared.” (Cc. *Antya* 14.78)

Also described is Lord Caitanya's running after a sand dune on the beach at Purī, mistaking it for Govardhana Hill. This time He again lost external consciousness. The devotees caught up to Him and chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa, but only after a long time did the Lord return to partial consciousness. As He stood up, He looked here and there trying to see something. He said, "Who has brought Me here from Govardhana Hill? I was seeing Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, but now I cannot see them."

As I read this and write these notes, I hear a car pull up to the house. Maybe it's the mail package from America. The last one took only five days to arrive by airmail, but it wasn't well stapled and it opened in transit. It doesn't seem like anything fell out. At least two more packages are due to arrive here before we leave. Now it's less than two weeks before October 1.

The weather is still holding up—blowy but not rainy, not overcast. The room is brightened when I open the curtains after my post-breakfast rest.

Earlier this morning I read two poems by Irish poets to Madhu, both about British atrocities in Ireland. Madhu immediately began to speak about the issues of military intervention and economic oppression—and not about the poems. What did I expect? The poems were full of emotion about injustice. Maybe I'm supposed to write poems from a similar angle of a devotee's injustice in this world.

As I attempt to read Cc., details of the massacre that took place in Smerwick and Kerry run through my mind.

“When Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī entered a cave together, the other *gopīs* asked Me to pick some flowers. Just then, all of you made a tumultuous sound and carried Me from there to this place.” (Cc. *Antya* 14.109–10).

These are some of the Lord’s extraordinary pastimes during His later years that are not recorded in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata*. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī heard them directly from Raghunātha Gosvāmī and read them in Svarūpa Dāmodara’s notebooks. We accept them as facts because they were recorded by such reliable persons.

Now I’m reading Chapter Fifteen. In the pre-chapter summary, Prabhupāda writes, “The Lord experienced all eight kinds of ecstatic transformations, and He relished them very much.” It’s reassuring to be reminded that the transcendental madness and apparent pain of the Lord was actually a cause of His relishing spiritual happiness. Otherwise, as we read some of these events, they appear distressful. Devotees become anxious and sometimes cry, worrying for the life of the Lord.

Sometimes in the evening Lord Caitanya would first recite a verse spoken by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī explaining the cause of Her anxiety and restlessness. Then He would explain that verse in His own words to Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya. His explanation was not from the viewpoint of a scholar explicating a verse, but as Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī Herself expanding on the meaning of Her own feelings.

Rādhārāṇī described how each of Her five senses all wanted to run to taste the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s form, aroma, bodily touch,

flute song, etc. The simultaneous desire of all the senses created a chaos of emotions.

One day while going to the beach, Lord Caitanya mistook a garden for Vṛndāvana and He entered it. He roamed about in the mood of the *gopīs* searching for Kṛṣṇa after He disappeared from the *rāsa* dance.

The *gopīs* asked the trees, creepers, deer, and other creatures for the whereabouts of Kṛṣṇa, but no one gave them information. As the *gopīs* wandered onto the beach by the Yamunā and suddenly saw Kṛṣṇa standing beneath a *kadamba* tree, so Lord Caitanya saw Kṛṣṇa's transcendental beauty and fell down on the ground unconscious.

What we hear may be more than the words in themselves convey. The Spirit who vivifies them is Himself the meaning, expressed *through* the words even more than by them.

I'm not exactly sure what the Christian author of these words intends here. She's referring to a state "too deep for words." We value the words of the scripture, such as the words spoken by Lord Caitanya and His explanations in Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's mood as absolute sound vibration. The words are not material; they are failing attempts to describe something that cannot be uttered. In another sense, however, the ecstasies and states described are indescribable. Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has stated this at the beginning of Chapter Fourteen: "Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's emotion of transcendental madness in separation from Kṛṣṇa is very deep and mysterious. Even

though one is very advanced and learned, he cannot understand it. How can one describe unfathomable subject matters? It is possible only if Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu gives him the capability.” (Cc. *Antya* 14.5–6)

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī’s words are similar to the *lectio divina* statement. The person who spoke the words is Himself the message. If He blesses us, we will be able to understand His words. In any case, the words of scripture are absolute, as are the names in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. But not everyone can enter them. They are too deep for most souls, even for practicing devotees.

It’s possible that Kṛṣṇa in the heart could convey to a fortunate reader meanings in addition to and even beyond what is stated in the scripture. Sometimes it appears, for example, that Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura seems to hear meanings which may even have escaped Śrīla Vyāsadeva in his composition of a *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse. At the same time, Viśvanātha Cakravartī, Rūpa Gosvāmī, and all the great commentators worship Śrīla Vyāsadeva’s words. The words of the scriptures are an ocean of meanings and we may taste them according to our ability to dive deep.

“[Lord Śiva said:] ‘I may know; Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the son of Vyāsadeva, may know; and Vyāsadeva may know or may not know the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. On the whole, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the spotless *Purāṇa*, can be learned only through devotional service, not by material intelligence, speculative methods or imaginary commentaries.’” (Cc. *Madhya* 24.313)

“*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is as great as Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord and the shelter of everything. In each and every verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and in each and every syllable, there are various meanings.” (Cc. *Madhya* 24.318)

I gave the example in *Japa Reform Notebook* of multi-track tape recordings. Although technically speaking I don’t know what they actually are, the analogy I intended was that we may simultaneously have different levels of consciousness. The most important one is the level on which we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa attentively. Inevitably there will be other tracks playing simultaneously, and sometimes we cannot control what track we are on. As long as we know where that important track is located, however, we can snap back to it. If it’s running well when we get there, that’s a big gain. Similarly in reading, it would be futile for me to even try to stay always in the specific shelter of the verses and topics of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. That’s possible for someone, but not me, not now. But if I can establish firm faith in the *śāstra* and have an abiding taste for it, then whenever I get a chance—and I hope that will be regularly within every twenty-four hours—I’ll go back to the *śāstra*. When I go back, it will be with taste, purity, and real interest. I’ll even think, “Ah, now I’m in my real home again.”

I am made up of many things, but the best part is my Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Factually, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not a part but the whole. In the immature stage of spiritual life, however, we are fractured. We will become whole again when we learn to give priority to that part of our life which is most purely Kṛṣṇa conscious—the *bhakti* practices beginning with chanting and hearing.



Lord Caitanya's speaking of the beauty of Kṛṣṇa's body is too rich for me. My mind become restless and I look ahead to see how many verses there are of this nature. I look for the relief of a break where Lord Caitanya will again be present on the page as a person relating to His devotees. The thick block of pure *kṛṣṇa-kathā* is full of poetic metaphors: "The luster of Kṛṣṇa's body is as beautiful as a spotless full moon that has just risen, and the vibration of His flute sounds exactly like the sweet thundering of a newly formed cloud." Why is this too much for me? Why can't I sit still and hear it peacefully? I think it is the sustained rush of metaphors and of concentration on Kṛṣṇa's form. I am simply not able to take it in because my mind is not elevated enough. A lover of Kṛṣṇa would swoon to hear it, but others become fidgety.

"In a faltering voice, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu again said, 'Alas, go on reading, Rāma Rāya.'" (Cc. *Antya* 15.69)

If I were to read a series of these verses aloud to an audience, it would be difficult to hold their attention. Or I might be suspected of sahajiyism because we are wary of too much conjugal *rasa* talk in ISKCON. But no one can say that Śrīla Prabhupāda is not giving us the full nectar of *ujjvala-rasa*. It will be here waiting for us when we are qualified. Many of the verses attributed to Lord Caitanya in this chapter also appear in *Govinda-līlāmṛta*, also by Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī.

"The pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are unlimited; it is not possible to write of them properly. I can only give an indication of them as I try to introduce them." (Cc. *Antya* 15.98)

Chapter Sixteen begins with the account of Kālidāsa, who loved to eat the remnants of food offered to the Vaiṣṇavas. He had great faith in the spiritual potency of such remnants. He also asked all the Vaiṣṇavas, regardless of caste, to bestow upon him the dust of their feet. When Kālidāsa went to Jagannātha Pūrī, Lord Caitanya, knowing of his full faith in the Vaiṣṇavas, gave him special mercy. He allowed Kālidāsa to drink the water that was used to wash His feet before entering Lord Jagannātha's temple. No one else was ever allowed to take this water, but Kālidāsa received special mercy. Because Kālidāsa was so eager to take the scraps from the leaf plates of all the Vaiṣṇavas even after they had been thrown in the garbage, Lord Caitanya awarded his faith by giving him His own food remnants.

“The dust of the feet of a devotee, the water that has washed the feet of a devotee, and the remnants of food left by a devotee are three very powerful substances. By rendering service to these three, one attains the supreme goal of ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. In all the revealed scriptures this is loudly declared again and again.” (Cc. *Antya* 16.60–61)

## NIGHT NOTES

Today while lying down with a headache, it occurred to me that I'm not physically fit to travel in the van as we had scheduled on October 1st. I think I will have to stay in this place for the time being. I'll probably finish reading Cc. and writing my notes by next week. Then I may read and write about something else.

## SEPTEMBER 19, 1996

This chapter next describes Purīdāsa, the young son of Śivānanda Sena, who would not chant Kṛṣṇa's name when asked to do so in front of Lord Caitanya. At the Lord's bidding, however, the seven-year-old boy composed a wonderful Sanskrit verse praising Lord Kṛṣṇa.

“Throughout the entire day and night, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu directly relished Kṛṣṇa's beauty, fragrance and mellow as if He were touching Kṛṣṇa hand to hand.” (Cc. *Antya* 16.79)

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī prays, “May that Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu rise within my heart and thus make me mad also.”

While in the temple, the servants of Lord Jagannātha gave Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu some of Lord Jagannātha's *prasādam*. The Lord tasted it and this led to a whole train of ecstatic emotions and words as described in this Chapter Sixteen, which is titled, “Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Tastes Nectar from the Lips of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.” Lord Caitanya said that the *prasādam* was so nectarean because, “These are remnants of

food that Kṛṣṇa has eaten and thus turned to nectar with His lips.” Anyone who obtains even a small portion of *prasādam* is very fortunate.

In the evening, Lord Caitanya gathered with His devotees, shared some remnants of Lord Jagannātha’s *prasādam*, and jubilantly discussed its meaning in connection with Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes. He requested the devotees to consider that the *prasādam*’s wonderful taste was not due to its material combinations but to the taste of Kṛṣṇa’s lips. “Now taste it with great faith and devotion.”

Rāmānanda Rāya recited a *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* verse by the *gopīs* on the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lips. Lord Caitanya recited a similar verse and, talking like a madman, explained the meaning. Speaking in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Lord Caitanya described the impudence of Kṛṣṇa’s flute, which steals the nectar from His lips.

“Thereupon, the flute said angrily to Me, ‘Give up Your shame, fear and religion and come drink from the lips of Kṛṣṇa. On that condition, I shall give up my attachment for them. If You do not give up Your shame and fear, however, I shall continuously drink the nectar of Kṛṣṇa’s lips. I am slightly fearful because You also have the right to drink that nectar, but as for the others, I consider them like straw.’” (Cc. *Antya* 16.126)

Reading verses like this takes us beyond “*lectio divina*” in the Christian sense. There is nothing as confidential as this except in the Kṛṣṇa conscious scriptures. We cannot enter this mood, but we regard it as the topmost expression of the spiritual kingdom. This is not “God consciousness” in reverence, but

something else. It is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's *kṛṣṇa-prema* described by Lord Kṛṣṇa in His form as Lord Caitanya. Thus the confidential meaning of Lord Caitanya's advent, which was outlined in the fourth chapter of *Ādi-līlā*, is now more fully demonstrated.

Tomorrow is Rādhāṣṭamī. If I don't get a headache, I plan to go over to the temple to attend the noon *ārati*. After that, I am scheduled to speak. I may speak about Lord Caitanya in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī tasting separation from Kṛṣṇa. No one but Lord Caitanya can taste such depth of separation, yet He teaches us to take it up in *paramparā*. This is the goal of our spiritual practices, not attainment of Vaikuṇṭha or impersonal Brahman.

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's position is very confidential. I may also speak from Chapter Sixteen about *prasādam*. Immediately after my talk, the feast will be served. We are not really qualified to think of *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* as the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips the way Lord Caitanya and Rāmānanda Rāya did, but nevertheless as stated in this chapter, "There are persons who are unfit to drink that nectar but who nevertheless drink it continuously, whereas some who are suitable never get it and thus die of greed. It is therefore to be understood that such an unfit person must have obtained the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's lips on the strength of some austerity." (Cc. *Antya* 16.137-138)

It appears to me that we are honoring *kṛṣṇa-prasādam* on the strength of Prabhupāda's mercy. Even though we still have a desire to taste palatable food and to fill our bellies, and therefore we are looking forward to special preps like "Rādhā Red" plum

chutney, still, we can become purified by offering the *bhoga* and trying to honor it as *kṛṣṇa-prasādam*. I will encourage us to try to actually honor it and not just gobble it down. We should take *prasādam* in the mood of spiritual gratitude.

“Expecting the mercy of Svarūpa, Rūpa, Sanātana and Raghunātha dāsa, and taking their lotus feet on my head, I, the most fallen Kṛṣṇadāsa, continue chanting the epic *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, which is sweeter than the nectar of transcendental bliss.” (Cc. *Antya* 16.151)

Chapter Seventeen is “The Bodily Transformations of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.” Again Lord Caitanya heard Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s flute and was able to leave His room, even though the doors were locked. The devotees searched for Him and found Him in a cowshed near the Simha-dvāra gate. He was unconscious, transformed into a tortoise-like shape. “Externally He was completely inert, but within He felt overwhelming transcendental bliss.” (Cc. *Antya* 17.17)

The devotees brought Lord Caitanya back to His room, where He became externally conscious and told them that He had just been with Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. Since His devotees had brought Him back, He said He could no longer hear the nectarean voices of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. “My ears are dying of thirst. Please recite something to quench this thirst. Let Me hear it.”

In perfect response, Svarūpa Dāmodara recited a verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* where the *gopīs* declare to Kṛṣṇa that His

beauty and flute-song conquer all living beings. Hearing this verse, Lord Caitanya began to ecstatically explain it in His own words. The *gopīs* were speaking in anger asking Kṛṣṇa—who was neglecting them after they had come to join Him in the forest—to give up His tricks.

Then Lord Caitanya recited a verse spoken by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and went on personally explaining it in a mood of loving anger toward Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī gives us just a glimpse of Lord Caitanya's behavior, which continued day and night in a deranged way with all ecstatic transformations.

“What can a poor creature like me describe of those transformations? I can give only a hint of them, as if showing the moon through the branches of a tree. This description, however, will satisfy the mind and ears of anyone who hears it, and he will be able to understand these uncommon activities of deep ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa.” (Cc. *Antya* 17.65–66)

“Worship the lotus feet of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in all respects. Only in this way will you achieve the nectarean treasure of ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa.” (Cc. *Antya* 17.69)

Chapter Eighteen is called, “Rescuing the Lord from the Sea.”

The author of Cc. says that Lord Caitanya explained the meaning of all the verses of *rāsa-līlā* in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. That means that for each verse Svarūpa Dāmodara recited, Lord Caitanya would explain it in that mad, ecstatic way, and while doing so, the Lord would sometimes fall unconscious. “To explain fully all those verses and all the transformations that took

place in the Lord's body would require a very large volume." (Cc. *Antya* 18.10) Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī emphasizes that he has only described the mad speeches and bodily transformations of the Lord in brief. Even Ananta Śeṣa with his one thousand hoods could not describe a single day's pastimes of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. "He would find them impossible to describe fully."

"If Gaṇeśa, Lord Śiva's son and the expert scribe of the demigods, tried for millions of millenniums to fully describe one day of the Lord's pastimes, he would be unable to find their limit." (Cc. *Antya* 18.14)

Even Lord Kṛṣṇa cannot estimate the limits of such emotions. In order to try to understand the moods of ecstatic love of His devotee, Kṛṣṇa accepted the role of a devotee to taste it fully. Ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa is like a big ocean in which endless waves are rising every moment. No one can estimate its limits. "When an ordinary living entity describes the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, he purifies himself by touching one drop of that great ocean." (Cc. *Antya* 18.23)

After Svarūpa Dāmodara recited the *śloka* about Lord Kṛṣṇa entering the Yamunā with the *gopīs*, Lord Caitanya took a walk on the beach and then mistook the sea to be the Yamunā. He was then carried by the waves down to the Koṇārka temple. The devotees finally found Him in a fisherman's net. The fisherman had himself become mad with love of Kṛṣṇa after he had touched the Lord's body.

The devotees placed Him on a cloth and cleaned His body. When the Lord became half-conscious, He began talking not to



them, but to the sky. He said, “Seeing the river Yamunā . . . I went to Vṛndāvana. There I saw the son of Nanda Mahārāja performing His sporting pastimes in the water.” (Cc. *Antya* 18.80)

Mostly Lord Caitanya felt Himself in the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, but sometimes He was like an assistant *gopī* in the company of other *gopīs* observing and serving in the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. In this water pastime, He was standing on the bank of the Yamunā and watching the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa with the *gopīs*. Therefore during the perilous time when the devotees understood that Lord Caitanya had been swept away in the ocean and caught in the fisherman’s net, the Lord had actually been deeply immersed in another kind of ocean, and in a different kind of pastime. He was not aware of the outer pastimes but the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* sporting in the Yamunā. He then described all those pastimes and His devotees heard them with great astonishment and relish.

Śrīla Prabhupāda gives very few purports to this confidential chapter and I dare not enter with comments of my own.

In Chapter Nineteen, we hear of the Lord’s great devotion to His mother. Every year He sent Jagadānanda Paṇḍita with gifts to visit Mother Śacī and the other devotees in Bengal. During one visit, just as Jagadānanda Paṇḍita was about to return to Purī, Advaita Ācārya presented him with an equivocal sonnet to be given to Lord Caitanya. When Jagadānanda Paṇḍita read the sonnet to the Lord, Svarūpa Dāmodara asked what it meant. Lord Caitanya replied indirectly and indicated that His earthly pastimes would soon end.

“From that day on, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s emotional state changed markedly; His feelings of separation from Kṛṣṇa doubled in intensity.” (Cc. *Antya* 19.30)

I am beginning to feel tongue-tied in this writing. I can comment neither on the Lord’s external appearance nor on His internal mood because these last pastimes are too inconceivable.

To be honest, I am also looking forward to completing the Cc. My taking shelter of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and this writing are intimately connected to my canceling the travel plan and to my staying in a convalescent state in this house. (Actually, I have been misusing the word “convalescence”. “Convalescence” means the period of recovery *after* an illness. More apt for me is “invalid,” because that refers to someone who lives in a chronic state of ill health. This morning Madhu remarked, “You’re worse off than you ever were. At least last summer you were still able to travel.” I’m so sensitive to his remarks that I thought he might have been hinting that I *should* travel. Then he explained, “Whatever you do should be a response to your low condition.”) I’ve almost finished the Cc. and that’s a sign that I have to clearly face the decision whether or not to travel.

Lord Caitanya spoke in the mood and expressions of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī as She shared Her confidences with Viśākhā about how She felt when Akrūra took Kṛṣṇa to Mathurā. The impetus for all these ecstatic manifestations is usually a recitation from the Tenth Canto or from the poetry of *Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta* or *Gīta-govinda*. These verses serve as a springboard or ecstatic

spark to inflame Lord Caitanya's own ecstatic expressions. For our own purposes, we can note that although Lord Caitanya's experiences are unique, He followed the time-honored method of discussing *kṛṣṇa-kathā* on the basis of scripture. We too can read sections of scripture, especially in the company of like-minded devotees, and speak something in *paramparā* but coming from our own hearts. While speaking, we should be careful not to speak beyond our actual realization of Kṛṣṇa consciousness (or lack of it). That's what I have been trying to do in this *Cc. Āśraya*. Because my life was full of *mleccha* activities, foolishness, and sin before I met Śrīla Prabhupāda, sometimes the scriptural verses springboard me not into ecstasy but into unholy associations. I have reported some of that in my writing in the name of honesty and with the intention to detach myself from old foolishness. The only solution is to return to the scriptures again and again for purification.

This chapter also contains the pastime of Lord Caitanya rubbing His face against the walls of the Gambhīrā and His dancing at the appearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa's fragrance. At the end of the chapter, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī requests the sincere readers to accept these unusual pastimes with full faith. He gives evidence that Lord Caitanya's madness is possible by showing how it corresponds exactly with Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's ecstasy. A similar mood is found in Kṛṣṇa's queens when they remained awake at night speaking to the birds, the ocean, and the moon.

"Just try to hear these topics with faith, for there is great pleasure even in hearing them. That hearing will destroy all

miseries pertaining to the body, mind and other living entities, and the unhappiness of false arguments as well. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* is ever-increasingly fresh. Continuously hearing it pacifies one's heart and ear." (Cc. *Antya* 19.110–11)

In the twentieth chapter we learn how Lord Caitanya spontaneously composed and tasted the meaning of the *Śikṣāṣṭakam* prayers in the company of Svarūpa Dāmodara and Rāmānanda Rāya. The chapter also reviews the entire *Antya-līlā*. Then the author makes his farewell.

Lord Caitanya teaches that our dormant love for Kṛṣṇa is easily awakened if we chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. One who actually chants the holy name thinks himself lower than the grass and tolerates all obstacles. By this humble method of chanting, we awaken our dormant love for Kṛṣṇa.

"Wherever there is a relationship of love of Godhead, its natural symptom is that the devotee does not think himself a devotee. Instead, he always thinks that he has not even a drop of love for Kṛṣṇa." (Cc. *Antya* 20.28)

"Natural humility and eagerness then awoke in Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He prayed to Kṛṣṇa to be able to chant the *mahā-mantra* in ecstatic love." (Cc. *Antya* 20.35)

Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī writes that the last verse of the *Śikṣāṣṭakam* was spoken by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī to Her *gopī* friends. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu recited the verse in the same spirit and when He did so, He felt just like Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

One time, Śrīla Prabhupāda described this verse to a roomful of guests at the 55th Street temple in New York City. He turned to me and asked me to describe it. I began by repeating in my own words whatever I had heard Prabhupāda himself say about it. Prabhupāda interrupted me and made the central point clear: “There is no business exchange.” The pure devotee loves Kṛṣṇa under all conditions, not like an ordinary religionist who expects to be rewarded for his piety. “Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of My life in all conditions, whether He shows Me affection or kills Me by giving Me unhappiness.” (Cc. *Antya* 20.49)

This is the greatest standard of devotional service, which Śrīla Prabhupāda has repeatedly cited in many “basic” lectures on *Bhagavad-gītā*. We are meant to satisfy Kṛṣṇa’s senses, not our own senses. When we act for sense gratification, we bring only misery upon ourselves and others. It is an uncompromising standard, and we flinch when we hear Prabhupāda state it so boldly. It sounds so austere—he chops away all our potential enjoyment from food, music, loving relationships in this world, work pursuits, etc.—and leaves us only with uninterrupted, unmotivated, pure *bhakti*. Prabhupāda has assured us repeatedly that such pure *bhakti* is easy to perform. We are, after all, already using our senses in this world. We don’t have to cease our engagements. All that Kṛṣṇa is asking of us is that we “change the account.” Instead of trying to deposit everything in our own account, we should deposit it for Kṛṣṇa. Hearing Prabhupāda’s masterful presentation, our material minds become confused. Is it possible to easily follow what he says? At least we know it’s imperative. Everything short of this

standard is a sham in the name of religion. “This is the mentality of fruitive workers who want to enjoy sense gratification by making a show of service to Kṛṣṇa.” (Cc. *Antya* 20.52, purport)

Although Rādhārāṇī and the *gopīs*’ specific conjugal relationship with Kṛṣṇa is something we cannot imitate and something we should not even dream of as long as we are burdened by sex desire, nevertheless, the principle of unalloyed service to Kṛṣṇa is something that Prabhupāda asks all devotees to take up from the beginning of their devotional lives. This standard is transcendental to the concept that we serve Kṛṣṇa to please ourselves. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī says that if somehow Kṛṣṇa derives happiness from making Her miserable, She considers that so-called misery Her greatest happiness.

In 1966, I wanted to quit my burdensome welfare job in order to spend more time with Prabhupāda and his boys. Prabhupāda told me I should not quit my job because I was doing a valuable service by bringing money to the temple. To convince me of the importance of the service, he told the story cited by Rādhārāṇī in this last chapter of *Antya-līlā*. It is the story of a *brāhmaṇa*’s wife who pleased her husband by becoming the maidservant of a prostitute so that her husband could enjoy the prostitute. The wife’s example of service to her husband was what Prabhupāda wanted to awaken in me. If I could make the sacrifice and do something practical to please Kṛṣṇa, then that would be my real satisfaction, not some other idea of what would please me in the name of spiritual life. By Swamiji’s grace I was able to grasp the point and continue my work, satisfied that I was doing the right thing even in terms of

my own self-interest. Instead of becoming a freelance hippie, I became his obedient son.

The author says that Lord Caitanya had formerly composed the eight verses to teach people in general, but now He tasted their meaning Himself. “If anyone recites or hears these eight verses of instructions by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, his ecstatic love and devotion for Kṛṣṇa increase day by day.” (Cc. *Antya* 20.65)

In verse 75 of this last chapter, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja declares that he is unable to elaborately describe all of Lord Caitanya’s pastimes. Therefore, he proposes to end his description and simply offers his obeisances to the Lord’s pastimes. Although he says that he has given only a hint of the *līlās*, he assures us that we may attain a taste of all the pastimes of the Lord through this hint.

Then he tells us frankly of his own physical maladies and old age, which make him exhausted and unsteady. He says, in fact, that he has not been the actual author of the book. He has been writing by the mercy of Śrī Govindadeva, Lord Caitanya, Lord Nityānanda, and other devotees. He also offers his prayers to all the readers of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, “After offering my respectful obeisances to the lotus feet of all my Vaiṣṇava readers, I shall therefore end this description of the characteristics of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.” (Cc. *Antya* 20.78)

Later, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī writes, “The mercy of their lotus feet is my spiritual master, and my words are my disciples that I have made dance in various ways. Seeing the

fatigue of the disciples, the spiritual master has stopped making them dance, and because that mercy no longer makes them dance, my words now sit silently.” (Cc. *Antya* 20.147–48)

Śrīla Prabhupāda was inspired to compose his “Concluding Words” at the end of his English translation and commentary. It is significant that his words immediately turn toward praising his spiritual master, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, who gave him the order and inspiration to present Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda briefly traces his own life and how he molded his activities to follow the instructions his guru gave him at their very first meeting and which he confirmed by letter just before he disappeared from this world.

Prabhupāda then mentions how he prepared many books, but now was induced to translate *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. “In his leisure time in later life, His Divine Grace Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura would simply read *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. It was his favorite book.”

Prabhupāda’s concluding point is that whatever writing he was able to do was done by the inspiration of his spiritual master. “I do not think myself a very learned scholar, but I have full faith in the service of my spiritual master.” Our Śrīla Prabhupāda is also convinced that his spiritual master would be happy to see the publication of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in English. “He was very fond of seeing many books published to spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Therefore our society, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, has been



formed to execute the order of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.”

#### 4 P.M.

I have just come out to the prefab shed Manu placed in a distant field on his property. It's about eight foot five with a clean, wooden interior. Right now it's completely bare. I'm sitting on the floor and I can see only the sky—a mass of white clouds. The clouds are semi-transparent, like delicate porcelain, because of the sunlight behind them. I can just see the tips of the treetops. I have been invited to come here regularly to write. I told Manu that the advantage of these buildings is that when you come to them, your mind develops a discipline to write or read because it's the only purpose of this place.

Anyway, I have “finished” another reading of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. Probably I will stop writing this *Cc. Āśraya* and go onto something else. I'm grateful to Prabhupāda for giving us this book, and I want to remember Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī's statement that it should be read again and again. Actually, after *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, we wonder what else we *can* read. It is already the highest scripture.

Writing while reading *Cc.* has definitely given me shelter. Although I may not always write in this tight combination of reading, taking notes, and diary, I'm grateful whenever I do get a chance to do it. I hope it will prove helpful, useful, and enjoyable to devotees in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

*September 19, 1996, the day before Rādhāṣṭamī*

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# GLOSSARY

## A

**Abhidheya**—the stage of performing regulated activities to revive one's relationship with the Lord.

**Abhimāna**—the sense of ego or identification with one's spiritual mood.

**Ādi-līlā**—initial pastimes. Refers specifically here to the first twenty-four years of Lord Caitanya's pastimes; the portion of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* recounting those pastimes.

**Advaita Ācārya**—an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya; one of the members of the Pañca-tattva and the incarnation of Mahā-Viṣṇu.

**Akāma**—free from lust or material desire.

**Akrūra**—Lord Kṛṣṇa's uncle who took Him from Vṛndāvana to Mathurā.

**Ālambana**—lit., "support or foundation." One of the two divisions of *vibhāva*, or the cause of love for Kṛṣṇa, which describes Kṛṣṇa as the object of love and the devotee of Kṛṣṇa as the receptacle of that love.

**Ananta Śeṣa**—a plenary expansion of the Lord in the cosmic form of a multi-headed serpent.

**Antya-līlā**—the last eighteen years of Lord Caitanya’s manifest pastimes; the portion of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* recounting those pastimes.

**Anubhāva**—ecstatic symptoms which follow and increase a devotee’s main mood of ecstasy in love of God.

**Anumāna**—reason, thought, or philosophical speculation, used to arrive at truth.

**Anurāga**—increased attachment in ecstatic love for God.

**Arcā-vigraha**—deity.

**Āśraya**—shelter.

**Ātmārāma**—those who are self-satisfied. May refer to the *āt-mārāma* verse in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.7.10).

## B

**Balarāma**—Kṛṣṇa’s elder brother and His first plenary expansion.

**Benares**—the center of Māyāvāda (impersonalist) philosophy in India.

**Bhakti**—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

**Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu**—lit., “The Ocean of the Nectar of Pure Devotional Service”; a treatise on the science of devotional service (*bhakti*), written by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

**Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura**—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda; an *ācārya* in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*.

**Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura**—an *ācārya* in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava disciplic succession; the father of Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.

**Bhaktivedānta purports**—refers to commentaries on the scriptures written by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.

**Bhaktivedānta Manor**—an ISKCON center located just outside of London, England.

**Bhāva**—the stage of transcendental ecstasy experienced after transcendental affection.

**Brahmacārī**—a celibate student living under the care of a bona fide spiritual master.

**Brāhmaṇa**—those wise in the *Vedas* who can guide society; the first Vedic social order.

**Bṛhat-mṛdaṅga**—lit., “the great drum.” A phrase coined by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura to refer to the power of publishing books as an instrument for preaching.

**Brahmavādīs**—those who are absorbed in thought of Brahman.

## C

**Caitanya (Mahāprabhu)**—lit. “living force.” An incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who appeared in the form of a devotee to teach love of God through the *saṅkīrtana* movement.

**Caitanya-caritāmṛta**—the biography and philosophy of Caitanya Mahāprabhu, written by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī.

**Cañcala**—flickering, unsteady.

**Cātuṣ-sloki**—the four core verses of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, spoken by Lord Kṛṣṇa to Brahmā at the beginning of creation.

## D

**Darśana**—vision; audience.

**Dhoti**—Vedic men's dress.

**Divyonmāda**—transcendental madness in separation from Kṛṣṇa.

**Dvārakā**—the city where Kṛṣṇa ruled in His later pastimes as a king.

## E

**Ekādaśī**—the eleventh day of both the waxing and waning moons, on which Vaiṣṇavas fast from grains and beans and increase their remembrance of Kṛṣṇa.

## F

**Founder-ācārya**—title referring exclusively to His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda as the founder and ultimate exemplar (*acārya*) of ISKCON.

## G

**Gadādhara Paṇḍita**—an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya; one of the members of the Pañca-tattva.

**Gambhīrā**—the room where Lord Caitanya stayed in Jagannātha Purī.

**Garuḍa**—the gigantic winged carrier of Lord Viṣṇu.

**Garuḍa-stamba**—a column at the back of the Jagannātha temple upon which a form of Garuḍa stands.

**Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava**—a follower of Lord Caitanya.

**GBC**—Governing Body Commission, ISKCON's board of directors.

**Gītā-nāgarī**—a spiritual farm community established by Śrīla Prabhupāda in Central Pennsylvania.

**Goloka**—Kṛṣṇaloka, the eternal abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

**Gopī**—a cowherd girl; one of Kṛṣṇa's most confidential servitors.

**Gosvāmī**—one who controls his mind and senses; title of one in the renounced order of life. May refer specifically to the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana, who are direct followers of Lord Caitanya in disciplic succession and who systematically presented His teachings.

**Govardhana Hill**—a hill in Vṛndāvana, the site of many of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes.

## H

**Halavā**—a sweet dish made from roasted farina, butter, sugar, and water or milk.

**Hari**—a name of Kṛṣṇa.

**Hare**—the evocative form of Harā, another name of Rādhārāṇī; refers specifically to the internal spiritual energy of the Lord.

**Haridāsa Ṭhākura**—a great devotee of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu; known as the *nāmācārya*, the master who taught the chanting of the holy names by his own example.

**Harināma**—public chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.

**Hari-nāma**—lit., “the name of the Lord.” Refers to the chanting of the names of Kṛṣṇa.

## I

**ISKCON**—acronym of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

## J

**Jagadānanda Paṇḍita**—a constant companion of Lord Caitanya; the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa’s consort, Satyabhāmā.

**Jagannātha**—lit., “the Lord of the universe.” May refer specifically to the Deity of Lord Jagannātha in His temple at Purī.

**Jagannātha Purī**—a city in the province of Orissa, India, where the temple of Lord Jagannātha is located.

**Jaladuta**—the name of the cargo ship on which Śrīla Prabhupāda traveled when he first came to the United States to preach.

**Janmāṣṭamī**—the festival of Kṛṣṇa’s birth.



## K

**Kadamba**—a tree which produces fragrant flowers.

**Kāliya**—the name of a serpent-demon who was chastised by Kṛṣṇa in His Vṛndāvana pastimes.

**Karatālas**—hand cymbals used during *kīrtana*.

**Karmī**—one engaged in karma (fruitive activity); a materialist.

**Kāśi Miśra**—an intimate associate of Lord Caitanya and priest of the king at Jagannātha Purī.

**Kīrtana**—chanting of the Lord's holy names.

**Kṛṣṇa**—the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

**Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī**—the author of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*.

**Kṛṣṇa-kathā**—topics spoken by or about Kṛṣṇa.

**Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā**—mercy received from Kṛṣṇa.

**Kuntī**—the paternal aunt of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

**Kumāras**—four great sages, devotees of the Lord, who exist eternally in the form of five-year-old *brahmacārīs*.

**Kurukṣetra**—a holy place where the war between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kurus took place and where Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke the *Bhagavad-gītā* to Arjuna; where Kṛṣṇa reunited with the *gopīs* after a long separation.

## L

**Lalitā**—one of Rādhārāṇī's two most confidential friends.

**Lectio divina**—a Christian practice of entering into God’s presence through reading scripture.

**Līlā**—pastimes.

## M

**Madana-mohana**—lit., “the one who bewilders Cupid.” A name of Kṛṣṇa; may also refer to a specific Deity of Kṛṣṇa or His temple in Vṛndāvana.

**Madhya-līlā**—the pastimes Lord Caitanya performed during the middle part of His manifest presence, while He was traveling throughout India; the portion of the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* recounting those pastimes.

**Mahā-bhāgavata**—a devotee in the highest stage of devotional life.

**Mahābhārata**—the history of ancient India, compiled by Śrīla Vyāsadeva and including the *Bhagavad-gītā*.

**Mahā-bhāva**—the highest degree of transcendental sentiment, experienced only by Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

**Mahā-mantra**—the great chant for deliverance: Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.

**Mahāprabhu**—supreme master of all masters; refers to Lord Caitanya.

**Mahā-prasādam**—the remnants of food offered to the Lord, generally understood to be the remnants taken directly from the Lord’s plate.

- Mahārāja**—a title of respect for a *sannyāsī* or a king.
- Māna**—a stage in the development of *prema* (love of God), expressed as jealous anger.
- Mathurā**—the city where Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared and to which He later returned after performing His childhood pastimes.
- Māyā**—the external, illusory energy of the Lord, comprising this material world; forgetfulness of one's relationship with Kṛṣṇa.
- Māyāpur**—a town in West Bengal, India, where Lord Caitanya appeared.
- Māyāvādī**—an impersonalist or voidist who believes that God is ultimately formless and without personality.
- Mleccha**—a class of persons outside the social and spiritual divisions of Vedic culture, whose standards and practices are considered abominable.
- Mokṣa-kāma**—one who is desirous of liberation.

## N

- Nādia**—a district in West Bengal, which encompasses Navadvīpa.
- Nanda**—Kṛṣṇa's father in Vṛndāvana.
- Nārada Muni**—a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa who travels throughout the spiritual and material worlds singing the Lord's glories and preaching the path of devotional service.
- Nārāyaṇa**—the four-handed expansion of Lord Kṛṣṇa.
- Navadvīpa**—lit., “nine islands.” The birthplace of Lord Caitanya.

**The Nectar of Devotion**—Śrīla Prabhupāda's summary study of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

**Nīlācala**—the name of a hill and the surrounding area in Jagannātha Purī, India, where the Jagannātha temple is situated.

**Nimāi Paṇḍita**—Lord Caitanya's name before He received initiation.

**Nine Yogendras**—sons of Lord Ṛṣabhadeva, who were well-versed in spiritual science.

**Nṛsimha(-deva)**—the half-man, half-lion incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared to save Prahāda Mahārāja from Hiraṇyakaśipu.

**Nṛsimhānanda Brahmācārī**—a devotee of Lord Caitanya to whom the Lord appeared within his heart due to his intense meditation upon Him. It is said that Lord Nṛsimhadeva used to speak with him directly.

## P

**P-stop**—European highway rest areas.

**Pañca-tattva**—the five features of the Absolute Truth: the Lord, His plenary portion, His incarnation, His energies, and His devotees.

**Paramparā**—the disciplic succession of bona fide spiritual masters.

**Parikṣit Mahārāja**—the emperor of the world five thousand years ago who heard *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* from Śukadeva Gosvāmī and thus attained perfection.

**Parvata Muni**—one of the oldest sages; almost always a companion of Nārada Muni.

**Prabhupāda, A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami**—Founder-*ācārya* of ISKCON and foremost preacher of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the Western world.

**Prasādam**—lit., “mercy.” Food which is spiritualized by being offered to Kṛṣṇa, and which helps purify the living entity. Also referred to as *prasāda*.

**Pratāparudra, King**—the king of Orissa at the time of Lord Caitanya’s manifest presence and a great devotee of the Lord.

**Pratyakṣa**—direct sense perception, considered a surbordinate and not self-evident proof of knowledge.

**Pravāsa**—a stage in the development of *prema* (love of God), describing the separation of lovers, who were previously intimately associated and are now separated by distance.

**Prayojana**—the ultimate goal of life; to develop love of God.

**Prema**—pure love of Kṛṣṇa.

**Prema-vaicittya**—love that brings grief from fear of separation, although the lover is present.

**Pūrva-rāga**—a stage in the development of *prema*, in which attachment is aroused in the lover before having met the beloved.

## R

**Rādhārāṇī (Rādhikā)**—the eternal consort and spiritual potency of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

**Rādhāṣṭamī**—the festival celebrating Rādhārāṇī's birth.

**Rāga**—attachment for Kṛṣṇa.

**Rāga-bhakti**—devotional service in transcendental rapture.

**Rāga-mārga**—the path of devotional service in spontaneous love.

**Rāgānugā-bhakti**—devotional service following the spontaneous loving service of the inhabitants of Vṛndāvana.

**Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī**—one of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

**Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī**—one of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

**Rāma, Lord**—the *avatāra* of Kṛṣṇa who appeared as the perfect king, whose full history can be found in Vālmiki's *Rāmāyāna*.

**Rāmānanda Rāya**—the governor of Madras at the time of Lord Caitanya's presence; one of only three or four devotees with whom Lord Caitanya discussed the most intimate pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhārāṇī.

**Rasa**—the spiritual essence of a personal relationship with the Supreme Lord.

**Rāsa dance**—Kṛṣṇa's pastime of dancing with the *gopīs*.

**Rasika**—adjectival var. of *rasa*; that which is saturated with *rasa*.

**Ratha-yātrā**—an annual chariot festival celebrating Kṛṣṇa's return to Vṛndāvana in which the Deity of Lord Jagannātha is pulled in procession on a *ratha* (chariot).

**Roṭi**—a griddle-baked, whole-wheat flat bread, thicker than a *capātī*.

**Rṣabhadeva**—an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa appearing as a great devotee king, known for his spiritual instructions to His sons and His subsequent renunciation of His kingdom for a life of severe austerity.

**Rukmiṇī**—one of Kṛṣṇa's chief queens.

**Rūpa Gosvāmī**—one of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

## S

**Śabda**—transcendental sound, considered by Vedic philosophy to be self-evident proof of knowledge.

**Śacī, Mother**—Lord Caitanya's mother.

**Sādhaka**—one who practices regulated devotional service.

**Sādhū-saṅga**—the association of saintly persons.

**Samādhi**—trance or absorption in the object of meditation.

**Sambandha**—knowledge of one's original relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

**Sambhoga**—union.

**Sanātana Gosvāmī**—one of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

**Sāṅkhya-yoga**—the process of realizing the self by analyzing the material elements.

**Sannyāsa**—renounced life; the fourth order of Vedic spiritual life.

**Sannyāsi**—one in the renounced order of life.

**Sarva-kāma**—full of material desires.

**Sārī**—Vedic women's dress.

**Śāstra**—revealed scripture.

**Sāttvika-bhāva**—the eight bodily transformations caused by ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa.

**Satyabhāmā**—one of Kṛṣṇa's chief queens in Dvārakā.

**Siddhānta**—the perfected conclusion according to Vedic scriptures.

**Śikṣā**—instruction.

**Śikṣāṣṭakam**—eight verses of instruction in devotional service written by Lord Caitanya.

**Simha-dvāra**—lit., “lion-gate.” One of the four gates leading into the Jagannātha temple at Jagannātha Purī, India.

**Sītā**—the wife of Lord Rāma.

**Śiva, Lord**—the personality in charge of the mode of ignorance.

**Śloka**—a stanza of Sanskrit verse.

**Sneha**—affection for Kṛṣṇa.

**Śraddhā**—firm faith and confidence.

**Śrīdāmā**—the chief among Kṛṣṇa's cowherd boyfriends.

**Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam**—the *Purāṇa*, or history written by Śrīla Vyāsadeva specifically to point to the path of devotional love of God.

**Sthāyi-bhāva**—lit. “steady ecstasy.” The mood permeating a devotee's individual relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

**Subhadrā**—the younger sister of Kṛṣṇa; Yogamāyā personified.

**Sudāmā**—an intimate cowherd friend of Kṛṣṇa.

**Śukadeva Gosvāmī**—the sage who originally spoke the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to King Parīkṣit just prior to the king's death.



**Sukutā**—a vegetable stew whose predominant taste is bitter.  
**Supersoul**—an expansion of the Supreme Lord manifest in the heart of every living entity.  
**Svarūpa Dāmodara**—Lord Caitanya’s secretary and constant companion.  
**Swami**—lit. “master.” One who controls his senses, a title of one in the renounced order of life.

## T

**Tapasya**—austerity.  
**Tenth Canto**—the part of the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam describing the most confidential pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa.  
**Totā-gopīnātha temple**—a temple in Jagannātha Purī near the *samādhi* (tomb) of Haridāsa Ṭhākura.  
**Tīrtha**—holy place of pilgrimage.  
**Tulasī**—a great devotee in the form of a plant; her leaves are always offered to the lotus feet of the Lord.

## U

**Uddhava**—a confidential friend of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in Dvārakā.  
**Uddīpana**—stimuli for love of God.  
**Ujvala-nīlamanī**—a book which elaborately explains the loving affairs and transcendental activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, written by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

**Ujjvala-rasa**—the relationship of conjugal love with the Lord, considered to be the most excellent of all *rasas*.

## V

**Vaikuṇṭha**—the spiritual world.

**Vaiṣṇava**—one who is a devotee of Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa.

**Vāṇī**—the instruction of the spiritual master.

**Vāsudeva**—the son of Vasudeva, or Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself.

**Vibhāva**—the cause or basis for relishing transcendental love.

**Vipralambha**—ecstasy in separation.

**Viraha**—transcendental feelings of separation from Kṛṣṇa.

**Viśākhā**—one of Rādhārāṇī's two most confidential friends.

**Viṣṇu**—a fully empowered expansion of Kṛṣṇa.

**Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura**—a great Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* and scholar.

**Vraja**—Vṛndāvana.

**Vṛndāvana**—Kṛṣṇa's personal abode, where He fully manifests His personal qualities.

**Vyabhicāri-bhāva**—the thirty-three bodily symptoms manifest in special ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa.

**Vyāsadeva**—the original compiler of the *Vedas* and author of the *Vedānta-sūtra* and *Mahābhārata*, and the author of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

## Y

**Yamunā**—a sacred river in India, which Lord Kṛṣṇa made famous by performing pastimes there.

**Yasodā**—Kṛṣṇa's mother in Vṛndāvana.

**Yogamāyā**—the internal spiritual potency of the Lord.

**Yukta-vairāgya**—renunciation expressed by utilizing everything in God's service.

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